THE DISPATCH

The Civil War Round Table of New York, Inc.

Volume 64, No. 8 589th Meeting April 2015



• Guest: Richard Sloan The Funeral of President Lincoln

Cost:

Members: <u>**\$40</u>**</u> Non-Members: \$50

• Date:

Wednesday, April 8th

• Place:

The Three West Club, 3 West 51st Street,

• Time:

Dinner at 6:00 pm, Doors open 5:30 pm, Cash Bar 5:30 – 7 pm

You must call 718-341-9811 by April 1st, no fooling, if you plan to attend the April meeting.

We need to know how many people to order food for.

Richard Sloan

Abraham Lincoln's Funeral

After his assassination. President Lincoln's coffin was transported to Illinois from Washington, D.C. on a special funeral train. During a twenty day period it stopped in a dozen cities, where it was carried on custom-made hearses



through the streets and sometimes placed on public view. Richard Sloan will transport us back in time and make us feel as though we are watching New York City's funeral procession and the lying-in-state as though we were watching the events unfold on television – the way

we saw President Kennedy's funeral (in fact, some of the funeral march music presentations is from off-theair recordings of the music played by the Marine band

during Kennedy's funeral.

Richard is a long-time student of Lincoln's assassination, and one of the co-founders (and a former president) of the Lincoln Group of New York. He was an audio engineer at ABC-TV for over forty years, most of which he spent mixing "Eyewitness News," two soap operas, the 1976 Winter Olympics and the 1989 World Series. He received an Emmy award for his work on the "Eyewitness News" live coverage of New York City's reaction to John Lennon's murder.

Life Insurance Civil War style

Investing in Life then describes the evolution of the major life insurance companies, (some are still in business, including New York Life and MetLife - which started as the National Union Life and Limb Insurance Co.), the development of the agency/agent system, the moral and religious arguments for and against life insurance, the grim, but interesting, involvement of some companies in insuring the lives of slaves, and, finally, the role of firms in insuring the lives of soldiers during the Civil War.

...Just as many do today, antebellum insurance companies required a medical examination of potential customers to determine possible risk factors. One firm required all agents to "select a physician of experience, and one in whose

character entire confidence can be placed. His opinion will be taken in every case."

...Presumed and demonstrated disease patterns across the continent also played strongly into assessing health risks and premiums. As a general rule, living or traveling in the Deep South was either prohibited or engendered increases in premiums or limits on policy values.

New York Life and Trust President William Bard declared that he declined altogether insurances for the whole year in New Orleans or in any other particularly unhealthy places in the South. The forms were also very cautious about insuring persons in California.

From Medical Department by James M. Schmidt Civil War News February/March 2014

015 • MEETING SCHEDU

• May 13th • Fletcher Pratt Award Ed Bearss The Petersburg Campaign

• June 10th • Frank O'Reilly The Overland Campaign

• September 9th • **TBD**

President's Message-

"April is the cruelest month..." What joy! What sadness! What effort just to carry on! Who is the author of this tragic pageant? To succeed at Five Forks...to overrun entrenched lines at Petersburg...to walk the streets of fallen Richmond...to pursue all the way to Appomattox...to accept surrender from Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia...to suffer assassination of the preserver of the Union...to hold a state funeral like none before it... to accept a second surrender of Johnston at the end of the month...to find and kill the assassin in a barn in Virginia. Oh Lord...as Lincoln said in his second inaugural, "Woe unto the world." April 1865...perhaps the cruelest month ever!

First of all, let me express my thanks to last month's speaker, **Karen Abbott**, who did a terrific job. We look forward to having you return with your next exciting project!

Second, please make sure you reserve your place for our upcoming April 8th Meeting with our guest speaker—one of the founding members of The Lincoln Group of New York—Richard Sloan. This will be an audio-visual experience that will take us on the streets of Manhattan as Richard re-creates the sights and sounds of Lincoln's Funeral in New York. You don't want to miss this!

Third, a little Round Table business. The **dress code at The 3 West Club** is business casual. That means no jeans. Plus, they like collared shirts, too. Please make sure you adhere to these rules.

Now, most importantly, if you call or email your reservation to attend the meeting and for WHATEVER reason you cannot attend, you must call us by MONDAY MORNING before the Wednesday meeting to cancel your reservation.

Here's the reason why. The Round Table has to guarantee how many people will be attendance. If you make a reservation and do not attend, we are still charged for your attendance (or, to be more specific, your non-attendance). So please make sure you follow this rule. Otherwise, we may have charge you for "not cancelling."

Finally... What a great season! I hope you have enjoyed it as much as I have. This is a wonderful club with terrific members, great speakers, delicious dinners, lively discussions, friendly repartee, congenial atmosphere, intellectual prowess, and heartfelt emotions. The good news is...it will be even better next year!

For all that, let me encourage you to close out the **Sesquicentennial** by attending the last three meetings of our 64th Season in person. Think of whom you will see—SLOAN... BEARSS...O'REILLY!

Please call 718-341-9811 right now and reserve your seats!

See you soon!

- Marty Smith

A Lincoln Pardon Concerning Alonzo Sheffield With Some Comments Thereon

May 2, 1864

Upon a good man being furnished by Alonzo Sheffield, within named, and mustered into the service for a term of three years, said Sheffield is fully pardoned for any supposed desertion.

A. Lincoln

Lincoln's endorsement is written on an affidavit of Mary Sheffield, Brooklyn, New York, April 28, 1864, that her husband, Alonzo Sheffield, had enlisted in the Fifty-first New York Volunteers on August 21, 1861, while intoxicated, that he left the regiment after two months to return to his business and had never concealed himself until arrested as a deserter on April 1, 1864, and that he was the sole support of his family. On May 16, Colonel Daniel T. Van Buren, assistant adjutant general, Department of the East, enclosed papers in the case to General John A. Dix, who forwarded them to Lincoln with the following endorsement: "Respectfully forwarded with the request that the attention of the president...may be called to the case for the purpose of suggesting that his interposition, on the ex parte representations of interesting persons, in cases of military crime, is almost always hazardous. In this case the soldier whom he ordered discharged, while laboring under the charge of desertion, deserted a second time; but the substitute having been provided, it was not deemed proper to suspend the president's order & ask a reconsideration. But it is respectfully suggested that in all future cases, reference may be made to the Comg. Genl. of the Dept. for a report before any final action is taken."

THE DISPATCH



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April during the Civil War



- 13 Lieutenant John L. Worden is seized by Confederate authorities and becomes the Civil War's first P.O.W. He will gain fame later in the war at Hampton Roads.
- **24** I don't believe there is a North. The 7th Regiment is a myth. So said A. Lincoln but the 7th staggers into Washington 3 days later.

1862

- **6–7** Don Carlos Buell arrives at Shiloh with reinforcements and Lew Wallace gets a new Map Quest and he, too shows up, albeit a day late.
- **9** President Lincoln urges, begs, threatens, cajoles, and nudges General Slow to attack but the general prefers a siege at Yorktown.

1863

- 13 Amidst flairs and flaming tar barrels, 11 out of 12 southbound vessels of Rear Admiral David D. Porter's river fleet makes it past the guns of Vicksburg.
- **30** The highly confident Joe Hooker plans to have his enemy at Chancellorsville either fly ingloriously or be destroyed in battle. It never happens

1864

- 12 The infamous Fort Pillow Massacre under the bluffs of the mighty Mississippi River in Tennessee. A scary place to visit.
- 17 General Grant discontinues the exchange system which ends the revolving door of men for the Rebels.

1865

- 1- One of the heroes of Gettysburg, Gouverneur Warren is relieved from command of the 5th Corps by Phil Sheridan at Five Forks.
- **9** Go to your homes and resume your occupation. Obey the laws and become as good citizens as you were soldiers. So saith Robert E. Lee to the remnants of the once powerful Army of Northern Virginia.

NEW Recruits

Kris Kasnicki from Long Beach, an attorney friend of Mike Connors, who is interested in Gettysburg.

Nerve Center

Other than his summer cottage at the Soldiers' Home (a three-hundred-acre sanctuary on the Maryland border constructed for the support of military veterans) and the White House itself, the most familiar destination for Abraham Lincoln in the summer months of 1862 was the War Department telegraph office situated just a few hundred feet from the Executive Mansion. "His tall, homely form could be seen crossing the well-shaded lawn between the White House and the War Department day after day with unvaried regularity," wrote Homer Bates, one of the telegraph operators who worked there, in a memoir published decades later.

On the cooler days, Lincoln would toss a grey plaid shawl over his shoulders "in careless fashion." Sometimes he would stay all night, but when he did not and opted instead to return to the White House for the evening, he was most often accompanied by one of the telegraph operators or by a small guard of soldiers, the latter under Secretary of War Stanton's firm order to ensure the president's protection, even though Lincoln had what one observer described as an "almost morbid dislike for an escort," preferring the ease of movement to protection from assassination. "If they kill me, the next man will be just as bad for them," he said.

For Lincoln, the telegraph office had the quality of sanctuary. "I come here to escape my persecutors," he told one operator, by which he meant the office seekers who arrived at the White House looking for positions in his administration. They competed with the throngs of people who arrive on public days at the White House asking for favors (days he described, albeit approvingly, as his "public baths," making Lincoln's time at the White House rarely his own. But the telegraph room was more than a refuge. It was the nerve center of the war, a place where Lincoln, using the most advanced technology of the day, could keep up with the news from the battlefronts and issue orders delivered with the speed of electricity.

From Lincoln's Gamble by Todd Brewster



Letters Home

The following Civil War letters were published in the AARP bulletin in November 2014 and are being preserved at the Center for American War Letters at Chapman University in California.

From Garret Clawson, May 2, 1865

'The news came here this morning that the rebs had agreed to the terms and peace was made. The rebel soldiers is acoming through here ever day on thare way home. They say that war is ended and they are glad of it. The rebs soldiers and our soldiers is a walking and talking and cutting up together as if they had always been friends."

The next letter was written by a Kentucky man named Lindsey Buckner, who was selected to be shot in retaliation for the death of a Union soldier killed by Confederate guerillas in his home state.

"My dear sister, I am under sentence of death and for what I do not know,...It is a hard thing to be chained and shot in this way; and if it was not for the hope I have of meeting you all in Heaven, I would be miserable, indeed."

Editor's note: I offered this organization copies of some 500 letters that I wrote home from October 16, 1951 through September 1, 1953, during the Korean

War. I also offered several letters my father wrote home while in France in 1918. If you have letters you want to offer this wonderful organization, send them to Andrew Carroll, PO Box 53250, Washington, DC 20009.

Thanks to my sister Shari for noticing this article.

58th Annual Battlefield Tour

Join Us As We Cross The Rapidan For...

Grant's Overland Campaign1864 -- Part 1! October 16-18, 2015

This year the Round Table will continue its tradition and travel South by bus as we follow Ulysses S. Grant, George Gordon Meade and the mighty Army of the Potomac with almost 120,000 Union soldiers as they encounter Robert E. Lee and over 60,000 members of the valiant Army of Northern Virginia. Oh, what a dark and deadly wrestling match this clash of arms will bring! Our tour guide will be the incomparable **FRANK O'REILLY** who will lead us into the Wilderness, challenge us at Spotsylvania, and guide us to North Anna.

To Reserve Your Place:

Send your \$100 check (made out to "CWRTNY") and complete contact information with phone and email) to: *Martin Smith/CWRTNY Tour*, 158 West 81 St. #24, New York, NY 10024.



THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE OF NEW YORK

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