

THE DISPATCH

The Civil War Round Table of New York, Inc.

Volume 70 No. 11

654th Meeting

September 2022



- Guest:
Andrew Astley
Post-war: Grant and the Vets
- Date:
**TUESDAY,
September 27th**
- Time:
6:00 pm

If you plan to attend our September 27th dinner meeting at Connolly's Pub and Restaurant, 121 W 45th Street, please call Telephone 718-341-9811, no later than September 19th.

Andrew Astley

Andrew Astley received his undergraduate degree in history and philosophy from Gettysburg College. Currently, he is working on his Masters in American History through the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History. Astley started his career with the Park Service as an intern at Andersonville National Historic Site in Georgia, before becoming a Park Guide at Martin Van Buren National Historic Site for five years. Presently, Astley is a Park Ranger at the General Grant National Memorial. His topic is, Post-war: Grant and the Vets.



ROBERT E. LEE OFFERS RESIGNATION AS COMMANDER OF THE CONFEDERATE ARMY | AUGUST 08, 1864

In the aftermath of his defeat at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, Confederate General Robert E. Lee sends a letter of resignation as commander of the Army of Northern Virginia to Confederate President Jefferson Davis.

The letter came more than a month after Lee's retreat from Pennsylvania. At first, many people in the South wondered if in fact Lee had lost the battle. Lee's intent had been to drive the Union army from Virginia, which he did. The Army of the Potomac suffered over 23,000 casualties, and the Union army's offensive capabilities were temporarily disabled. But the Army of Northern Virginia absorbed 28,000 casualties, nearly one-third of its total. As the weeks rolled by and the Union army reentered Virginia, it became clear that the Confederacy had suffered a serious defeat at Gettysburg. As the press began to openly speculate about Lee's leadership, the great general reflected on the campaign at his headquarters in Orange Courthouse, Virginia.

The modest Lee took the failure at Gettysburg very personally. In his letter to Davis, he wrote, "I have been prompted by these reflections more than once since my return from Pennsylvania to propose to Your Excellency the propriety of selecting another commander for this army... No one is more aware than myself of my inability for the duties of my position. I cannot even accomplish what I myself desire... I, therefore, in all sincerity, request your Excellency to take measure to supply my place."

Lee not only seriously questioned his ability to lead his army, but he was also experiencing significant physical fatigue. He might also have sensed that Gettysburg was his last chance to win the war. Regardless, President Davis refused the request. He wrote, "To ask me to substitute you by someone... more fit to command, or who would possess more of the confidence of the army... is to demand an impossibility."

From: history.com

2022 • MEETING SCHEDULE • 2022

• Tuesday, September 27 •
Andrew Astley
Post-war: Grant and the Vets

• Tuesday, October 25 •
TBD

• Tuesday, November 29 •
TBD

President's Message

Welcome to our first "live" meeting for 2022-2023 at our new location at Connelly's, conveniently located on West 45th Street, just off Sixth Avenue!

This being the bicentennial of U.S. Grant's birth year, our topic and speaker (from the U.S. Park Department's Grant Memorial) appropriately, will be on "Post-war: Grant and the vets".

With September being a most consequential month during the war, we will concentrate on those events which were real game changers

In September 1862, following up his huge victory at Second Bull Run (or, Second Manassas) General R.E. Lee, hoping to bring the war north, initiated his "Maryland Campaign", by leading his rather tattered army across the Potomac River (Sept 4 -7).

On Sept 13, soldiers from the Army of the Potomac (once again commanded by the always cautious General McClellan) found the famous "lost orders, and the Union Corps began their serious pursuit of Lee's scattered army. On the 14th, they engaged outnumbered Confederates desperately defending the narrow passes of South Mountain, while on the 15th (as per those "lost orders") "Stonewall" Jackson, with more than half of Lee's forces, captured the Federal garrison – and a mountain of supplies – at Harper's Ferry.

Lee, although outnumbered about 2-1, decided to wait for Jackson and make a stand around the little Maryland town of Sharpsburg, just across Antietam Creek. The resulting battle (on the 17th), as we know, is still the single bloodiest day in American history, with over 26,000 total casualties, including almost 3,000 killed. As one participant later wrote, "No tongue can tell, no mind conceive, no pen portray the horrible sights I witnessed this morning".

Besides the unimaginable casualties, the battle – a tactical draw and strategic win for the North (as Lee withdrew back over the Potomac) – enabled President Lincoln to issue his preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, freeing the slaves in the rebellious states effective January 1, 1863. Professor James McPherson (among others) considers this THE turning point of the war.

The following September found another scattered army, this time General William Rosecrans' Union Army of the Cumberland, in a desperate fight for their survival along the Chickamauga Creek (in north Georgia), fending off the attacks of General Braxton Bragg's Army of Tennessee. A massed attack, organized by General James Longstreet (who had just arrived with reinforcements from Virginia) took advantage of an opening in the Federal line, splitting Rosecrans' defenses wide open, and giving General George Thomas the opportunity to earn his famous sobriquet, "The Rock of Chickamauga".

The bloodiest two-day battle of the war saw heavy losses on both sides, with total casualties of almost 35,000, including about 4,000 killed. One major outcome of the Union defeat at Chickamauga was the appointment of General Grant as overall commander of Federal forces in the Western Theater.

September of 1864 saw the culmination of General William Tecumseh Sherman's "Atlanta Campaign" (begun in May), with the capture of that major Southern industrial and transportation hub (on September 2nd). Sherman wired Washington, proudly and succinctly announcing, "Atlanta is ours and fairly won".

The news electrified and reinvigorated people all through the North, who were tired and weary of the seemingly endless, stagnated, and bloody- soaked military situations in both the Eastern and Western Theaters.

Sherman's triumph at Atlanta (along with other successful outcomes at Mobile and in the Shenandoah Valley) insured President Lincoln would be reelected, something that looked far less promising in August.

So, this September, please join us at Connelly's on Tuesday the 27th and let us know you'll be there by calling the reservation number as soon as you can.

Thanks - take care and hope to see you soon!

Paul Weiss



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Civil War Events During the Month of August/September 1863

AUGUST 1863

- August 1** Federal cavalry advance from Witteburg on campaign to capture Little Rock, Arkansas
- August 8** **Robert E. Lee offers to resign as commander of the Army of Northern Virginia**
- August 17** Federals begin bombardment of Fort Sumter as siege of Fort Wagner continues
- August 26** Engagement at White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia
- August 27** Skirmish at Bayou Meto (Reed's Bridge), Arkansas

SEPTEMBER 1863

- September 5** Laird Rams detained at Liverpool
- September 6** Confederates evacuate Fort Wagner and Morris Island, South Carolina

- September 8** Confederates repulse attack at Sabine Pass (Fort Griffin), Texas
- September 9** Federal army enters Chattanooga, Tennessee
- September 10** Little Rock, Arkansas captured by Union forces
- September 15** Lincoln suspends writ of habeas corpus
- September 18** **Confederates force their way across Chickamauga Creek**
- September 18** Skirmish at Bristol in east Tennessee
- September 19** **Battle of Chickamauga, Georgia**
- September 20** **Day two of the Battle of Chickamauga, Union troops retreat to Chattanooga, Tennessee**

Meetings

Tuesday, September 27, Tuesday, October 25, Tuesday, November 29.

Dinner: \$50 members, \$60 guests
Dues: \$40 single, \$50 family

Meetings to be held at:
 Connolly's Pub & Restaurant, 121 West 45th St. NYC between 6th Avenue & Broadway.

Question of the month:

One of the four major generals appointed by President Lincoln at the beginning of the war, John Fremont was a national hero who was known by what epithet?



BATTLE OF CHICKAMAUGA, GA | SEP 18 - 20, 1863

The Confederate army secured a decisive victory at Chickamauga but lost 20 percent of its force in battle. After two days of fierce fighting, the Rebels broke through Union lines and forced the Federals into a siege at Chattanooga.

How it ended

Confederate victory. At the end of a summer that had seen disastrous Confederate losses at Gettysburg and Vicksburg, the triumph of the Army of Tennessee at Chickamauga was a well-timed turn-around for the Confederates, but it came at a great cost. Chickamauga was the second bloodiest battle of the Civil War, ranking only behind Gettysburg, and was by far the deadliest battle in the Western Theater.

In context

The small city of Chattanooga, with 2,500 inhabitants, lay on the banks of the Tennessee River where it cut through the Appalachian Mountains. It was the crossroads for four major railroads. President Abraham Lincoln knew that if his army could capture Chattanooga, vital Confederate supply lines would be severed, and the war would be closer to an end.

In the summer of 1863, the Confederate army was reeling from a string of losses in the Western Theater, while the success of the

Tullahoma Campaign bolstered the confidence of Union Maj. Gen. William Rosecrans. Targeting Chattanooga, Rosecrans outmaneuvered the Rebel army and forced Confederate general Braxton Bragg to relinquish control of the critical transportation hub without a fight.

Rosecrans assumed that Bragg's demoralized army would retreat further south into Rome, Georgia. He divided his army into three corps and scattered them throughout Tennessee and Georgia. But Rosecrans made a mistake—Bragg had in fact concentrated his men at LaFayette, Georgia, where he was expecting reinforcements and was close to a vulnerable corps of Rosecrans's army. When Bragg's troops crossed Chickamauga Creek, the Federals had a fight on their hands.

Although Bragg's original plan was the destruction of the Army of the Cumberland and the recapture of Chattanooga, the results of two days of bitter fighting at Chickamauga stalled him. He decided to occupy the heights surrounding Chattanooga and lay siege to the city instead. Just two months later, the reinforced Federals drove the Army of Tennessee from their positions around Chattanooga, permanently securing Northern control of the city. With that loss, the Southern victory at Chickamauga was turned into a strategic defeat.



Members of the CWRT pay a visit to the Museum of the American Indian at Bowling Green.

From left: Pat Falci, Joan McDonough, Marty Smith, Robin Burke, & Carolyn Roxen.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND OUR “UNFINISHED WORK”

The following article was sent in by Alan Y. Lowcher

A few years ago, I was a panelist in “Abraham Lincoln: 15 Captivating Stories from His Law Practice” with Glenn LeBoeuf, a gifted storyteller, at the New Jersey Bar Association CLE program. In order for the lawyers to get CLE credit, a lawyer needed to be a panelist. I was Glenn’s “second chair” and tied in Glenn’s anecdotes and what Lincoln said about the practice of law (“Notes on a Law Lecture” variously 1850 – 1858) to the Rules of Professional Conduct governing the modern practice of law. The room was packed with lawyers as were the rooms where the program was simulcast. Given the attention paid to the presentation, the questions raised by the audience and the people who came up to the panelists, it was obvious that the lawyers were there not so much for the credit as they were to hear about Lincoln, especially Lincoln, the lawyer. It is natural for lawyers to claim Lincoln for themselves: he was one of us. And yet 25 of the 44 Presidents have studied or practiced law. What makes Lincoln the standout? Why are there hundreds of statues and memorials to Lincoln in this country, as well as in several countries around the world? Why are dozens of new books written about him annually to add to the estimated more than 16,000 published titles on Lincoln? Why has Lincoln remained so popular?

Historians and Polls

Numerous polls taken over the last 65 years consistently rank Abraham Lincoln in the top three of US Presidents along with George Washington and Franklin D. Roosevelt. Most of the polls are conducted among historians who rate the Presidents on a number of categories (leadership, accomplishments and crisis management, political skill, character, integrity, etc.). Lincoln achieved an overall rating of Number One. But it is not just historians. Among those who identify themselves as liberal or conservative, Lincoln again is Number One. John Q. Public, responding to a C-Span presidential leadership survey in 1999 rated Lincoln as Number One, as did surveys conducted by ABC, and Washington College. When all the poll results are considered, more than 80% of Americans give a favorable rating to Lincoln. He was surpassed only by George Washington in the hearts and minds of Americans. Lincoln often harkened back the Founders in his writings and speeches. I don’t think he would mind at all taking second place behind George Washington.

Lincoln’s Enduring Popularity, Relevance and Our “Unfinished Work”

Writing on the occasion of the bicentennial of Lincoln’s birth, James McPherson pondered the “Why” question of Lincoln’s

enduring popularity and ranking by historians as our greatest president. He posited several answers.

Lincoln took office facing the greatest crisis of any President: a nation divided and soon to be engaged in a civil war “testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure”. His leadership and single-minded determination to assure the survival of the “experiment” that began in 1776 ensured that that nation would live.

Lincoln’s essentially military action authorizing the seizure of enemy property – slaves - used in the Confederate war effort, thereby depriving the South of the manpower it needed to sustain the war, brought the power of the Federal government to bear to attack the “monstrous injustice of slavery”. These efforts, culminating in the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863 and the 13th Amendment in 1865, assured Lincoln’s place in history.

Lincoln the “westerner” who grew up in a log cabin, split rails, piloted a flatboat on the Mississippi, was a store keeper and postmaster, read the law, became a successful trial attorney, one term Congressman and then President, epitomized the uniquely American belief that if you worked hard, you could go as far as your energy, intelligence and talents could take you. This opportunity for self-improvement was Lincoln’s definition of equality which is also why, in addition to his moral aversion to the institution, he opposed slavery. Slavery was the antithesis of this definition of “equality”.

And of course, Lincoln was a superb craftsman of the written word. As a lawyer, he wrote concisely and with persuasion. As President, McPherson observed that “Lincoln had the unique ability to write for both the eye and the ear.”

... the closing lines of his first inaugural address
 ... the opening lines of the Gettysburg Address
 ... his second inaugural address

McPherson was surely right when he said “[e]ven if his deeds were to be forgotten, his words will live as long as there is a United States.”

And finally, Lincoln’s violent death when he should have savored the fruits of victory assured the martyred president immortality. He guided the country through the crucible of civil war and we emerged a stronger, although still not perfect, nation.

continued from page 5

His leadership skills, determination, ability to compromise, fundamental fairness and integrity are worthy of study and emulation by today's politicians and leaders of all stripes. There is something there for "average Americans" too in Lincoln's words that should inspire us to be "governed by the better angels of our nature". Lincoln's birthday, as with the Dr. Martin Luther King holiday, should be a time of reflection on what these men achieved – and imagining what they might have achieved had they lived a full life.

I urge the reader to consider spending a day at Gettysburg, the venue of what is perhaps Lincoln's greatest speech. Make your way past the Pennsylvania Monument to the monument erected in memory of the officers and soldiers of the First New Jersey Brigade. Consider the following:

"...and when the First New Jersey's Brigade monument was constructed...and dedicated...on the battlefield of Gettysburg in 1888...in what likeness was the actual monument (the largest brigade monument on the battlefield) constructed?"

A watch-tower? Why that? Certainly, the war was now long over in 1888...and the veterans gathered there at the dedication...fewer in number...most in their 40s or 50s ... had had their fill of war.

Why would they want future generations to gaze upon....and ponder...a "watch-tower"?

Because it is for **"us the living"** ...to man the watch-towers now...light the watch fires . . . and to remind...instill ...and teach generations to come of the sacrifices made by so many...over such a long time...to maintain ..."a more perfect union."

Lincoln's legacy – and their legacy - should inspire each of us to redouble our efforts as Americans to keep history alive and relevant. This is our "unfinished work".



THE INCA'S DAUGHTER

by W. WHITMAN

Before the dark-brow'd sons of Spain,
 A captive Indian maiden stood;
 Imprison'd where the moon before
 Her race as princes trod.
 The rack had riven her frame that day—
 But not a sigh or murmur broke
 Forth from her breast; calmly she stood,
 And sternly thus she spoke:—
 "The glory of Peru is gone;
 Her proudest warriors in the fight—
 Her armies, and her Inca's power
 Bend to the Spaniard's might.
 "And I—a Daughter of the Sun—
 Shall I ingloriously still live?
 Shall a Peruvian monarch's child
 Become the white lord's slave?
 "No: I'd not meet my father's frown
 In the free spirit's place of rest,
 Nor seem a stranger midst the bands
 Whom Manitou has blest."
 Her snake-like eye, her cheek of fire,
 Glowed with intenser, deeper hue;
 She smiled in scorn, and from her robe
 A poisoned arrow drew.
 "Now, paleface see! the Indian girl
 Can teach thee how to bravely die:
 Hail! spirits of my kindred slain,
 A sister ghost is nigh!"
 Her hand was clenched and lifted high—
 Each breath, and pulse, and limb was still'd;
 An instant more the arrow fell:
 Thus died the Inca's child.

From: *The Walt Whitman Archive: whitmanarchive.org*

Answer:

The Pathfinder, because of his trailblazing of the West. From: *Civil War Trivia and Fact Book*, by Webb Garrison

Native Americans and the Civil War

Native American allegiances varied during the Civil War but were often motivated by a common desire to protect tribal lands and lifeways. Approximately 3,503 Native Americans served in the Union Army.



Photo by Matthew Brady, National Archives photo no. 524444

General Ulysses S. Grant (fourth from left) and his staff, including Lieutenant Colonel Ely S. Parker (second from the right), late spring, 1864.

Though exact numbers are not known, many more Native people allied with the Confederacy. Even more participated indirectly, aiding or sabotaging one side or another while remaining outside the military.

Having survived removal from their ancestral homelands in the Southeast in the 1830s and 40s, the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Muscogee (Creek), Choctaw, and Seminole Nations signed Confederate treaties that guaranteed title to territories west of the Mississippi. Elite tribal members' enslavement of African Americans further motivated Southern allegiance.

Ely S. Parker, 1860–65.

At the Confederate surrender at Appomattox in 1865, Ely S. Parker (Seneca, 1828–1895) was the highest-ranking American Indian in the Union army, a lieutenant colonel. As General

Ulysses S. Grant's secretary, he drafted the terms of surrender. A popular story states that Confederate General Robert E. Lee, noticing that Parker was an American Indian, remarked, "I am glad to see one real American here." Parker later recalled, "I shook his hand and said, 'We are all Americans.'"

Native nations supporting the Union likewise hoped their service would encourage the federal government to honor treaties that recognized tribal land rights.

The war exacted a terrible toll on Indigenous people. One-third of all Cherokees and Seminoles in Indian Territory died from violence, starvation, and war-related illness. Despite their sacrifice, American Indians would discover that their tribal lands were even less secure after the war.



Photo by Matthew Brady, National Archives photo no. 529376