

THE DISPATCH

The Civil War Round Table of New York, Inc.

Volume 65, No. 6

597th Meeting

February 2016

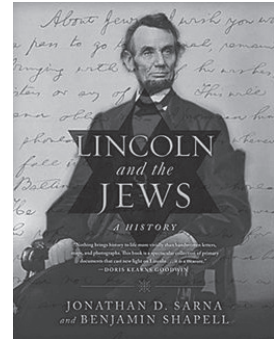


- Guest:
Barondess Lincoln Award winner
- Cost:
Members: \$50
Non-Members: \$60
- Date:
Wednesday, February 10th
- Place:
The Three West Club,
3 West 51st Street
- Time:
Dinner at 6:00 pm,
Doors open 5:30 pm,
Cash Bar 5:30 – 7 pm

You must call 718-341-9811 by February 3rd if you plan to attend the February meeting. We need to know how many people to order food for.

Barondess Lincoln Award winner

The winner of the Benjamin Barondess Lincoln Award for 2015 is *Lincoln and the Jews* by Jonathan D. Sarna and Benjamin Shapell. As our resident Lincoln expert, Harold Holzer, has written, “With a dazzling mastery of the subject, and a compelling style that transforms a scholarly book into a page-turner, the authors have provided nothing less than the definitive study of a long-neglected aspect of Civil War history and Lincoln biography. If a picture is worth a thousand words, then this book is further elevated, and exponentially, by the prominence of hundreds of magnificent illustrations – many from the amazing Shapell archive, and quite a few of them new to this old hand at Lincoln relics and portraiture. The result is that happiest marriage of text and images: an instant classic.”



A New Review and a New Reckoning

The real break in Lincoln’s vision and policies came in mid-to-late 1863 and arose from the accumulated weight of decisions and policies by which the administration felt its way forward. Lincoln saw this clearly and described it quite forthrightly in the Annual Message in December 1863, written precisely during the two weeks bracketing the Gettysburg Address, in which he outlined the path by which he came to what he called a “new review” and a “new reckoning” about the course and destination of the war.

Most crucial in the new reckoning were the radical implications of administration policies regarding recruiting and arming formally enslaved blacks. Building upon the policy that blacks could be citizens, in July 1863, and in response to Confederate massacres of black soldiers, the Lincoln administration forthrightly proclaimed, “It is the duty of every government to give protection to its citizens, of whatever class, color, or condition,” and then began to impose this view in its economic and Reconstruction policies. In early October 1863 the Lincoln administration, over the strong objection of some border state Unionists, *instituted a remarkable and little-known policy of*

compulsory emancipation of enslaved men, with compensation to their previous owners, in most of the border states and of their enrollment in the army, effectively extending the draft to slaves and providing the essential foundation for the extension of full citizenship. Most crucially for Reconstruction, the Annual Message of 1863 announced for the first time that only states that had abolished slavery would be readmitted to the Union: there would be no reunion with slaveholders. At the same time, Lincoln also pushed behind the scenes for state governments then in formation in the occupied South to enfranchise blacks who had served the Union. This set the stage for his public statement of April 1865 in support of voting rights for some of the freedmen, perhaps the most radical and controversial public statement made by a president to that time. Hearing that speech, John Wilkes Booth resolved to strike.

Editor’s note: The explanation of the italicized items is explained in footnote 11.

General Order 329 enforced compulsory compensated emancipation on all slave owners, loyal or rebel, if draft quotas were not met. William C. Harris notes that the policy was not always implemented as written.

From *Writing The Gettysburg Address* by Martin P. Johnson

2016 • MEETING SCHEDULE • 2016

• March 9th •

David Kincaid
Union and Confederate
Irish songs

• April 13th •

Judge Andrew Napolitano
Lincoln and the Constitution

• May 11th •

Fletcher Pratt Award winner
Embattled Rebel - Jefferson Davis
as Commander-in-Chief

President's Message

It's February and we are already half-way through the Round Table's Sixty-Fifth Year, and (as Frank Sinatra once grandly sang) "The Best is Yet to Come"!

We are most pleased to announce that our annual Lincoln-Barondess Award meeting will be held in conjunction with the Lincoln Group of New York, as we both have chosen the recently published book, "Lincoln and the Jews", co-authored by Johnathan D. Sarna and Benjamin Shapell, to receive our organizations' respective awards. (Many of you will recall our quite successful previous joint meeting, when both groups honored Tony Kushner, the screenwriter of the movie "Lincoln").

Our own Harold Holzer, also a prominent member of the Lincoln Group, and (perhaps), the nation's best known and most distinguished Lincoln scholar, will moderate a discussion with co-author Johnathan D. Sarna, in what I am sure will be a most enlightening session. The book explores the rather extraordinary relationship between Lincoln and Jewish-Americans, beginning while he was running for President and how it affected their participation in, and their views of, the war itself.

The Lincoln Group will also be honoring Ford's Theatre for their work, "Fords Theatre: Remembering the Lincoln Assassination."

You certainly don't want to miss this extraordinary meeting, so, RIGHT NOW, while you are thinking about it, call in your reservation to (718) 341-9811. Future meetings will feature David Kincaid interpreting the Irish based music of both the Union and Confederacy (March 9), and the distinguished jurist, Judge Andrew Napolitano, discussing President Lincoln and the Constitution (April 13), and the annual Fletcher Pratt Award for this year's best Civil War book (May 11).

Also, be sure to check in with Marty Smith to reserve your spot on the upcoming October tour, covering the latter part of Grant's Overland Campaign (space is quite limited!).

See, the best IS yet to come (and, it will be fine!)

See you on the 10th!

Paul Weiss

59th Annual Battlefield Tour

Join Us As We Continue Down The "Bloody Roads South" For...

Grant's Overland Campaign 1864 — Part 2!

Friday to Sunday...October 14-16, 2016

This year the Round Table will continue to travel the same roads South to **NORTH ANNA, COLD HARBOR** and **PETERSBURG** with the already battered, bruised and bloodied armies of Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee after their colossal struggle in The Wilderness and Spotsylvania. This year's Tour Guides **BOB KRICK** from the Richmond National Battlefield and **CHRIS BRYCE** from the Petersburg National Battlefield will complete the dramatic story of Grant's Overland Campaign and dig deeply into the offensive strategy and defensive tactics of its heroic commanders.

To Reserve Your Place:

Send your \$100 check (made out to "CWRTNY Tour") and your complete contact information with your phone number, cell phone and email address to:

Martin Smith/CWRTNY Tour,
158 West 81 Street #24,
New York, NY 10024.

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Founded January 24, 1951

The Dispatch is published monthly, except July and August, by

The Civil War Round Table of New York, Inc.,

139-33 250th Street,
Rosedale, N.Y. 11422
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The Army Medical Museum

In 1862, Surgeon General William A. Hammond had a vision. Frustrated with the lack of consistent medical and surgical practices used on Union troops during the Civil War, he planned a world-class research facility, publishing case histories and statistics to back up proper soldier care. He immediately issued Circular No. 2 in May, advising that an army medical museum was being established and directing medical officers “to collect and to forward...all specimens of morbid anatomy, surgical or medical, which may be regarded as valuable...(and) may prove of interest in the study of military medicine or surgery.”

...The first museum was located on the second floor in the old Riggs Bank building at 15th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue. Dr. John H. Brinton was serving as a brigade surgeon when Dr. Hammond offered him a position as the curator, and he eagerly agreed. ...Dr. Brinton was ambitious and productive; by January of 1863, he had already published a catalogue describing 1,349 specimens in the collection.

Initially, Dr. Brinton and several medical officers secured material from Washington; but as the war progressed, he

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February During the Civil War

1862

6 – Fort Henry, already under water, falls, opening the way for a west-east road to Nashville. But first comes Fort Donelson and Unconditional Surrender Grant.

16 – The future most-feared cavalryman in the CSA, declares that he didn’t “jine” up to surrender. He leads his troops out of a freezing Fort Donelson and N.B. Forrest plagues Union generals for the duration of the war.

1863

18 – General P.T.G. Beauregard warns against expected attacks on either Charleston or Savannah by crying. “Aux armes, citoyens,” I mean, “To arms, fellow citizens.”

19 – J.Davis laments the loss of confidence in Braxton Bragg’s fitness for command but he does not replace him. Yet.

1864

6 – The Confederate Congress approves a ban on the importation of luxuries. The best-known blockade runner in the Confederacy pays little attention. Rhett Butler will bring in arms and luxury goods.

7 – Dozens of BG Truman Seymour’s troops, in Jacksonville, Florida, hijack an Amtrak locomotive and head for Miami Beach.

contacted all northern military hospitals...Recognizing a great opportunity, Dr. Brinton began visiting active battlefields as soon as information was telegraphed to Washington. He scavenged piles of amputated limbs near field hospitals and would occasionally dig up buried soldiers. When needing transportation back to Washington, he hid specimens on returning wagons or bribed local military officers with cherry brandy.

The work soon became overwhelming. A network of ten surgeons across the North was developed to find specimens and coordinate deliveries to Washington. At times, the collection of specimens took a heavy-handed approach. When one soldier visited the army medical museum and found his leg on display, he demanded that the amputated leg be returned. He was denied. The hapless soldier said, “But it is mine, part of myself.” Asked how long he enlisted for, he reported, “For three years or the end of the war.” A museum official advised him sternly, “Then your contract isn’t terminated; come back at the end of the war or at the end of your three year’s service and you can have your bone. In the meantime, one detachment of you is stationed at this museum on government duty, the other wherever you may be ordered.”

Some specimens were voluntary – even cheerfully – donated. After Daniel E. Sickles lost his right leg, shattered by a cannon ball on the second day of the battle of Gettysburg, legend has it he promptly lit up a cigar and enjoyed it while being carried off to have his amputation. He later sent it in a miniature casket to the museum, with a handwritten calling card saying, “With the compliments of Major General D.E.S.”

When the battle of Chancellorsville ended, the Confederate army allowed defeated Union forces and museum staff to collect their wounded and dead, with Robert E. Lee stating that he was glad because, he “didn’t want a single Yankee to remain on our soil, dead or alive.”

The museum was officially opened to the public in September 1863, and rapidly became popular, with crowds flocking to see the exhibits. Officers and soldiers (including Dan Sickles) visited to see their amputated limbs. One colonel “with a limp” was seen hurriedly searching for a particular specimen, and upon finding it calling out happily to his daughter, “Come here, come here –here it is, my leg, and nicely fixed up, too.”

Field surgeons became more interested upon learning that they would be recognized for contributions, and the limbs, bones, and organs from the battlegrounds were sent to the museum in wooden barrels, soaking in alcohol (which was preferred) or salt and water. Once returned to the museum they were catalogued and, if awaiting treatment, were stored in a small adjoining building until it became full. Barrels and receptacles later were stacked in the alley. The large number of containers required mass quantities of alcohol, but Washington had a limited supply. Liquor licenses were regulated by the Metropolitan Police Department, but many taverns operated without one. The illegal alcohol trade soon prospered, and thirsty troops based in and around the Washington area were appreciative. Secretary of War Edwin McMasters Stanton finally authorized the provost marshal to confiscate this contraband for the museum, and Dr. Brinton recalled: most of the alcohol used for the preservation of the moist specimens were procured by distillation of contraband liquors seized (while entering Washington) on the Long Bridge. These liquors ran from blackberry wine to straight alcohol, and were packed in many peculiar vessels. Frequently women were arrested with belts under their skirts to which were fastened tin sectional cans holding from a quart to a gallon, and in a number of cases false breasts, each holding a quart or more.

From *The Surratt Courier* June 2015 by Blaine V. Houmes, M.D.

Did Lincoln See the Heavyweight Champ?

John C. Heenan (America's boxing champion) reportedly visited presidential candidate Abraham Lincoln in October 1860. Republican newspapers assured readers that Heenan was a "warm admirer" of Lincoln. Democratic newspapers countered that only the "lower classes" followed boxing. Heenan put on an exhibition match here [in Springfield] the following December to a sold-out house. Boxing was a bare-knuckled sport in those days, and both Heenan and his opponent left for St. Louis after the fight to recuperate from their injuries. We don't know if Lincoln and his sons attended. As a former wrestler Lincoln may have wished to; Mary would probably have considered it beneath the dignity of the president-elect.

From Lincoln's Springfield by Bryon C. Andreasen

A Major Birth Defect

A month later, Lincoln made clear his view that the blame for what might be called the nation's "birth defect" - American slavery - as consecrated by the U.S. Constitution, deserved to be shared by South and North alike. In perhaps the greatest inaugural address ever delivered, he invoked Old Testament fire and brimstone to declare that the suffering caused by the Civil War might well have been the punishment of a just God for tolerating such a sin. And then Lincoln asked the mortal citizens of the warring sections to treat each other when peace finally came, "with malice toward none" and "charity for all."

A birth defect. What a wonderful description.

From Harold Holzer's introduction of *1865 America Makes War and Peace in Lincoln's Final Year*

Edited by Harold Holzer and Sara Vaughn Gabbard



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OF NEW YORK

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