629th REGULAR MEETING

THOMAS F. SCHWARTZ ON “‘CRAZY FOLKS...WHY I MUST ONLY TAKE MY CHANCES’: ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND DEATH THREATS”

Friday, March 12

HOLIDAY INN MART PLAZA
350 North Orleans Street

Cocktails at 5:30 p.m.
Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

$30 - Members/Non-members

Entrée:
London Broil with Shiitake Mushroom Sauce or Catch of the Day

(We are offering, on a Trial Basis, the option of choosing not to have dinner and coming only for the address at 7:30 p.m., for a charge of $10 per person.)

PLEASE NOTE
Make your reservation by MONDAY, MARCH 8, by calling Carole Le Claire at 847-698-1438.

People who attend without having made a reservation will pay a $5 walk-in charge. If you make a reservation and then find you cannot attend, please call to cancel or you will be billed for a dinner.

Until the end of the year, parking is at the lot at the corner of Hubbard and Orleans Streets. The hotel is providing shuttle bus service for guests between the lot and the hotel.

Parking is $8 with a validated parking sticker. Tickets will be validated by the Round Table treasurer at the meeting.

THOMAS F. SCHWARTZ - on -

“‘Crazy Folks...Why I Must Only Take My Chances’: Abraham Lincoln and Death Threats”

WHAT THREATS SHOULD BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY?

By Barbara Hughett

Most people are aware of the ending of the Lincoln story at Ford's Theatre. Thus, John Wilkes Booth will forever define the act of assassination in American political history. It was, after all, the first time an American president had been assassinated. It was widely held up until then that such an act could not happen in America!

Because of President Lincoln's dramatic and brutal murder by a famous actor at Ford's Theatre, most historians have tended to read the story backwards, assuming that Lincoln was, as Mark Neely stated, "easy to kill." Lincoln's fatalism and a general belief that assassination was a European, not American, practice only reinforced the President's avoidance of protective measures.

But is this depiction true? The topic of Thomas F. Schwartz's address to The Round Table on March 12 will be: "Crazy folks... why I must only take my chances": Abraham Lincoln and Death Threats." Dr. Schwartz will point out that a careful examination of the records show that credible death threats against Lincoln began even before he left his home in Springfield, Illinois, on February 11, 1861, to journey to Washington, D.C., for his inauguration. Lincoln did not have a tin ear to the dangers he faced.

Rather, as Dr. Schwartz will explain, he struggled with the problem of evidence in proving the credibility of threats. What threats should be taken seriously and what threats were merely the ranting of "crazy folks"? And if the threats were credible, how should he alter his life to reasonably avoid perceived danger? Lincoln's problems anticipated what public officials now face in a post 9/11 world.

Thomas F. Schwartz, a native of Downers Grove, Illinois, attended the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, where he received the A.B., A.M., and Ph.D. in history. He became curator of the Henry Horner Lincoln Collection at the Illinois State Historical Library in 1985 and is an acknowledged authority on the Sixteenth President and his times. Schwartz is the author of over ninety articles, reviews, chapters, and electronic reference entries, and is editor of "For a Vast Future Also": Essays From the Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association (Fordham University Press, 1999). On November 19, 1993, Governor Jim Edgar named Schwartz to fill the post of State Historian, making him, at 38, the youngest person to ever serve in that position. With John Rh deshamel of the Henry Huntington Library, Schwartz co-curated the nationally acclaimed exhibition, "The Last Best Hope of Earth": Abraham Lincoln and the Promise of America, featuring materials from the
"Time for the 3rd Annual Ed Bearss Preservation Award," as reported by Mary Abroe in last month’s by-line. A flyer is included with this Newsletter that gives you all the details. Basically, the Award was established to present $1000 to whatever project, person, or preservation effort that Ed deems worthy. Ed will name this year’s honoree at our 54th Annual Tour to Atlanta in May. This is also your invitation to individually honor Ed by contributing to the funding for this CWRT award. Sign-up at the next meetings or mail a check to: BP Chair Mary Abroe, 212 Woodbine Ave., Wilmette, IL 60091-3332...make check payable to CWRT-Chicago. All individual contributors, of any amount, will be listed in the Tour Program and in the CWRT Newsletter. This is our way of saying, "Thanks, Ed, for the thirty-plus years of guiding our Tours… and for just being our friend!"

The year got off to a good start for preservationists, reports The Civil War News. Pete Jorgensen indicates that several "good things" are happening:

Fort Heiman, Kentucky received a check for $367,000 from the Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund Board. This is the final amount for the Fort Heiman land that included forty lots owned by individuals. The fort was built by the Confederates in 1861, across from Fort Henry, on the Tennessee River. (...Remember Ed’s Tennessee Tour "photo-op" as he put on swim fins and a hat to wade Fort Henry?)

Richmond, Kentucky Battlefield got a recent bid of $1.4 million for 207 acres on behalf of Madison County. In 2001, the Historical Society bought a homestead and acreage after the Civil War Preservation Trust (CWPT) had declared the battlefield as one of the country’s ten most endangered battle sites. A museum and visitors’ center is planned for 2005. (Brooks Davis led us on a Fall Tour of that battlefield in 1994.)

Black Jack Battlefield, Kansas has been purchased with a plan to develop it as a battlefield park. On June 2, 1856, John Brown’s Free-Staters attacked and defeated pro-slavery forces camped near the town of Black Jack. Brown called it the first regular battle fought between Free-State and Pro-Slavery men in Kansas. "Some historians consider it the first battle of the Civil War because it involved organized military forces on opposite sides of the slavery question," says Pete Jorgensen.

Manassas National Battlefield Park, Virginia now has 115 acres of the recently restored Stuart’s Hill tract. This site was the focus of the "greatest Civil War battle ever fought," when the 1888 rezoning for a 2.4 million square-foot shopping center and 560 private homes were scheduled for construction here. The "third battle of Manassas" was fought in the courts even as the bulldozers moved onto the site. Eventually, the Park Service won out, but it was left with 115 torn-up acres on which water, sewer, gas and electric lines had been installed… along with three model homes and a short highway that had been built. The tract is now restored to its 1862 appearance.

A reminder: It is a federal violation to sell a Medal of Honor! Federal prosecutors announced a crackdown on Internet crime that resulted in charges being filed against a man who illegally sold a Medal of Honor for $30,000 on the Internet… so beware!

Developers put pressure on Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield with plans to annex and develop 74 acres adjacent to the park and known as the Hayes Farm. In the planning are homes in the $3 million range, and lots near the park sell for $100,000 to $175,000 an acre. Preservationists are working to table the annexation and to purchase the land, if it is feasible. Anyone interested in preserving this site, please call Peter Popham, 770-425-3400, Marietta, Georgia.

History Travel Study released, reports Battlefield Update, the Newsletter of the American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP) and published by the National Park Service. The Travel Industry Association of America (TIA) and the Smithsonian Magazine say that a new study indicates that 81% of adult Americans who traveled in the past year visited historical sites, battlefields, and museums, or participated in cultural activities. This represents an increase of 13% over the same group the previous year. The study spokesman feels that history and culture continue to be a significant and growing part of the U.S. travel experience. "The Historic/Cultural Traveler 2003 Edition" also documents that such travelers on average spend more money—$623 as compared to $457—than do travelers visiting other attractions. Their trips tend to be longer, seven nights or more, and they are more likely to extend their stay to experience history and culture at their destination. Information on obtaining a copy of the report is available at: http://www.tia.org/Pubs/pubs.asp?PublicationID=16
On Wednesday, February 11, eighty-one members and guests heard Lawrence Lee Hewitt present "The Confederacy's Best Chance for Victory: Robert E. Lee and the Battle of Annihilation" at the 628th regular meeting of The Civil War Round Table of Chicago. Hewitt, a member of this Round Table, is a noted Civil War historian, who has written several books, including *Port Hudson: Confederate Bastion on the Mississippi*. His challenging and provocative speech revolved around the planned strategy of Confederate General Robert E. Lee at the famous Battle of Gettysburg.

Hewitt's thesis involved a nearly successful attempt by Robert E. Lee to win a decisive, overwhelming victory at the Battle of Gettysburg (July 1, 2, and 3, 1863). In executing this gambit, Lee planned a battle of annihilation, a pincer movement by Confederate General Robert E. Lee in a better fashion, the Army of Northern Virginia would have won the Battle of Gettysburg.

Hewitt examined each of the three days of battle. In the late afternoon of July 1, Confederate artillery commander William Pendleton refused to order artillery fire on Union forces on Cemetery Hill. Confederate officer Stephen Ransom's men requested that Pendleton not shoot cannon fire over his men. Hewitt proclaimed, "Pendleton deliberately disobeyed a direct order from General Robert E. Lee and did not fire!" This lack of artillery fire allowed Union forces to retain possession of the valuable, strategically important Cemetery Hill.

The action on July 2 involved a planned pincer movement by Robert E. Lee on Union forces at Cemetery Hill. Lee's original plan was for Richard Ewell's corps to attack Cemetery Hill and Culp's Hill from the north, Confederate General James Longstreet's corps was ordered to attack Cemetery Hill along Emmitsburg road from the south. Longstreet's corps moved slowly, Union commander Dan Sickles moved his division into the Peach Orchard and Wheat Field on the Emmitsburg Road, causing the Confederates to change their plans. The change in strategy called for a direct Confederate attack across the Emmitsburg Road, toward the east, instead of down the road north, toward Cemetery Hill.

Hewitt claimed that several Confederate division commanders failed to properly execute their duties, thereby ensuring a Confederate defeat. Around 4:00 p.m., Confederate General John Bell Hood's division attacked the Devil's Den and Little Round Top areas, Confederate General Richard Anderson's division failed to attack a huge hole in the Union line east of the Emmitsburg Road. Brigadier General Carnot Posey's brigade attacked, slowed down, and stopped. Brigadier General William Mahone's brigade did not advance at all! It is Hewitt's position that these Confederate officers—Richard Anderson, William Mahone, and Carnot Posey—failed miserably and cost the rebels a reasonably good chance to win a decisive battle of annihilation at Gettysburg.

Lee's battle plan of a pincer movement on Cemetery Hill was sound. Hewitt asserted, "Lee's plan on the second day worked! Union commander George Gordon Meade did shift units from the right flank to the left flank to face Longstreet's corps. Meade moved five of six brigades from Culp's Hill would reinforce the Union left to counter Longstreet's forces. The Confederate attack faltered at Culp's Hill, resulting in a retreat. Furthermore, Hewitt theorized that the real possibility to win the battle on July 2 was the high-water mark of the war.

This missed opportunity would forever haunt the Confederacy. A total of thirteen Confederate brigades, including Robert Rodes's brigade, were not involved in the direct attack across the Emmitsburg Road.

In Hewitt's opinion, the glorified rebel attack on Little Round Top and its defense by Union forces had limited benefits. He continued, "The troops were wasted at Little Round Top on both sides. Little Round Top was a difficult location to place cannons, and the line of sight through the trees restricted the line of fire down Cemetery Ridge. The importance of Little Round Top has been over-emphasized."

On Gettysburg's last day (July 3), Hewitt stated, "Lee read Meade correctly. Meade reinforced both flanks, early on July 3. Meade did not reinforce the Union center; the Union center was vulnerable, according to Lee. General Lee was pleased with the results of the first two days. On July 3, Lee put his trusted lieutenant, James Longstreet, in command of the attack into the Union center. Lee made the correct decision to attack the Union center with Pickett's charge; there was really only one choice—to attack." Hewitt explained, "Lee's plan of this great battle of annihilation—Gettysburg—came much closer to victory than previously stated.

The most important factor that determined Union victory in the Civil War, according to Hewitt, was U.S. President Abraham Lincoln's resolve to win, regardless of costs. Hewitt stated, "Lincoln did a great job. He won the war more than any Confederate inadequacy or failure." Union military forces and most of the northern population followed their leader, President Lincoln. As long as Lincoln was the Union president, Confederate chances for success were nonexistent.

### A Message from President Birndorf

At its winter meeting, the Executive Committee of The Civil War Round Table of Chicago voted to reduce dues for the 2004-2005 year by $15 for regular and family memberships. In addition, dues will be reduced a further $5 for anyone who agrees to receive their Newsletter via email instead of regular mail.

### A Message from the Tour Director

Jerry Kowalski, director of the Spring Battlefield Tour, would like to communicate the following information:

1. The tour buses are full. All applicants will now be on a waiting list.
2. The tour will begin on Thursday at 8:00 a.m., and end on Sunday at noon. The hotel will admit people to their rooms at 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday. Participants can arrange their travel arrangements accordingly.
3. The "Armchair Generalship" list prepared for many years by Marshall Krolick, which generally appears in the traditional Battlefield Tour edition of the Newsletter, mailed with the March Newsletter, will instead be included as an attachment with this Newsletter. There will be no traditional Tour Newsletter mailed with the March 2004 regular monthly Newsletter. A newsletter may be included in the tour packet.

### "Crazy Folks... continued from page 1

Henry Horner Lincoln Collection, the Huntington, and the Louise and Barry Taper Collection. This exhibition attracted over 600,000 visitors in a two-city tour of Los Angeles and Chicago.

Tom Schwartz has served as a historical consultant for numerous documentaries and has appeared on the Today Show, the History Channel, and C-SPAN. He is senior editor of the prestigious *Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association*, serves on a number of boards of historical and cultural associations, and is secretary of the Board of Directors of the Abraham Lincoln Association.

He is chief historian for exhibits and content in the new Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois. Schwartz is also on the advisory board for the state and federal Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial commissions, planning events for the bicentennial of President Lincoln's birth in 2009.
The New Books
Compiled by C. Robert Douglas

Coates, Earl J.; Michael J. McAfee; and Don Troiani. Don Troiani’s Regiments and Uniforms of the Civil War. Stackpole Books. 2002. $49.95.

The history of The Round Table, The Civil War Round Table: Fifty Years of Scholarship and Fellowship, by Barbara Hughett, is available for $30 per copy. You may purchase the book at the monthly meeting or order it from Morningside Bookshop, 260 Oak Street, Dayton, Ohio 45401 (1-800-648-9710), or online at barnesandnoble.com or amazon.com.

In addition to The Round Table history and The Continuing Civil War, a collection of essays from the Fiftieth Anniversary Proceedings, the following items are generally available at each monthly meeting: Lapel pins, Mugs, Meeting Tapes and CDs, and Civil War Buff posters.

Proceeds from the sale of these items go to support the Battlefield Preservation Fund of The Civil War Round Table of Chicago.

"ECHOES OF THE PAST"

Lifeline Theatre and The Illinois Humanities Council will present "Echoes of the Past: A discussion of Chicago in the Civil War" on Sunday, March 14 at 7:45 p.m., immediately following the 5:30 p.m. production of The Killer Angels at the Lifeline Theatre, 6912 North Glenwood, Chicago. The discussion will focus on the part Chicago and Chicagoans played in the Battle of Gettysburg and the entire Civil War. Featured speakers are Theodore Karamanski, professor of history at Loyola University Chicago; and Leigh Moran, Collections Manager for the Civil War Collection at the Chicago Historical Society. For information, contact Sherman Shoemaker at Lifeline Theatre (773-761-1772; sherman@lifelinetheatre.com).

The 13th Annual Civil War Symposium of the Kankakee Valley Civil War Round Table will take place on Saturday, March 27, at the Quality Inn of Bradley. Speakers include our own Patrick Brennan, Jeffery Wurt, Gail Stephens, and Stephen Wise. The cost is $40 for adults and $20 for students. For information contact Art Schumacher, 655 S. Harrison Avenue, Kankakee, IL 60901, phone 815-939-1041, or contact mhess@yahoo.com.

SILENT AUCTION

A silent auction is held at each monthly dinner meeting, for books donated by late Round Table founding member Ralph G. Newman. The minimum bid is $5 per book, with a minimum rise of $1 per bid. Five minutes after the conclusion of the speaker’s presentation, bidding will close and the last highest bid is the winner of each book. Proceeds go to benefit battlefield preservation.

The Civil War Round Table

Future Meetings

Regular meetings are held at the Holiday Inn Mart Plaza, 350 North Orleans Street, the second Friday of each month, unless otherwise indicated.

March 12: Thomas F. Schwartz, "Crazy Folks … Why I Must Only Take My Chances": Abraham Lincoln and Death Threats
April 16: (third Friday) James Ogden, topic to be announced.
April 29-May2: Annual Spring Battlefield Tour, Atlanta Campaign
May 14: Bruce Tap, "Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War"
June 11: To be announced

NEW MEMBER

Dick Jensen, 1315 East Harrison Avenue, Wheaton, IL 60187, 630-668-1315

The Jackson, Mississippi, Civil War Round Table is in the process of raising $1,470 for placement of a state historical marker at the Union gun emplacement near the Dental School on the University of Mississippi Medical Center campus. Send donations to the Jackson Round Table treasurer, Ron Stowers, P.O. Box 16945, Jackson, Mississippi 39236.

STAGE PRODUCTION OF THE KILLER ANGELS

A wonderful stage production of Michael Shaara’s Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, The Killer Angels, is running through April 18 at Lifeline Theatre, 6912 North Glenwood, Chicago. The production has received rave reviews in the Chicago Tribune and other publications. I saw it last weekend and highly recommend it. The Killer Angels was adapted for the stage by Karen Tarjan and is directed by Ned Mochel. Show times are: Thursday and Friday, 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, 8:00 p.m.; Sunday, 5:30 p.m. (Some Thursdays may not be available. Please call to check on this.)

The cost is $20 per ticket; call ahead to reserve tickets. Some tickets are held back until a half hour before show time and are sold for $10—but you must get there early and it’s somewhat risky to go this route. To reserve tickets, call 773-761-4477 or visit lifelinetheatre.com or ticketweb.com.

Barbara Hughett
Armchair Generalship
By Marshall D. Krolick

*Blue and Gray Magazine,* special issue on The Atlanta Campaign - The Battles of May, 1864, April 1989.

*Carter, Samuel III, The Siege of Atlanta, 1864.*

*Castel, Albert, Decision in the West.*

*Catton, Bruce. Never Call Retreat.*


*Civil War Times Illustrated,* special issue on the Campaign for Atlanta, July 1964; special issue on the Atlanta Campaign, Summer 1989.

*Cleaves, Freeman, Rock of Chickamauga.*

*Connelly, Thomas L., Autumn of Glory.*

*Cox, Jacob D., Atlanta (Vol. IX of Scribner’s Campaigns of the Civil War series).*

*Davis, Stephen, Atlanta Will Fall.*


*Foote, Shelby, The Civil War: A Narrative, Vol. III*

*Govan, Gilbert E. and James W. Livingood, A Different Valor.*

*Hood, John Bell, Advance and Retreat.*

*Horn, Stanley F., The Army of Tennessee.*

*Johnson, Robert U. and Clarence C. Buel, Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, Vol. IV.*

*Johnston, Joseph E., Narrative of Military Operations.*

*Kennett, Lee, Sherman.*

*Kerksis, Stanley C., The Atlanta Papers.*

*Key, William, The Battle of Atlanta and the Georgia Campaign.*

*Lewis, Lloyd, Sherman, Fighting Prophet.*

*Marszalek, John F., Sherman.*

*McCarley, J. Britt, The Atlanta Campaign.*

*McKinney, Francis F., Education in Violence.*


*Miles, Jim, Fields of Glory.*

*O’Connor, Richard, Thomas: Rock of Chickamauga.*

*Richardson, Eldon B., Kolb’s Farm.*

*Scaife, William R., Atlas of Atlanta Area Civil War Battles; The Campaign for Atlanta.*


*Secrist, Philip L., The Battle of Resaca; “Scenes of Awful Carnage” (Pickett’s Mill), Civil War Times Illustrated, June, 1971.*


*Strayer, Larry M. and Richard A. Baumgartner, Editors, Echoes of Battle.*

*Symonds, Craig L., Joseph E. Johnston.*

*Van Horne, Thomas B., History of the Army of the Cumberland; The Life of Major-General George H. Thomas.*

*War of the Rebellion, Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, Series I, Vol. XXXVIII.*
The Civil War Round Table
of Chicago

Will honor Edwin C. Bearss with our third
Annual Ed Bearss Preservation Award

This award was established to present $1000 annually to whatever project, person, or preservation effort that Ed deems worthy. Ed is certainly the most qualified person we know to recognize specific areas that urgently need a "helping hand," and we can honor our most esteemed Tour Guide as well, by making this award in Ed's name.

The award will also tell the Civil War Round Table "community" that our Round Table cares enough to put forth an effort at preserving, in whatever fashion it may take, our national heritage. Each year Ed will name the Award recipient and the money will go to that effort in Ed's name with our congratulations. It will be presented on our 54th Annual Tour to the ATLANTA area battlefields.

This is our way of saying, "Thanks, Ed, for the thirty-plus years of guiding our Tours...and for just being our friend!"

★★★★★

This is also your invitation to individually honor Ed by contributing to the funding for this CWRT award! Sign-up at any meeting before the Tour or give your cash / check to any member of the Battlefield Preservation Fund Committee.

Or mail check to: BP Chair Mary Abroe, 212 Woodbine Ave., Wilmette, IL 60091-3332 (Make check payable to: CWRT Chicago)

All individual contributors, of any amount, will be listed in the Tour Program & the Newsletter.