

September, 2004

416th Meeting

Vol. 26 #1

*Tonight's Program:*

## **Voices of the Civil War: Douglas, Lincoln, and Echoes on the Prairie**

During the 1858 senate campaign, Lincoln branded Douglas a “care not” candidate, one who cared not what the result of the slavery issue was, while Douglas labeled Lincoln a “Black Republican,” who believed that “the Negro is his brother.” This set the stage for the seven debates that most historians regard as the most famous in American history, matching two powerful logicians and hard-hitting speakers. One was nationally eminent, the other little known outside his region. The stakes were high, higher even than the 1860 presidential election, for the theme of the debates was nothing less than the future of slavery and the Union. Even though he lost, these debates thrust Lincoln into the national spotlight, propelling him to the presidency two years later.

Using the words of Lincoln, Douglas, and other members of Congress, our speaker will address the politics of the 1850s. It should provide a fascinating beginning to an exciting new year.



*Tonight's Speaker:*

## **George Buss**

Tonight's speaker is George Buss. George is a sixth generation Illinoisan whose family came to Illinois in the same year Abraham Lincoln was elected to Congress (1847). He holds earned degrees from Ball State University and National Louis University. George serves as President of the Stephen A. Douglas Association of Chicago, Vice President of the Lincoln Douglas Society of Freeport, a board member of the Lincoln Fellowship of Wisconsin, and on the Board of Advisors of the Lincoln Forum. Through fifteen years of research on Lincoln, Douglas, and the politics of the 1850s, he has collected untold numbers of speeches, letters, and documents by not only Lincoln and Douglas, but their contemporaries in both Houses of Congress. This rhetoric serves as the basis for tonight's presentation.

*Date:* **Wednesday,  
September 8, 2004**

*Place:* **The Cleveland  
Playhouse Club  
8501 Carnegie Ave.**

*Time:* **Drinks 6 PM  
Dinner 7 PM**

*Reservations:* **Please Call  
JAC Communications  
(216) 861-5588**

*Meal choice:*

## CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### SEPTEMBER, 2004

Welcome to our 2004/2005 season - the beginning of our 48<sup>th</sup> year. We look forward to a year with you that is interesting, informative, and fun

Our speakers and their subjects offer us an array of Civil War personalities and events, including the greatest personality of that era, Abraham Lincoln. Our first speaker, George Buss, knows Abe very well, having portrayed him in C-SPAN's recreation of the Lincoln-Douglas debates throughout Illinois. George will share with us his insights on the debates and his experiences as Lincoln. The Great Emancipator himself will join us in April.

We thank Dick Crews for his long and valuable service to the CCWRT as editor of the Charger and as moderator of our annual debate as he passes the Charger keyboard to Dan Zeiser and his moderator's whip to William Vodrey. Our thanks to Dan and William as they take on these duties. Thanks, too, to Dale Thomas, who continues as our historian and manager of our web site.

Dan will continue as our quizmaster. Our secretary, Marilyn DeBaltzo, will also be handing our raffle this year. Hans Kuenzi will chair our membership committee, and William will chair our fund raising committee, created to attract on-going revenues so we can increase our support of historical preservation. Lynn Loritts, our treasurer, will manage our money this year. Please be sure your dues are paid so she has some to manage. Vice president Dave Carrino is already working on next year's program; I'm sure he would appreciate any suggestions you may have for speakers and topics.

We intend to use our web site and e-mail notices to enhance communications this year. Let me know your e-mail address if it's not listed in the last roster so you don't miss anything. ([melmaurer@aol.com](mailto:melmaurer@aol.com)). Please use this address to give me any suggestions you have for improving our organization.

I'm looking forward to seeing you September 8<sup>th</sup> and the second Wednesday of every month thereafter. *Mel Maurer*

**CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE  
2004/2005 SCHEDULE**

September 8, 2004



Lincoln and Douglas

**Voices of the  
Civil War:  
D o u g -  
las, Lincoln,  
and Echoes on  
the Prairie**

**George Buss**

October 13, 2004

**Henry  
W.  
Halleck**



**John Marszalek**

November 10, 2004

**Winfield Scott  
Hancock**



**Dan  
Zeiser**

December 8, 2004



**Ghosts of  
Gettysburg**

**Neil  
Glazer**

January 12, 2005

**The Great Debate**

*Which is the best book, fiction or  
non-fiction, on the Civil War?*

**Moderator: William Vodrey**

February 9, 2005

**Stonewall  
Jackson in the  
Valley  
Bob Boyda**



March 9, 2005

**Myths of  
Shiloh**

**Tim Smith  
Shiloh National Park Historian**



April 13, 2005

**Abraham  
Lincoln  
Portrayed by  
Jim Getty**



May 11, 2005

**Lincoln**

**Harold Holzer**



# LINCOLN AND THE BLACK HAWK WAR

Written by Dale Thomas © 2004

On April 7, 1832, fife and drum announced the spring muster of militiamen around the region of New Salem. All white males from eighteen to forty-five, according to state law, had to assemble four times a year, but the regulation was often ignored in favor of a yearly muster. William G. Greene, twenty years old, stood in a casual formation with his cousins, Bennet Abell and Mentor Graham, along with Lincoln and the other men who were part of the Thirty-first Regiment of Illinois. A militiaman was supposed to “provide himself with a good musket or rifle with proper accoutrements.” (2) But these citizen soldiers did not look like a military unit with “some sitting, some lying, some standing on one foot, some on both -- every variety of weapon, the cornstalk, the umbrella and riding whip predominating.” (3)



Nine days later, Governor John Reynolds of Illinois called for mounted volunteers to reinforce federal troops opposing Black Hawk, chief of the Sauks and Foxes, who had led his braves across the Mississippi River, one hundred miles northwest of New Salem. Black Hawk, sixty-seven at the time, had violated an agreement to stay out of Illinois, but his initial purpose was planting corn until some local militiamen fired the first shots in what became known as the Black Hawk War. Most of the fighting would take place near the northern border of Illinois. If there had been a true emergency in the state, Reynolds could have called up the entire militia of one hundred and fifty thousand, but the Indians only numbered between four and five hundred braves. (4)

Volunteers to fight Black Hawk eventually totaled around nine thousand men, most of whom were motivated by an intense hatred of Native Americans. Less than twenty years earlier, the Territorial Government of Illinois had given a fifty dollar bounty for a “hostile” Indian’s scalp and only two dollars for a wolf’s pelt. “An antipathy since childhood,” wrote an Englishman traveling through Illinois, “they should not mind shooting an Indian than a wild cat or raccoon.” (5)

According to a biography written in 1863, Lincoln had a somber conversation with Greene after hearing of Reynolds’s request for volunteers. (6) “I shall enlist,” he said, “Black Hawk is one of the most treacherous Indians there is, and I hope he will be shot.”

“Just like an Indian,” Greene said. “The only way to keep them in their place is to show them no quarter.”

“I don’t know about that,” Lincoln said, “though I am certain we have got to fight Black Hawk to save ourselves. He is a cunning, artful warrior, and determined to massacre all the whites he can.”

Twenty-three years old and nearly out of work, Lincoln may have seen the political advantages of being a war veteran, as he was considering a run for state representative. “In less than a year,” he later wrote, “Offutt’s business was failing -- had almost failed -- when the Black-

Hawk war of 1832 -- broke out." New Salem swelled with "military ardor. Enlistments progressed rapidly." (7) On April 21, Lincoln, Greene, John Rutledge, Royal Clary, William F. Berry, and Jack Armstrong joined the other young men of the region, who were mostly in their early twenties or late teens, traveling to Richland and volunteering for thirty days. They were assigned to Company A of the first division of Illinois forces to fight the "British Band" as Black Hawk's warriors were called. (8)

Before leaving New Salem, Greene, now a private, claimed his father had spoken to the men without Lincoln's knowledge: "There's no question about it, Abe is altogether the best man for captain." They were in agreement, but many of them believed Lincoln was too modest to be a candidate. "Well then, you must keep the matter close, but have a fair understanding among yourselves. Whisper the matter about, so that every vote will be right." (9)

"We will press him into service," Pvt. Greene said. After the election, he humorously greeted him: "Captain Lincoln, your honor!"

"None of your fun at my expense," Lincoln answered, knowing Greene was kidding and showing respect at the same time. (10) Lincoln later wrote that he "joined a volunteer company, and to his own surprise, was elected captain of it,.. [and] has not since had any success in life which gave him so much satisfaction." (11)

The New Salem Company rode to Beardstown, joining the other volunteers who awaited orders to move north. "The whole time that I was out," an enlistee from St. Clair County said, "I never witnessed a company drill.... I never heard a roll-call in the whole Brigade." He felt like the men were "going on some frivolous holiday excursion, and not to encounter hostile Indians." (12) On the last day of April, the citizen army left for Yellow Banks on the Mississippi River. The carnival atmosphere soon turned into a nightmare of cold rain, swollen streams, and prairie mud. Motivated by promises of food and whiskey at the end of the journey, the army found neither as it rode into Yellow Banks on the night of May 3. Hungry volunteers openly cursed Governor Reynolds, army commander, as they waited for two days before steamers arrived with supplies. In the mean time, local farmers suffered the foraging of militiamen, unlike Black Hawk's braves who had passed through the region a month earlier. Reynolds' militia met the federal troops at Fort Armstrong on May 7, and the two armies moved northeast from the mouth of Rock River in pursuit of Black Hawk. After the thirty day enlistment expired, the New Salem Company was disbanded, and most of the men returned home without seeing any action. Lincoln, however, reenlisted twice as a private, serving until a month before the war ended with the Battle of Bad Axe on August 2, 1832. (13)

Speaking on the floor of Congress in 1848, Lincoln joked about his militia days in which he had never seen any fighting: "By the way, Mr. Speaker, did you know I am a military Hero? Yes sir; in the days of the Black Hawk war, I fought, bled, and came away.... I had a good many bloody struggles with the mosquitoes; and, although I never fainted from loss of blood, I can truly say I was often very hungry." (14)

Greene was impressed with his company commander, especially when an "old Indian came to camp & delivered himself up, showing us an old paper written by Lewis Cass, stating that the Indian was a good & true man. Many of the men of the Army said, 'we have come out to fight the Indians and by God we intend to do so.' Mr. Lincoln in the goodness & kindness and humanity & justice of his nature stood -- got between the Indian and the outraged men -- saying -- 'Men this must not be done -- he must not be shot and killed by us.' Some of the men remarked - - 'The Indian is a damned Spy.' Still Lincoln stood between the Indian & the vengeance of the outraged soldiers... Some of the men said to Mr. Lincoln -- 'This is cowardly on your part Lin-

coln.' Lincoln remarked, 'If any man thinks I am a coward let him test it,' rising to an unusual height. One of the Regiment made this reply to Mr. Lincoln last remarks --'Lincoln -- you are larger & heavier than we are.' 'This you can guard against -- Choose your weapons,' replied Mr. Lincoln somewhat sourly. This soon put to silence quickly all charges of the cowardice of Lincoln." (15)

Prior to Lincoln saving the Indian's life, Royal Clary, who told the same story as Greene, said they came upon the scene of a battle that had just taken place: "Whites lost 12 killed -- found 11 -- 25 were wounded. They were horribly mangled -- heads cut off -- hearts taken out -- disfigured in every way... [And some time later, the] Indians had committed depredations on Fox River -- had killed some men, women & children... We saw the scalps they had taken [at the Pottawatomie camp] -- scalps of old women & children." (16)

Two weeks before the August election, Lincoln returned to New Salem. "Having lost his horse, near where the town of Janesville, Wisconsin, now stands," Greene recalled, "he went down Rock River to Dixon in a canoe. Thence he crossed the country on foot to Peoria, where he again took [a] canoe to a point on the Illinois River, within forty miles of home. The latter distance he accomplished on foot." (17)

While campaigning, Lincoln stayed with the Abells, whose cousin later took most of the credit for suggesting he enter politics. "Going to send you to the Legislature," Greene supposedly had said to Lincoln, who thought he was joking: "You are crazy, William, and all the rest of you who entertain such a thought. What! Run me, nothing but a strapping boy, against such men of experience and wisdom!" (18) In the end, though, Lincoln agreed, but he was not optimistic about his chances of being successful. "That is impossible. I should not expect to be elected..." (19)

A mile north of the Abell farm that summer, Lincoln spoke in the new town which would soon outgrow and eclipse New Salem. Greene stood in the crowd as Lincoln "addressed the people in the town of Petersburg on the election and the causes which he advocated. It was what the world would call an awkward speech, but it was a powerful one, cutting the center every shot." (20)

On August 6, 1832, the voters of Sangamon County selected four state legislators from a list of thirteen. Even though New Salem precinct gave him 277 out of 300 votes cast, Lincoln finished eighth in the county where he was generally not known. Grateful for the support given him, Lincoln "was now without means and out of business, but was anxious to remain with his friends who had treated him with so much generosity, especially as he had nothing elsewhere to go." (21)

#### FOOTNOTES:

1. Don E. Fehrenbacher, ed., *Abraham Lincoln, Speeches and Writings, 1832-1858* (New York: The Library of America, 1989) Vol. I, 106.

2. Albert J. Beveridge, *Abraham Lincoln, 1809 -1858* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1928) Vol. I, 120.

3. "Independent Military Companies of Sangamon County," (*Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, 3:23).

4. William H. Herndon and Jesse W. Weik, *Herndon's Life of Lincoln* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1983), 76.

5. Cecil Eby, *That Disgraceful Affair, the Black Hawk War* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1973) 99 -100.

6. William M. Thayer, *The Pioneer Boy and How He Became President* (Boston: Walker, Wise and Co., 1863) 245.

7. Don E. Fehrenbacher, *Abraham Lincoln, Speeches and Writings 1859 -1865* (New York: The Library of America, 1989) Vol. II, 164.

8. Database of Illinois Black Hawk War Veterans on website of the Illinois State Archives. ([www.sos.state.il.us/depts/archives/blkhawk.html](http://www.sos.state.il.us/depts/archives/blkhawk.html))

9. Thayer, 247 -249.

10. *Ibid.*

11. Fehrenbacher, Vol. II, 164. Lincoln may have been originally elected captain on April 7, 1832 and reelected two weeks

later on the farm of Greene's father. Eby, 108.

12. Eby, 106.

13. *Ibid.*, 110 -112. Thayer, 252 -253.

14. Fehrenbacher, Vol.I, 214.

15. Douglas L. Wilson and Rodney O. Davis, ed., *Herndon's Informants* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1998) 18-19.

16. *Ibid.*, 371-372.

17. Thayer, 253.

18. Michael Burlingame, ed., *An Oral History of Abraham Lincoln, John G. Nicolay's Interviews and Essays* (Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern University Illinois Press, 1996) 19.

19. Trayer, 254 -255.

20. Wilson and Davis, 20. President Lincoln appointed William Graham Greene the collector of internal revenue for Illinois.

21. Fehrenbacher, Vol.II, 164.

This article is an excerpt from a chapter of Dale's book, still a work in progress, *Lincoln's Old Friends of Menard, Kindred Families: Abell, Owens, Graham, and Greene*. After his failure to win the Whig nomination for Congress in 1843, Lincoln wrote to a political associate: "It is truly gratifying to me to learn that while the people of Sangamon [County] have cast me off, my old friends of Menard [County] who have known me longest and best of any, still retain their confidence in me." (1)

### September 8 in the Civil War

**1862** (Monday). With Lee getting deeper into Maryland, Lincoln asked McClellan, who was at Rockville, "How does it look now?" Lee issued a proclamation citing the South's sympathy with the people of Maryland who were pro-Southern and offered to provide protection for those who chose to go with the Confederacy. The choice, however, was to be the individual's. There was heavy skirmishing around Poolesville, Maryland, just west of Washington. McClellan still did not know where Lee was. [Editor's note: What a surprise!]

**1864** (Thursday). At Orange, New Jersey, Major General George B. McClellan formally accepted the Democratic nomination for President.

At Andersonville prison in Georgia, an exchange of prisoners had been authorized, and the prison administration sorted out who would go and who would stay. One of those chosen was Private S. J. Gibson, 103rd Pennsylvania Volunteers, who had been captured at Plymouth, North Carolina, on April 20, 1864, and had arrived at Andersonville, along with most of his unit, on Monday, May 2, 1864, slightly over four months previously. The exchange was tenuous because Grant had not authorized the exchange of prisoners for military reasons, believing it would held the South's manpower problems. The prisoners were notified to get their gear ready and to stand by.

Commander Melancthon B. Woolsey, USN, the senior commander off the Texas coast, notified Admiral David G. Farragut off Mobile:

The *Kanawha* sailed hence last night with orders to blockade the Brazos Santiago [one of the points of approach to Brownsville]. She also bore orders to the *Aroostook* to blockade the Rio Grande.... The blockade of those places will be resumed from to-morrow morning (9th).

**Field Trip  
September 30 through  
October 3, 2004**

**Middle Tennessee Campaigns  
Franklin—Stones River—  
Thompson's Station—Nashville**

This year our President is leading us on a field trip to the battlefields of middle Tennessee.

If you are interested in going, contact Mel Maurer at 440-808-1249 or email him at [melmaurer@aol.com](mailto:melmaurer@aol.com).

**Dues are due**

If you have not sent in your dues for this year, you can pay at the meeting or you can send your check to:

**Lynn Loritts  
P.O. Box 202267  
Shaker Heights, Ohio 44120**

**OCTOBER 13, 2004**

**HENRY W. HALLECK**

**JOHN MARSZALEK**