LADIES NIGHT -- DICK BLAKE'S "A LOOK AT LINCOLN"

A unique experience in fine dining and entertainment awaits those who attend the Round Table's annual Ladies Night to be held on February 8, 1974.

The highlight of the evening will be a presentation by our own member, Dick Blake, of his truly fascinating program, "A Look At Lincoln." Vocally and visually, Dick creates the amazing illusion that the audience is actually in the presence of our 16th president. His warm portrayal depicts the essence of Lincoln as the great Emancipator grew from a young politician to a weary chief executive. Speaking in Lincoln's own words, Dick addresses the audience as if in conversation with them, thus conveying the moods of the martyr's life, his humor, sadness, dedication, and ideals. It is a memorable performance, one that will leave everyone with a greater understanding of the legend that is Lincoln.

To set the stage for Dick's presentation, we will first be treated to a program of "Songs of the Sixties" (1860's, that is), sung by four professional members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Chorus. This talented quartet, named the "Schimmelsteng Singers" in honor of our immortal hero, will include Robert Durnbaugh, Richard Carter, Dale Prest, and the Round Table's senior vice-president, Ward Smidt. Anyone who has had the good fortune to attend Chicago Symphony concerts can well attest to the excellence of its Chorus. These four gentlemen, who represent many years of experience in that Chorus, have planned for us a most enjoyable and representative selection of period music.

The site of the festivities will be the Chandelier Room of The Como Inn at 546 N. Milwaukee Avenue in Chicago. A Chicago landmark, this outstanding restaurant is renowned for its old world atmosphere and Italian and American cuisine. A choice of baked lasagna, rock cornish hen, or whitefish will be available and each entree will be part of a complete dinner from soup to dessert. Free parking service is provided by the restaurant's doorman. The evening will begin with the traditional Command Post at 6:30 P.M., with dinner to follow at approximately 7:30 P.M. The price is $10.00 per person and payment must accompany your advance reservation.

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DICK BLAKE, OUR OWN MR. LINCOLN

Dick Blake began his acting career in the late 1950's as a result of his involvement with the Boy Scouts in the Chicago area. Dick had been active as a district leader and explorer advisor when the eminent English actor and producer, Ralph Reader came to Chicago in 1957 to produce the Boy Scout Gang Show for the Boy Scout Council. This was an event that played for two weeks every year, all of its talent coming from the ranks of scouting. Dick was one of those to answer the call for performers and for the next five years he had feature roles in the shows while he learned the art of acting from Mr. Reader.

This first taste led in the early 1960's to additional acting experience with community theaters in the Chicago area, such as Theater First at the Athenium, Music Onstage in Arlington Heights, and the Lincoln Park Players. He also participated in night club reviews at the Gate of Horn and Meadowbrook Country Club. In 1965, Dick conceived the idea of combining his life-long interest in history with his newfound love of the (Continued on page 4)
On January 11, 1974, the members and their guests were treated to a most interesting and informative description of events on the Kansas-Missouri Border from 1854 to 1865. Our speaker was Stephen Z. Starr, secretary and director of the Cincinnati Historical Society. Mr. Starr pointed out that while many writers dwell on the chivalry and genteel aspects of the participants’ conduct during the War Between the States, in Kansas and Missouri it was a true civil war, grim, dirty, treacherous and bloodthirsty.

It all began in January of 1854 when Stephen A. Douglas introduced his Kansas-Nebraska Act which specifically repealed the Missouri Compromise. The latter had prohibited slavery above the line that became the southern boundary of Kansas. Douglas' bill, however, did away with this arbitrary demarcation point and, instead, instituted the doctrine of squatter sovereignty, that is that the residents of a new state would decide by vote whether slavery would or would not be permitted. When the Act became law, the race was on as abolitionists and pro-slavery forces vied with each other to bring into Kansas enough people to carry the question. While many abolitionist organizations, such as the Emigrant Aid Society, did operate to encourage and assist new residents, most of the anti-slavery settlers were mid-western Free-Soilers who, while not strict abolitionists, were nonetheless opposed to the “peculiar institution.” The pro-slavery faction came mainly from Missouri, a slave state, where in the six counties abutting Kansas there were seventeen thousand slaves. For the most part, the Missourians merely travelled to Kansas to perform some symbolic act to establish residency, thus qualifying to vote, before returning back to their Missouri homes to await the election.

The controversy was fanned by the inflammatory rhetoric of politicians and newspapers, some of whom even blatantly suggested that opposition settlers be driven out at the point of a gun. When it became apparent that the anti-slavery residents were in the majority and would control the elections, the Missourians resorted to tactics such as widespread vote fraud in the elections of March 1855 and October 1856. Missouri newspapers advertised free transportation and refreshment to those who would travel to Kansas to vote and caravans of voters were organized. As a result, incidents such as at Oxford, Kansas, where 1600 voted in a district with 30 registered voters, were not uncommon.

Feelings ran high and the explosion came in May of 1856 when a pro-slavery grand jury declared two anti-slavery newspapers and the Free State Hotel in Lawrence to be nuisances. A posse of 800 Missourians soon carried out the destruction of these businesses. In retaliation, the fanatic John Brown and six others murdered five pro-slavery men near Pottawatomie Creek. The violence had begun and soon the massacres, murders, scalplings, burnings, and lootings were an every day occurrence. Corpses were a common sight on the roads and in a thirteen month period, it was estimated that over 200 politically motivated killings occurred.

As Mr. Starr related, the flame that was “Bleeding Kansas” soon spread across the country. In the Senate, Charles Sumner gave a speech on the subject and the next day was censured in insensibility by Preston Brooks. In the presidential election of 1856, the new Republican Party adopted a free Kansas as their battlecry. Atrocities followed atrocity as the opposing forces raided each other across the Kansas-Missouri Border. The eventual outbreak of the Civil War made things even worse as the survivors of the violence of the late 1850's joined the
TO THE CAMP FOLLOWERS (LADIES)

A real treat awaits the camp followers on February 8th as we will be joining the Round Table for their annual Ladies Night at the Como Inn. Mr. Dick Blake, a member of the Round Table, will present an outstanding portrayal of the trials and tribulations of our 16th president. Mr. Blake has presented this program on television and has appeared at colleges all over the nation.

So bring your spouse or make up a party for a very special and entertaining evening. See the front page of the Newsletter for all of the details.

At our last meeting, Ward Smidt, the senior vice-president of the Round Table, presented a most outstanding program on slavery in the South. Ward began by describing the history of slavery in America and then went on to detail the experiences of the slaves while on the voyage from Africa and their subsequent life on the plantations. He related many interesting examples of the hardships and sufferings they were forced to endure.

years of age. Sir Denis, a lecturer at the University of Illinois in 1956 and at the University of Chicago in 1966, was the featured speaker at our 250th regular meeting on April 6, 1966. That night was also the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Grand Army of the Republic. Sir Denis' topic on that occasion was "The War As A War", a study of the strategy, tactics and weapons of the Civil War, as well as the role of that conflict in the history of warfare.

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Arnold Alexander, co-chairman of our Fellowship Committee, advises us that the deadline for applications for the 1974-1975 Fellowship Award is March 1, 1974. To be eligible for the Award, a three thousand dollar grant, an applicant must be a graduate student working on a Ph. D. in history, specializing in the Civil War period. The applicant must have completed the oral examinations and must have the intention of teaching. Any interested and qualified parties can obtain an application by addressing the Round Table. Each application should be accompanied by a grade transcript, description of the doctoral thesis, copies of any previous articles or dissertations, and two written faculty recommendations. The winner of the Award, as decided by the Committee, will be announced at the June meeting.

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Can there be a comprehensive "Ten Title Civil War Library", one that would cover the broad range of Civil War interests without duplication of subject matter or author? That is the question raised by Past President Ver Lynn Sprague. For some time Ver Lynn has been working on such a list that would provide an in-depth study of all aspects of the Civil War to those who are not inclined to read countless volumes or who do not have the room for an extensive book collection. It is a challenging project and he would welcome the suggestions of other members. So get your pencils out, review your bibliographies and send your list to Ver Lynn at 195 Pago Pago Drive, Isle of Capri, Naples, Florida 33940. The only stipulation is that the book be reasonably easy to obtain; no rare or out-of-print titles. He will compile the consensus results, which will be published in a forthcoming issue of the Newsletter.

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Our President, Gordon Whitney, was scheduled to speak on "General Jefferson C. Davis" before the Decatur, Illinois Civil War Round Table in December and was rescheduled to appear... (Continued on page 4)
THE NEW BOOKS

(Compiled by Dick Clark)


Everett, Frank Edgar, Jr. Brierfield, Plantation Home of Jefferson Davis. Hattiesburg, University and College Press of Mississippi, 1971. $5.95


(Continued from page 1)

...theater by the development of a one-man program about Abraham Lincoln. After two years of preparation, he was ready and, in 1967, he gave up his other commitments to concentrate full-time on presenting "A Look at Lincoln."

Now, seven years later, Dick has put on over 1500 performances in twenty-two states, including television appearances in Chicago, Oklahoma City and Binghamton, New York. His audiences include colleges and community and service organizations, as well as regular theater presentations. Coming up is a special appearance at Lincoln College on February 12th.

Dick, who has been a member of the Round Table for several years, was born in Davenport, Iowa, but has lived in Chicago since he was a young boy. He attended Steinmetz High School and DePaul University. During World War II, he served in, appropriately enough, the Blackhawk Division. Dick has three sons and three grandchildren with another of the latter on the way.

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...in January. Unfortunately, each time the Central Illinois area was hit by a severe winter storm on the day of the meeting,