

Sumter to Appomattox

The Official Newsletter of the New South Wales Chapter of
The American Civil War Round Table of Australia

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Please visit our website at www.americancivilwar.asn.au

A Message from the Chairman –

Following our meeting on Monday, March 12, I felt that we had turned the corner with our attendances and that the exciting program planned by your Committee for 2007 will be realised. The 22 members who were present represented an increase of over 50% from the poorly attended February “boutique” meeting that had me wondering if our decision to have monthly meetings was the right one. The increase in attendance at the last meeting, however, has confirmed for me that we are on the “right track”.

The change in the meeting schedule necessitated your Committee making some decisions regarding the format and frequency of publication of this Newsletter. We have decided to retain the distribution of the Newsletter every two months, with an additional notice of the meetings to be sent to all members with an e-mail address by our Secretary, Brendan O’Connell, in the week before the meeting. In this regard, if you haven’t given Brendan your e-mail address, please get it to him.

In the adjoining column to this page you will see the details regarding our meetings for the year. The May meeting “kicks off” the major theme of our presentations in 2007 which focuses on the life and times of Abraham Lincoln. I believe members will find this series a most stimulating and informative set of learning experiences.

One of our new Committee members, Geoff Kay, has acquired a most interesting Civil War resource, two detailed maps of A2 size produced by the *National Geographic* magazine for the Civil War Centenary in 1961. These maps are in pristine condition. Geoff is looking at the prospect of having these reproduced in full colour for members who might be interested in purchasing the maps. His preliminary estimate of costs indicates that the price of the two maps will be certainly less than \$20. If you are interested in obtaining these maps, please speak to Geoff Kay at our next meeting or ‘phone him on 9451 6569 to obtain more information about the maps and/or to place your order for them.

I look forward to seeing you at our next meeting.

Paul Kensey

Our Forthcoming Meetings

The regular meetings of the NSW Chapter of ACWRTA will be held at the **Roseville Memorial RSL Club, Pacific Highway, Roseville**. Each meeting will commence with a bistro-style dinner at the Club from 6pm with the proceeding of the meeting proper to start at 7:15pm. The dates and speakers/topics for the rest of our meetings for 2007 are detailed below:

- **Monday, April 16.** A **Trivia Quiz** Night with a Civil War theme is planned for this meeting. The questions (and answers) for this quiz are to be coordinated by **Jennifer Kirkby and Geoff Kay**.
- **Monday, May 14.** At this meeting the presentation will be given by **John Cook** who will speak on the topic: **“A Surprise Nomination: Lincoln’s Path to the Presidency”**.
- **Monday, June 18.** A presentation by one of our new members, **John Dixon**, whose address will be **“Lincoln - The Great Emancipator”**.
- **Monday, July 9.** A presentation by a visiting lecturer, **Bruce Dennett**, speaking on the topic **“Lincoln – The Man and the Myth”**
- **Monday August 13.** A double-barrelled presentation on the topics:
 1. **“Lincoln – The Devil Incarnate - A Southern Perspective (David Smith);**
 2. **Lincoln – Lessons on Leadership - (Bruce McLennan).**
- **Monday, September 10.** Another double-barrelled set of presentations with:
 1. **“The Gettysburg Address” (Paul Kensey)**
 2. **“What are NSW Schools Teaching about Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War?” (John Dixon and Bruce Dennett – History teachers)**
- **Monday, October 8.** A surprise presentation - **“Will the Real Abe Lincoln Stand Up”** with three of our members answering questions about the life of the 16th President.

It Happened in April

HATCHES AND DESPATCHES

April 2, 1865 – Confederate General A P Hill is killed outside Petersburg, Virginia;

April 5, 1839 – Robert Smalls (USN), the only African American naval captain during the Civil War, is born in Beaufort, S.C.;

April 15, 1865 – President Lincoln dies at 7:22 am after being shot the previous night at Ford's Theatre by John Wilkes Booth;

April 26, 1865 – John Wilkes Booth is shot and killed;

April 27, 1822 – Ulysses S Grant is born at Point Pleasant, Ohio.

COMMAND AND POLITICAL APPOINTMENTS

April 15, 1865 – Andrew Johnson sworn in as President after Lincoln's death;

April 22, 1861 – Robert E Lee is named commander of the forces of Virginia;

BATTLES / MILITARY ACTIONS

April 1, 1865 – At the Battle of Five Forks Lee's forces are defeated by the Union army, which now threatens his route of retreat;

April 3, 1865 – Federal troops occupy Richmond and Petersburg;

April 6, 1865 – The last major engagement between the Army of Northern Virginia (Lee) and Army of the Potomac (Grant) occurs at Saylor's Creek, Virginia;

April 8, 1864 – Nathaniel Banks' Federals "skedaddle" from Richard Taylor's Confederates at the Battle of Sabine Crossroads, La;

April 11, 1861 – Confederate representatives visit Fort Sumter and demand its surrender;

April 12, 1861 – Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor is fired on thus beginning the War;

April 12, 1865 – The formal surrender ceremony of what remained of the Army of Northern Virginia to the Federal Army of the Potomac at Appomattox;

April 13, 1861 – After 24 hours of bombardment, the Union Force within Fort Sumter is forced to surrender.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

April 2, 1865 – The Confederate government evacuates Richmond;

April 9, 1865 – Confederate General Robert E Lee surrenders to Union General Ulysses S Grant at Appomattox Court House;

April 17, 1861 – Virginia adopts an ordinance of secession;

April 17, 1865 - Joseph E Johnston surrenders to Sherman near Durham Station N.C.;

April 18, 1865 – Johnston and Sherman sign "a memorandum or basis of agreement" calling for an armistice by all armies in the field;

April 19, 1865 – Funeral services held for Lincoln;

April 21, 1865 – The train bearing Lincoln's body leaves Washington for Springfield, Illinois;

April 24, 1865 – President Johnson and his Cabinet reject the terms of agreement of Sherman and Johnston and directs that hostilities must resume if there is no surrender;

April 26, 1865 – General Johnston formally surrenders troops under his command to General Sherman after intervention by Grant.

Books on US Presidents

Last year, Roger Dixon provided a most interesting list of the ten US Presidents who have the most books still in print written about them. Whilst this list was presented in the January, 2006 Newsletter, it is considered that it is relevant to our theme for this year on Abraham Lincoln as is presented again below:

Abraham Lincoln	... 1,191
George Washington	... 805
Thomas Jefferson	... 613
John F Kennedy	... 534
Bill Clinton	... 404
George W Bush	... 337
Theodore Roosevelt	... 317
Franklin D Roosevelt	... 308
Ronald Reagan	... 288
Ulysses S Grant	... 256

Source: Books in Print compiled by Andrew Grabois

Lincoln's Position

*"As I would not be a **slave**, so I would not be a **master**. This expresses my idea of democracy. Whatever differs from this, to the extent of the difference, is not democracy"*

- Abraham Lincoln, August 1858

A Great Read – “*Team of Rivals*”

One of the 1,191 books on Lincoln is the recently published and highly original multiple biography by acclaimed historian and Pulitzer Prize winner, Doris Kearns Goodwin that illuminates Lincoln’s political genius as the one term congressman and prairie lawyer rises from obscurity to prevail over three talented rivals with national reputations to become president.

This book, *Team of Rivals: the Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*, centres on Lincoln’s mastery of men and how it shaped the most significant presidency in US history. The book views Lincoln in comparison with and through the perspective of his three rivals for the Republican nomination in 1860 election. That Lincoln succeeded, Goodwin demonstrates, was the result of a character that had been forged by experiences that had raised him above his more privileged and accomplished rivals and helped by the common mistake by each of these men of seriously underestimating the self-taught lawyer from Illinois.

Goodwin shows Lincoln was able to bring these three disgruntled opponents together winning their respect and, in the case of Seward, find a loyal and crucial friend to support him in the task of preserving the Union and winning the War. Even Salmon Chase, who became Secretary for the Treasury in Lincoln’s wartime Cabinet and who never really accepted his defeat for the Republican Presidential nomination in 1860 had to finally admit that Lincoln had outmanoeuvred him. Goodwin enables the reader to view the long and horrifying struggle from the vantage of the White House, as Lincoln copes with and ultimately overcomes the obstacles of incompetent generals, hostile congressmen and his unusual and often raucous Cabinet. She has drawn on a wealth of diaries and letters, some previously unpublished, particularly from the wives and daughters of Lincoln’s Cabinet members and this has shed light on their private lives.

This book is presently available as a hard-back edition through ‘amazon.com’ for \$US22:05 with shipping and handling a further \$US11:98. Nevertheless, this is a “must read” book for any serious Civil War scholar or enthusiast and is highly recommended.

One of our members has recently purchased the audio-book of *Team of Rivals* a set comprising 8 CDs. Although abridged, these CDs provide great listening, particularly on any long journeys by car and they are certainly not boring in any way. Indeed, the member who bought this audio-book is on his fourth “reading” of this set of CDs.

The audio-book of *Team of Rivals* is available, also, through ‘amazon.com’ and costs \$US25:17 plus postage. Whilst the audio-book might be considered a little expensive, members will find it a good investment if they need a “painless” way of learning more about America’s 16th President.

What Should We Do?

One of our members has kindly donated a copy of Doris Kearns Goodwin’s book *Team of Rivals* and its associated audio-book to our Chapter. In considering what we should do with this donation, your Committee considers there are three options that we could adopt:

1. hold a special raffle for the book and the CDs, either separately or as a set; or
2. conduct an auction for them, again either separately or as a set; or
3. hold these as a Chapter resource for members to obtain as short term loans.

The Committee would greatly appreciate your input as to which of these options you favour. In this regard, a quiet word to any Executive or Committee member is just what we want. In addition, Committee members will be actively seeking your views on the most viable option so don’t be reluctant to state your views.

Lincoln’s Beard

In October of 1860, an eleven year old girl, Grace Bedell, wrote to the clean shaven Abraham Lincoln suggesting that he grow a beard:

*“... for your face is so thin ...and
all the ladies like whiskers”*

In replying to her, Lincoln lamented he did not have a daughter of his own to advise him and responded by wondering:

*“... As to the whiskers, having never worn any
do not you think people would call it a silly
piece of affection (sic) if I were to begin now?”*

Nevertheless, Lincoln appears to have taken Grace’s advice and proceeded to grow a beard, something which led John Hay, Lincoln’s Private Secretary, to write the mildly witty couplet in January 1861:

*“Election news Abe’s hirsute fancy warrant
- Apparent hair becomes heir apparent”*

Lincoln and His Generals

*“So Grant gets drunk, does he?...Well, you needn’t
waste your time getting proof; you just find out, to oblige
me, what brand of whiskey Grant drinks, because I want
to send a barrel of it to each of my generals”*

- Lincoln’s remark to Grant’s active detractors; Grant at that a period was inflicting heavy damage on the enemy.

Lincoln's Early Life – Part 1

This is the first in a series of articles that will support the presentations on the life and times of Abraham Lincoln to be given at our monthly meetings throughout 2007.

Abraham Lincoln was born on February 12, 1809, in a rough-hewn log cabin in Hardin County, Kentucky. His father, Thomas Lincoln was an uneducated migratory carpenter and a farmer. Little is known of his mother, Nancy Hanks, but she had little or no schooling and could not write. She died in 1818 not long after the family settled in the wilds of southern Indiana near present-day Gentryville. In these times, the Lincoln family could best be described as poverty-stricken.

In 1819, Lincoln's father re-married to Sarah Bush Johnston, a widow with three children whose first husband had died in 1816. Sarah was a kind and affectionate step-mother to Abraham and he grew to be much closer to her than he was to his father.

Lincoln had little formal schooling, with his attendance being only scattered weeks in Kentucky and Indiana amounting to less than a year in total. He taught himself, however, reading and re-reading a small selection of books borrowed from his neighbours including *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Aesop's Fables*, *Arabian Nights* and *Robinson Crusoe*. In 1825, a book borrowed from his neighbour, Josiah Crawford, became soaked with rain water and Lincoln worked off its worth to have it replaced. The dried out volume, which was titled *The Life of Washington* became the first book that Lincoln owned personally.

During 1827, Lincoln began earning a living by ferrying passengers to a steamer on the Ohio River and the following year, using a flatboat as transportation, took a load of farm produce down the Mississippi River to New Orleans.

In 1830, the Lincoln family moved once again, this time from Indiana to Illinois first settling in Macon County and then to Coles County.

After another visit to New Orleans in 1831, the young Lincoln decided to leave his family and settled in New Salem, Illinois, where he began working in a store and managing a mill. By this time, the tall (190cm or 6'4") Lincoln had won considerable popularity amongst the citizens of New Salem not only for his great strength and his flair for storytelling but most of all for his demonstrated strength of character. His sincerity and capability won widespread respect and this was strengthened by his ability to hold his own in this rough frontier society. It was not surprising, therefore, that when he joined the Illinois militia for the Blackhawk War Lincoln was elected Captain of the company of volunteers but during his three months of service with the militia company, did not see any military action.

In August 1832, Lincoln was defeated in his first attempt at public office, the Illinois State Legislature.

In 1833, the general store where Lincoln was a partner with William Berry failed, leaving him with substantial debts. He then turned to surveying and was appointed as an Assistant Surveyor in the north-western part of Sangamon County.

In 1834, Lincoln again ran for the Illinois State Legislature and, this time was successful, taking his seat in state government in Vandalia, Illinois' capital prior to Springfield on December 1. He became a member of the "*Long Nine*", the name given to Sangamon County's delegation because their combined height was exactly 54 feet. It was at this time that Lincoln was first encouraged to study law.

When the State Legislature adjourned in February 1835 Lincoln returned to New Salem and resumed his legal studies with great vigour. Lincoln was re-elected to the Illinois State Legislature in 1836 and on September 9 of that year was licensed to practise law.

March 1, 1837 saw Lincoln admitted to the Illinois Bar and he moved to Springfield where he became a partner in a law practice with John T Stuart, the person who first encouraged him to study law. It was at this time that Lincoln's economic circumstances changed for the better with income now coming from the law practice and the State Legislature.

The following year, Lincoln was elected to the Illinois House of Representatives for the third time.

In 1839, Lincoln met his future wife Mary Ann Todd who had come from Lexington, Kentucky, to live with her married sister, Elizabeth Edwards, in Springfield. Despite the vast differences in their backgrounds, they became interested in each other. Meeting at one of the formal balls in Springfield, Lincoln is alleged to have said:

"...I want to dance with you in the worst way"

Mary is reported to have said laughingly to one of her cousins after the ball:

"... he certainly did!"

For the fourth and last time Lincoln won his place to the Illinois Legislature in 1840 and later in the year he and Mary Todd became engaged. The following year, Lincoln became a law partner with Stephen T Logan.

Although Lincoln and Mary broke off their engagement in 1841, on November 4, 1842, they were married, with the ceremony being held in the parlour of her sister's home. Abraham gave Mary a gold wedding ring with the words "*Love is Eternal*" inscribed on the inside of the band. Mary is said to have worn the ring until the day she died. The newlyweds moved into the Globe Tavern, a two storey wooden building in Springfield, where they paid \$4:00 per week in board.

(To be continued in the next Newsletter)