

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Volume XLV, Number 10

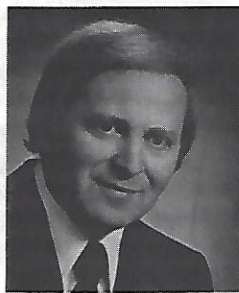
Chicago, Illinois

June, 1985

Paul J. Beaver on Lincoln's Political Rise in Central Illinois

The years that Abraham Lincoln spent in mid-state Illinois were formative ones that would prepare him for his role in national politics and extraordinary service as our nation's sixteenth President during the critical years of the Civil War. On June 14th, Paul J. Beaver, our fellow member and associate professor of history at Lincoln College, Lincoln, Illinois, will address The Round Table and relate how Lincoln's days riding the judicial circuit brought him to the attention of important figures locally and nationally. Here he learned to persuade and effect the compromise of complex cases with thorough preparation in an honest, homespun manner.

Lincoln was 22 years old when he came to New Salem to be a clerk in Denton Offutt's store. Though the business failed, Lincoln volunteered for the militia during the brief Black Hawk War, and his company, comprised of men from the New Salem area, elected him captain. During the six years he spent at New Salem, he also managed a mill; conducted a store with W. F. Berry (who died leaving him a heavy \$1,100 debt, all of which Lincoln finally paid); split rails and did odd jobs to earn a scant living; acted as village postmaster; and traveled the county as deputy surveyor. All the while he read law and studied grammar, expanded his circle of acquaintances, followed the trend of national politics and laid the foundation for a wide personal influence.



Paul J. Beaver

In 1834, he was chosen for the state legislature as a Whig and served four successive two-year terms in the lower house of the Illinois General Assembly. Lincoln came to the fore in the legislature through his homespun wit and marked ability in debate. As a Clay Whig in a Democratic body, he belonged to the minority; but he became Whig floor leader and directed the fortunes of his party in the lower house, receiving in several sessions the full party vote for the speakership.

In 1834, during his campaign for the legislature, John F. Stuart, a man of influential family, able in the law and prominent in Whig circles, had urged him to study. Lincoln overcame his doubts about his lack of formal education, borrowed and studied law books, and received his license to practice law in 1836. New Salem's population had dropped, and he decided to move to the new state capital at Springfield. He rode into Springfield in April, 1837 and became the junior partner in the law firm of Stuart and Lincoln. As a lawyer, Lincoln rose to front rank in his own



442nd Regular Meeting

Paul J. Beaver
on
Lincoln's Political Rise
in Central Illinois

Friday, June 14, 1985

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



Meeting site

As indicated above, we will return to our regular meeting site, the Quality Inn at Halsted and Madison, for the June meeting.

state. He was associated with capable partners, at first, Stuart, then Stephen T. Logan, and finally William H. Herndon. His practice was important and extensive in the state supreme court as well as the federal courts. After Illinois was divided into two federal judicial districts, Lincoln attended the sessions of the United States courts in Chicago with increasing frequency.

Lawyers at that time were generally required to 'ride a circuit' from county seat to county seat, ranging the breadth of Illinois, in order to earn their livelihood. Court was generally held for a two-week period in each county during the spring and fall for the trial of lawsuits and other legal matters. In his circuit practice, where cases had to be quickly whipped into shape, Lincoln was not more than

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Founded December 3, 1940

18 East Chestnut Street
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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 Ward C. Smidl, 1104 Whippoorwill Lane, Palatine, Illinois 60007.



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ordinarily successful; but in the higher courts, where careful study served to bring into play the sureness of his matured judgments, his record was outstanding. Lincoln thoroughly enjoyed the picturesque life on the circuit, meeting the country folk on their own level, and joining the happy migratory life of judges and attorneys as they lodged two to a bed and eight in a room, swapping stories and making the taverns resound with their hilarity.

For 23 years Lincoln rode the 8th judicial circuit in central Illinois—one of few lawyers to do so for such a long period of time and one of very few to ride the entire circuit. Lincoln, a Whig for most of his political life, would join in the partisan debate that often followed court day and court week in the various county seats. His views on national issues at these informal evening gatherings enabled him to construct his political base in the 'melting pot' that central Illinois' population represented in those important days before the outbreak of the Civil War.

Paul Beaver was born on a farm near Lincoln which had been settled by his great-grandfather in the spring of 1853, just a few months before the town of Lincoln was founded and named for lawyer Abraham Lincoln. This heritage sparked his interest in history, focusing closely on Lincoln himself and Logan County. He received his bachelor's and master's degrees from Illinois State University, majoring in history and English. After teaching both subjects for seven years at Elkhart (IL) Junior High School, he assumed the post of Associate Professor of History at Lincoln College, as well as curator of the college's Lincoln Museum in 1966. A member of the Abraham Lincoln Association, he was a founder of the Logan County Abraham Lincoln Heritage Foundation. On four occasions the Illinois State Department of Tourism selected him to be 'Lincoln Scholar in Residence', a post which involved travel with the Lincoln Heritage Trail Travel Writers group as it toured 'Lincoln Country' in Illinois, Indiana and Kentucky.

1986 Battlefield Tour

The Round Table Executive Committee, at its meeting May 10, selected Richmond, Virginia as the site of the 1986 tour, to be held May 1-4. The tour will concentrate on the 1862 Peninsula Campaign.

Summer Executive Committee meeting

President-elect Paul Klinger has announced that the summer meeting of the Executive Committee will be held on Saturday, July 13 beginning at 10 a.m. at the Pheasant Creek Clubhouse, 3100 Pheasant Creek Drive, Northbrook. All 1985-86 officers and committee chairmen, and all past presidents, are encouraged to attend. Further details will be sent prior to the meeting.

Honorary Award Life Members

Brooks Davis, chairman of the Honorary Awards committee, has announced that the following persons have been selected as Honorary Award Life Members of The Civil War Round Table: Robert Todd Lincoln Beckwith, great-grandson of Abraham Lincoln; Joseph P. Cullen, a National Park Service historian; C. Robert Douglas, a past president and current assistant editor of the newsletter; Richard Harwell, 1984 Nevins-Freeman Award recipient; Marshall Krolick, a past president and former editor of the newsletter; and Jerry Warsaw, a past president. Sincere congratulations are extended to each of these individuals.

May meeting

Two of the "more remarkable men of the Civil War" was Jeffery Wert's subject when he addressed 104 members and guests at The Round Table meeting May 10. The men he discussed were Jubal Early and Phil Sheridan, and in particular their generalship in the 1864 Shenandoah Valley Campaign.

In July, 1864, Lee called Early to his headquarters at Cold Harbor to discuss the situation. Union General David Hunter was moving toward Lynchburg—Lee had to drive him out of the Valley. After doing so, Early was to move down the Valley and threaten Washington. Lee's decision changed the strategic balance in Virginia in the summer of 1864. It was, according to Jeff, a replay of 1862 and a major gamble.

On July 30, when two Confederate brigades burned Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, Grant was forced to take the Valley more seriously. The Confederates were achieving success there at a time when the Union was facing the most important election in its history. Sheridan came from Petersburg and assumed command in the Valley on August 7—he was told by Stanton that he (Sheridan) could not afford to lose.

In the summer of 1864 Early was 47 years old and crippled with arthritis. Although he was an excellent officer, Jeff explained that in independent command he had problems, and did not get on well with subordinates. He also did not understand the role of cavalry, something Sheridan understood well. Sheridan at this time was 33. He was an aggressive officer who had had a meteoric rise. His big problem, Jeff said, was inexperience. In fact, Lincoln, Stanton and Halleck thought he was too young for the campaign, but they acceded to Grant's wishes. Sheridan had about 43,000 troops, including 8000 cavalry armed with repeaters. Early had 9000 infantry and 4000 cavalry. As Jeff said, even Lee had never faced such odds.

On August 25 Early took four divisions to threaten Maryland, leaving Kershaw behind. Sheridan could have crushed Kershaw, but did nothing. On September 16 Grant came to see Sheridan and urge him to action and on the 19th Sheridan launched the Third Battle of Winchester. Early was spread out over 10 miles. It was a standup fight with Sheridan using his cavalry as the cutting edge of his army. Early was forced to retreat to Fisher's Hill.

For the Union army to assault headlong there was unthinkable, and Sheridan flanked and routed the Confederates on September 22. This opened the upper Valley to the Union army. Grant wanted Sheridan to keep pressing Early, but he didn't do it. On October 12 Lee told Early he needed victory in the Valley, ignoring the fact that Early was badly outnumbered. Early marched his army all night on October 18-19 and placed it in position on the Union flank at Cedar Creek. This movement, Jeff noted, was unparalleled in the Civil War. However, it is often overlooked since Early eventually lost. The Confederates had early success but failed to seal the Valley Pike and the initiative shifted to the Union army when Sheridan arrived back on the field. His counterattack at 4 p.m. forced the Confederates to retreat to Fisher's Hill; the Battle of Cedar Creek ended the Valley campaign.

In summing up, Jeff noted that Early operated in the shadow of Jackson and that he paled in comparison. And, Lee, needing a victory, expected too much of him. Early simply couldn't beat such heavy odds; had the armies been of more equal strength, Jeff feels Early would have given

Sheridan a lesson.

Sheridan went on to greater fame, but in Jeff's opinion he was not as great as Sherman or Grant. He was preeminent in the use of cavalry as a strike force, however, and had instinctive battlefield control. He also had a charisma that was worth a lot—it enabled him to hold and finally win at Cedar Creek.

Chatham to be protected

Chatham Square Associates, Safeway Stores, Inc., and the National Park Service recently achieved an agreement whereby Chatham Manor, a unit of the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, will be screened with trees to protect it from land development changes occurring on the boundaries of the property. Chatham Square Shopping Center, under planning and construction for the past several years, shares a common boundary of about 1,700 feet with the historic property. The National Park Service was concerned that the views from the historic manor remain reasonably unaltered to allow visitors to the mansion to gain a sense of history as when Chatham was the seat of a 1,200-acre plantation.

Chatham Square Associates and Safeway Stores, Inc., have agreed to protect Chatham through the following measures: The shopping center buildings will be moved 25 feet further away from the park boundary than originally planned; the 25-foot undeveloped strip of land will be planted in a double row of white pine trees to provide for visual screening for the protection of Chatham; funds in the amount of \$4,000 will be donated to the National Park Service in order that a secondary access road next to the park boundary can be screened from increased traffic and adjacent developments, with a double row of white pines.

The Friends of Virginia Civil War Parks, upon learning of the need to protect Chatham, also donated \$300 toward the planting of the trees in honor of Roland Galvin of Richmond, Virginia, the prime organizer of Friends of Virginia Civil War Parks. The Friends also established a program in which concerned citizens interested in contributing to the tree screen at Chatham may buy trees for this purpose through donations, at a cost of \$30 per tree.

Chatham was built in 1771 by William Fitzhugh, a member of the Virginia House of Burgesses and contemporary friend of George Washington. Chatham became nationally prominent in 1862 during the Battle of Fredericksburg when it was appropriated by Union officers to serve as a Federal headquarters. Many notables of that period, including Clara Barton, Walt Whitman, and Abraham Lincoln, visited Chatham during the Civil War.

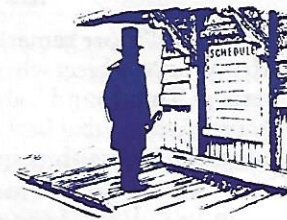
Last year we reported on the problem at Kennesaw Mountain Battlefield Park which was being overrun by recreational users. The Park now has a new superintendent, Ralph Bullard, and as the following letter written by him to a congressman in response to an inquiry as to why permission for a church road race within the park was denied, it looks like things are going to change for the better.

"Some 15 years ago, Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park was located in a relatively stable, semi-rural area. As an accommodation to the surrounding community, some management policies were relaxed, or totally ignored.... The intervening years have brought vast change to the area with resultant pressures on the park.... Kennesaw Battlefield was suddenly overwhelmed with recrea-

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THE NEW BOOKS

(compiled by Dick Clark)



BULLETIN BOARD

Johnson, Michael P. & James L. Roark, editors. *No Chariot Let Down: Charleston's Free People of Color on the Eve of the Civil War*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984. 174 p., bibliog., index, \$16.95.

Parker, Wm. Harwar. *Recollections of a Naval Officer, 1841-1865*. With introduction and notes by Craig L. Symonds. Annapolis, MD: The Naval Institute Press, 1984. 320 p. \$16.95. First published 1883.

Rawls, Walton, ed. *Great Civil War Heroes and Their Battles*. New York: Abbeville Press, 1985. 300 p., color illus. \$39.95.

Sherman, William T. *Memoirs of General William T. Sherman*. New introduction by William S. McFeely. New York: Da Capo Press, 1984. 2 vols. in 1. pbk. \$13.95.

Silbey, Joel H. *The Partisan Imperative: The Dynamics of American Politics before the Civil War*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985. \$25.00.

Spiegel, Marcus M. *Your True Marcus. The Civil War Letters of a Jewish Colonel*. Edited by Frank L. Byrne and Jean Powers Soman. Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 1985. 353 p. \$19.95.

Stevens, Thomas N. "Dear Carrie..." *The Civil War Letters of Thomas N. Stevens*. Edited by George M. Blackburn, illustrations by Andrea Lozano. Mt. Pleasant, Michigan: Clarke Historical Library, Central Michigan University, 1984. \$17.50. Stevens was captain of Co. C, 28th Wisconsin.

Terdoslavich, William. *The Civil War Trivia Quiz Book*. New York: Warner Books, 1984. pbk \$2.50.

Wood, James H. *The War, "Stonewall" Jackson, His Campaigns and Battles; The Regiment, as I Saw Them...* Introduction by James I. Robertson. Gaithersburg, MD: Butternut Press, 1984. \$20.00. Original of 1910.

Worthington, Glenn. *Fighting for Time*. With new introduction and additional material by Brain Pohanka. Shippenburg, PA: Beidel Printing Co., 1984. \$19.95. Original of 1932.

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tional use. Irreplaceable historic features were being damaged or destroyed, and historic interpretation suffered. As a result, national attention became focused on the competing and often conflicting uses at Kennesaw Battlefield. The park was set aside as an important cultural property dedicated to public inspiration and interpretation of the significant historic events that occurred here.

"The National Park Service has been forced to make some hard decisions concerning the future management of the battlefield. A few of the decisions are going to be unpopular with certain interest groups. One of these decisions was that the policies governing the management of the historic area will be adhered to, and, as a result, conflicting recreational uses such as organized athletic events no longer will be permitted."

The above item appeared in the Harpers Ferry Round Table newsletter.

Future meetings

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

June 14: Paul J. Beaver on "Lincoln's Political Rise in Central Illinois."

July 13: Summer Executive Committee meeting.

July 21: Picnic at Paul Klekner's home. Further details will be provided.

September 20: Nevins-Freeman Award Dinner. Recipient of Award, Dr. John Y. Simon. **Note:** This is the third Friday of the month.

October 11: Kent Brown on "Alonzo Cushing and His Battery at Gettysburg."

November 8: Donald C. Pfanz on "Negligence on the Right: The 11th Corps at Chancellorsville."

December 13: Christopher Calkins, subject to be announced.

January 10, 1986: "Our Ethnic Ancestors in the Civil War;" a panel featuring Wayne Anderson, Marshall Krollick, Bill Sullivan, Karl Sundstrom, and Jim Vlazny.

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

March 15: All day assembly on "Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant: The Civil War Years."

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 "Lincoln's Gettysburg Address."

June 13: James I. "Bud" Robertson on "A. P. Hill."

Several years ago fellow member Jerry Warshaw prepared a very useful chart showing the organization of the Union and Confederate armies. He still has some copies available; if you would like one, send a stamped, self-addressed #10 envelope to Jerry at 748 Hinman, Evanston, Illinois 60202.

The 100th anniversary of the death of Ulysses S. Grant will be marked by the New York Department Sons of Union Veterans on July 20. The ceremony will take place at Mt. McGregor, site of the Grant cottage in which he died on July 23, 1885. Mt. McGregor is 36 miles north of Albany. The furnishings in the cottage are exactly the same as they were when Grant died. For further information about the ceremony or the Grant cottage, contact Jerome Orton, Box 233, Syracuse, New York 13201.

Gore Vidal, author of the novel, *Lincoln*, has been selected as the recipient of the 1985 Barondess/Lincoln Award of the Civil War Round Table of New York. The Award is presented annually for "Contribution to the greater appreciation of the life and works of Abraham Lincoln." It is named in memory of Lincoln scholar Dr. Benjamin Barondess.