

THE CHARGER

October 2011

480th Meeting

Vol. 33, #1

Tonight's Program:

The Battle of Monocacy

After marching north through the Shenandoah Valley from Lynchburg, the Confederate army of Lt. Gen. Jubal A. Early side-stepped the Federal garrison at Harpers Ferry and crossed the Potomac River at Shepherdstown into Maryland on July 5-6. On July 9, 1864, a makeshift Union force under Maj. Gen. Lew Wallace attempted to arrest Early's invading Confederate divisions along the Monocacy River, just east of Frederick. Wallace, joined by Ricketts's Division of the VI Corps that had been rushed from the Petersburg lines, was outflanked by Gordon's Division and defeated after putting up a stiff resistance. Hearing of Early's incursion into Maryland, Grant embarked the rest of the VI Corps on transports at City Point, sending it with all dispatch to Washington. Wallace's defeat at Monocacy bought time for these veteran troops to arrive to bolster the defenses of Washington.

Early's advance reached the outskirts of Washington on the afternoon of July 11, and the remaining divisions of the VI Corps began disembarking that evening. Monocacy was called the "Battle that Saved Washington."



Text and map from civilwar.org

Tonight's Speaker:

Marc Leepson



Marc Leepson is a journalist, historian, and the author of seven books, including one on the battle of Monocacy and Jubal Early's march on Washington, D.C. in 1864, *Desperate Engagement: How a Little-Known Civil War Battle Saved Washington, D.C., and Changed American History*. He earned his undergraduate and master's degree from George Washington University. Mr. Leepson is a former staff writer for the Congressional Quarterly and has written for many newspapers and magazines. He is a regular on radio and television.

Date: **Wednesday, October 12, 2011**

Place: **Judson Manor
1890 E. 107th Street
Cleveland, Ohio**

Time: **Drinks 6 pm
Dinner 6:45 pm**

Reservations: **Please send an email to ccwrt1956@yahoo.com with your reservation, or call Dan Zeiser at (440) 449-9311 by 9 pm the Sunday before the meeting.**

Meal: **Meatloaf, garlic whipped potatoes, green beans, salad, and apple pie.**

**CLEVELAND
CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE**

FOUNDED 1957

President: **Paul Burkholder** (440) 918-0222
Vice President: **Michael Wells** (216) 371-8449
Treasurer: **Jim Heflich** (216) 381.8833
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Editor - THE CHARGER - Dan Zeiser

President's Message September 2011

I am sure you all know that the CCWRT has had a website for many years. It was originally created by Dale Thomas in 1998 when Dick Crews was president and Dale served as Historian. Dale continued to maintain the site up through 2007 when he retired as Historian and John Fazio asked me to take it over. Dale created the website as a way to communicate with CCWRT members and promote the club to potential members. As we have all watched over the past ten years, the Internet has pretty well steamrolled just about all other forms of media and communication. Today, an organization that does not have a website does not exist to the outside world. Together with the *Charger* and our cadre of public speakers, our website is the CCWRT's face to the outside world.

As with everything concerning the web, the CCWRT website has morphed into something quite different and more elaborate than it was at its creation thirteen years ago. Today, our website includes close to 400 pages, most of them articles written by members, most of those having originated in the *Charger*. The website also includes many articles unique to the website, some written by members – Peter Holman's unauthorized Meade memoirs and Mel Maurer's annual Lincoln Forum updates being two examples – and more than a few written by published authors looking to promote their work. This month's speaker, Marc Leepson, our November speaker, Jason Emerson, and our April speaker, Edward Bonekemper, are all published authors who have very graciously permitted us to use excerpts of their work on the CCWRT website.

The number of visitors to our website has grown steadily over the years, partly due to overall Internet growth, but more due to the quality and depth of our website's content – a tribute to the work of our club's many fine writers. Today, the CCWRT website receives as many as 9,000 visitors in a month who view over 12,000 total pages.

Over the years, the website has had some certifiable hits – articles that have been viewed by many people. The five most visited articles on the CCWRT website since its inception are:

1. "Did the Institution of Slavery Cause the Civil War?" by John Fazio – more than 16,000 visits since its publication on the website in 2007;
2. "Grant vs. Lee" by Dan Zeiser – more than 9,000 visits since its publication on the website in 2008;
3. "The Search for Lost Confederate Gold" by Hans Kuenzi – also more than 9,000 visits since its publication on the website in 2008;
4. "Was Jefferson Davis the Reason the Confederacy Lost the War?" by Dick Crews – more than 4,300 visits since its publication on the website in 2007;
5. "The Madness of Mary Lincoln" by Jason Emerson (our November speaker) – more than 3,600 visits since its publication on the website in 2008.

The website also makes money for the club – not a lot, but enough to make the small effort required worthwhile. Through Amazon's "associates" program, the CCWRT receives a commission for every purchase referral we forward onto Amazon.com from our online "bookstore" or the many book links you see scattered throughout our site. Since the program began, more than 350 items have been purchased this way, totaling over \$8700 in sales and generating \$500 in commissions; as I said, not a lot of money, but better than a sharp stick in the eye. Happily, activity has grown each year with a quarter of our total Amazon revenue having been generated within the last eight months. Items sold run the gamut from books to home theater and video gaming systems to DVDs to jewelry to cheese platters. It has been a pretty good deal for us.

Last, and perhaps most important, the website has drawn new members to our club, people who only found us *because* we had a website. Many of the members who have joined over the past ten years first came in contact with the CCWRT through our website. The most interesting recruit occurred just this past summer when Stuart Kay from the United Kingdom contacted us through the website wanting to know if we extended membership to people who might not be able to regularly attend meetings. Stuart joined and will be attending his first CCWRT meeting in April. The Cleveland Civil War Roundtable goes global. It is a small world after all.

Respectfully submitted,
Paul Burkholder

**Cleveland Civil War Roundtable
Past Presidents**

2011 Lisa Kempfer
2010 Dennis Keating
2009 Jon Thompson
2008 Terry Koozer
2007 John Fazio
2006 Dave Carrino
2005 Mel Maurer
2004 Warren McClelland
2003 Maynard Bauer
2002 Bill McGrath
2001 William Vodrey
2000 Bob Boyda
1999 Dick Crews
1998 John Moore
1997 Dan Zeiser
1996 John Sutula
1995 Norton London
1994 Robert Battisti
1993 Kevin Callahan
1992 Bob Baucher
1991 Joe Tirpak
1990 Ken Callahan Jr.
1989 Neil Glaser
1988 Martin Graham
1987 George Vourlojanis
1986 Tim Beatty
1985 Brian Kowell
1984 Neil Evans

1983 William Victory
1982 John Harkness
1981 Thomas Geschke
1980 Charles Spiegle
1979 William Bates
1978 Richard McCrae
1977 James Chapman
1976 Milton Holmes
1975 Thomas Gretter
1974 Nolan Heidelbaugh
1973 Arthur Jordan
1972 Bernard Drews
1971 Kenneth Callahan
1970 Frank Schuhle
1969 Donald Heckaman
1968 Frank Moran
1967 William Schlesinger
1966 Donald Hamill
1965 Lester Swift
1964 Guy DiCarlo Jr.
1963 Paul Guenther
1962 Edward Downer
1961 Charles Clarke
1960 Howard Preston
1959 John Cullen Jr.
1958 George Farr Jr.
1957 Kenneth Grant

**CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE
2011-2012 SCHEDULE**

September 14, 2011

***Experiencing
the Civil War***

**Robert
Olmstead**



October 12, 2011

***The Battle of
Monocacy***

Marc Leepson



Destruction of the RR bridge
over the Monocacy River

November 9, 2011

***Robert Todd
Lincoln***

**Jason
Emerson**



December 14, 2011

***How Sibling
Rivalry Helped
Spawn an Assassin***

Nora Titone



January 11, 2012

***The Dick Crews Annual Debate:
Lincoln and Douglas Debate***

**Mel Maurer as Abraham Lincoln
Chris Fortunato as Stephen Douglas
Moderator: William F. B. Vodrey**

February 8, 2012

***A. P. Hill
at Gettysburg***

Jon Thompson



March 14, 2012

***The Barlows and
the Gordons***

John Fazio



April 11, 2012

***How Robert E. Lee
Lost the Civil War***

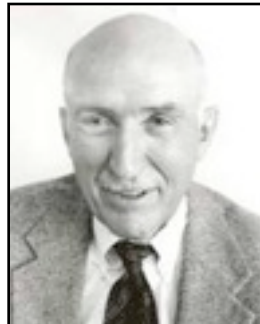
**Edward H.
Bonekemper III**



May 16, 2012 (Note later date)

Vicksburg!

Ed Bearss



THE RED RIVER CAMPAIGN OF 1864

(March 10 - May 22, 1864)

Because of the French threat (Maximilian) in Mexico, Lincoln wanted military operations undertaken early in 1864 to raise the Federal flag over some part of Texas. Although Grant, Sherman, and Banks were opposed, a line of operations up the Red River was finally prescribed. (Halleck favored it.) Banks, as senior department commander (Department of the Gulf), was directed in January 1864 to work out a joint operation with the other two department commanders, Sherman (Department of the Mississippi) and Frederick Steele (Department of Arkansas).

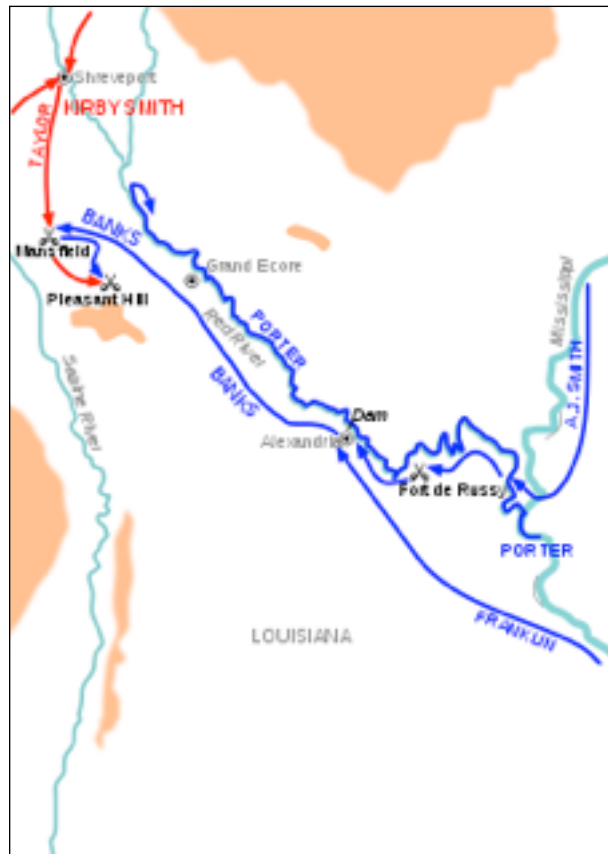
As finally agreed, Banks was to move up Bayou Teche with 17,000 troops and link up at Alexandria on March 17 with 10,000 men Sherman would send up the Red River. Steele was to advance south from Little Rock with 15,000 and join Banks at Alexandria, Natchitoches, or Shreveport, as seemed best. (As it turned out, Steele was so late starting that he played no part in the operations.)

To oppose this concentric advance Kirby Smith had 30,000 troops in his Trans-Mississippi Department that were divided into three equal groups: T. H. Holmes was near Camden, Arkansas; Magruder was along the Texas coast; and Richard Taylor was in Louisiana. Taylor's forces were disposed as follows: J. G. Walker's division of three brigades and three attached cavalry companies was located around Marksville, with covering forces in the direction of Simsport and 200 men detached to reinforce the artillery garrison of Fort De Russy. Mouton's newly created division of two brigades (Henry Gray and Polignac) was posted below Alexandria when Taylor learned of the Federal advance. Vincent's 2nd Louisiana Cavalry was on the Teche around Vermillionville, except for the three companies with Walker.

The task force Sherman sent to Banks was composed of the division of J. A. Mower, W. F. Lynch, and T. Kilby Smith. A. J. Smith commanded this 10,000 man provisional organization, which is variously referred to in accounts as the "detachment from the Army of the Tennessee," "XVI and XVII Corps," etc. It will be called A. J. Smith's corps or command in the following narrative.

On March 10, A. J. Smith's command embarked at Vicksburg and was escorted into the Red River by Admiral Porter with "the most formidable force that had ever been collected in western waters," thirteen ironclads and seven light draft gunboats (B.&L., IV, 362). After leaving Vicksburg, Smith learned that Banks had not departed on schedule, and that the Red River was obstructed at Fort De Russy. The Federals landed at Simsport and captured the partially completed Fort De Russy on March 14 from the land side with little difficulty. About 250 prisoners were taken and Walker's three cavalry companies were cut off, temporarily depriving him of their reconnaissance. On March 18, A. J. Smith entered Alexandria (population 600) without opposition, as Taylor retreated up the Red River. Vincent's 2nd La. Cav. joined Taylor on the 19th and was sent toward Alexandria. Over the next two days, Vincent skirmished briskly with the Federal advance guard, and he was reinforced with Edgar's battery of light artillery. The night of March 21, which was cold and rainy, A. J. Mower led the brigades of Hubbard and Hill with Lucas's cavalry brigade and the 9th Indiana Battery in an envelopment that surprised and captured about 250 men and Edgar's four guns. This action is known as Henderson's Hill (or Bayou Rapides), March 21, 1864.





At Natchitoches, Taylor halted to await the reinforcements Kirby Smith had ordered from Texas (a cavalry division) and Arkansas (two infantry divisions).

On March 24, Banks arrived at Alexandria in person, and two days later the contingent from the Dept. of the Gulf reached that area. His column was composed of Ransom's XIII Corps (3d Div. of R. A. Cameron, and 4th Div. of W. J. Landram); W. B. Franklin's XIX Corps (1st and 2nd divisions of W. W. Emory and Cuvier Grover); Albert Lee's cavalry division; and four infantry regiments of Negro troops (73rd, 75th, 84th, and 92nd U.S.C.T.). There were thirteen batteries of artillery with the Gulf troops, and none with A. J. Smith's corps. All of the infantry divisions had only two brigades, with the exception of Lynch's and Emory's, which had three each.

Banks found his further passage endangered by low water that made it only barely possible for the fleet to pass the double rapids just above Alexandria. He also learned that A. J. Smith's contingent would have to be returned no later than April 15 to participate in the Atlanta campaign. Despite these restrictions and his slow start, Banks ordered an advance on Shreveport.

Leaving Grover's division at Alexandria, Banks reached Natchitoches April 2-3. There was a minor

cavalry skirmish at Crump's Hill (Piney Woods) on April 2. He left this place on the 6th with all but Kirby Smith's division. The latter was to be moved by water - twenty transports escorted by Adm. Porter with a force of six naval vessels - and to rendezvous with the land column within three days at Springfield Landing, ten miles by river below Shreveport. Taylor continued his retreat to Pleasant Hill, where he was joined by Thomas Green's cavalry from Texas. The latter was put in command of a division formed of the brigades of Bee, Major, and Bagby, and given the rearguard mission. Taylor then fell back to the vicinity of Mansfield, where he was within twenty miles of the two divisions of Churchill (Parsons and Tappan) that had been sent down from Arkansas.

At Wilson's Plantation on April 7, a spirited cavalry clash resulted in Albert Lee's being reinforced the next morning by Landram's infantry division.

Banks expected his advance guard to clear the way and ordered his other troops into bivouac. Cameron and Emory were camped near Pleasant Hill around noon (April 8). The Confederate cavalry was driven to Sabine Cross Roads, a strategic communications hub within three miles of Mansfield. Here Taylor had organized a defensive position with the infantry divisions of Walker and Mouton, and Bee's cavalry. Although neither commander had all his forces available and neither intended to fight a major action here, a general engagement was brought on by Mouton's division late in the day. This was the battle of Sabine Cross Roads, April 8. The Federals were routed with a loss of 2,500 prisoners and much materiel. Mouton was killed (succeeded by Polignac). Ransom was wounded and succeeded by Cameron; Franklin was wounded but retained command.

That night Banks withdrew his forward divisions to a line formed by Emory's division and two divisions of A. J. Smith's. Here was fought the battle of Pleasant Hill, April 9, in which Taylor's attack was repulsed with heavy loss. Walker (C.S.A.) was wounded.

Kirby Smith reached the battlefield and found Taylor's army so demoralized that he ordered a retreat to Mansfield. The following morning, however, he found that Banks had withdrawn. He decided, therefore, to leave Taylor with Polignac's division and the cavalry (total 5,200) to harass Banks's withdrawal, and to return to Shreveport with Walker and Churchill and operate against Frederick Steele.



Nathaniel P. Banks

Banks abandoned his attempt to capture Shreveport since he could expect no assistance from Steele, and since the return of A. J. Smith's corps was already overdue.

At Grand Ecore, near Natchitoches, Banks was rejoined on April 15 by the Porter-Kilby Smith force. The latter had gone thirty miles up the river before being stopped on the 10th by an obstruction. At Blair's Landing (also called Pleasant Hill Landing), on the 12th, the naval expedition was attacked by Thomas Green's cavalry (750 horses and two batteries, according to Taylor). The Confederates broke off the engagement after inflicting seven casualties on the gunboats and fifty on the transports and suffering "scarcely a casualty except the death of General Green [killed], an irreparable one."

Banks left Grand Ecore the night of April 21 and marched thirty-two miles to Cloutiersville without a halt. With William Steele's brigade, Wharton drove the Federal rear guard from Natchitoches, took some prisoners, and

continued the pursuit beyond Cloutiersville. Bee's cavalry was in a position at Monett's Bluff, about six miles due south of Cloutiersville, to block the Federal retreat while Wharton and Polignac attacked their rear. Bee was, however, driven off by a frontal attack by Emory and an envelopment by Birge from the west. This latter action is known by the names of Monett's Bluff (or Ferry), Cane River Crossing, and Cloutiersville. (Taylor's spelling is Monette.)

Low water continued to impede Porter's struggles to get his fleet down the river. The *Eastport*, largest of the ironclads, struck a mine ("torpedo") eight miles below Grand Ecore and settled on the bottom. She was raised and taken another forty miles downstream before grounding again. After being once more floated free, again she was stopped by obstructions in the river. Adm. Porter had boarded the light draft *Cricket* and gone to Alexandria to bring back two pump boats to aid in saving the *Eastport*. However, when he returned with these, the *Champion 3* and *5*, the leak could not be found. When the ironclad grounded again she had to be destroyed (April 26). Meanwhile, a blocking position had been established farther downstream at the junction of the Cane and Red rivers. Here Col. J. H. Caudle of Polignac's division with Capt. Florian Cornay's four-gun battery attacked this last element of Porter's fleet as it made its way toward Alexandria. "Nineteen shells went crashing through the *Cricket* she was under fire she was struck thirty eight times and lost twelve killed and nineteen wounded and during the five minutes out of a crew of fifty," says the account in *Battles and Leaders* (IV, 364). "The *Juliet* was nearly as badly hurt, with 15 casualties, but got under a bank and managed to turn back upstream". The *Champion 3* exploded after being hit in the boiler and an estimated 200 of its Negro crewmen (runaway slaves) were scalded to death. The *Fort Hindman* remained upstream. The *Cricket*, aground and on fire, got free and escaped about dark. The next day the *Hindman* ran the batteries successfully, but the *Champion 5* was sunk in the attempt. Taylor, in his memoirs, quotes Porter's report that he had been engaged by "a large number of cannon, eighteen in all, every shot of which struck this vessel [*Cricket*]." Taylor observes "This is high testimony to the fighting capacity of two hundred riflemen and four guns. . . ."

Banks had reached Alexandria on April 25, where he found that the water had gone down so that the fleet could not pass the double rapids. "At this point appeared the deus ex machina in the person of Colonel Joseph Bailey . . ." In one of the most imaginative engineering feats of military history, Bailey, using a lumberman's technique, raised the water level by a series of wing dams, and the fleet completed its passage of the obstacle on May 13.

While this engineering project was going on, Taylor split his small force (5,200) to block the Red River below Alexandria while also maintaining pressure on Banks, who had to remain in the latter town to protect the fleet.



Gen. Richard Taylor

Major's brigade of about 1,000 cavalry was sent to Davide's Ferry (Snaggy Point), about thirteen air line miles below Alexandria (twenty-five miles by the river road) and three miles above Fort De Russy. Wm. Steele's cavalry (1,000) covered the river and Rapides roads to the north and west of Alexandria; Bagby's cavalry (1,000) covered the Boeuf road to the south; Polignac's 1,200 infantry were on the Boeuf road within supporting distance of Major and Bagby. Taylor says that Liddell's 700 newly organized troopers and four guns were of little value. In a series of actions known collectively as Alexandria, La., May 1-8, the Confederates harassed Banks's force, destroyed five Federal boats by "cavalry action," and effectively blocked the Red River during the period May 4-13.

On May 13, Porter and Banks resumed their retreat from Alexandria. There were skirmishes at Wilson's Landing and Avoyelles (or Marksville) Prairie on the 14th and 15th. At Mansura, May 16, the Federals had to fight their way through a Confederate position. Meanwhile, Liddell's cavalry was harrying Porter from the north bank of the river. At Yellow Bayou (Bayou de Glaize), on May 18, there was a loss of 267 Federals and 452 Confederates in the final action of the campaign, and in the last battle that took place in the Trans-Mississippi region. (This action is known also as Old Oaks or Norwood Plantation.)

While this final rearguard action was taking place, Joseph Bailey's engineering skills were once more called on to solve the problem of bridging the 600 yard wide Atchafalaya River at Simsport without pontoons or the usual engineer field equipment. Using steamers, he improvised a bridge over which Banks's wagon trains passed the afternoon of the 19th and the troops the next day. On May 21-22, A. J. Smith's corps embarked for Vicksburg, and on the 26th the rest of Banks's command reached Donaldsonville, La.

"On both sides this unhappy campaign of the Red River raised a great and bitter crop of quarrels. Taylor was relieved by Kirby Smith, as the result of an angry correspondence; Banks was passed over for command, and Franklin quit the department in disgust; A. J. Smith departed more in anger than in sorrow; while between the admiral and the general recriminations were exchanged in language well up to the limits of 'parliamentary' privilege," wrote a Federal officer in *Battles and Leaders* (IV, 361). One of the secondary purposes of the expedition was to open rich sugar and cotton country, and there was considerable suspicion of a great cotton speculation." On March 14, Kirby Smith ordered the burning of an estimated 150,000 bales of cotton, then valued at \$60,000,000. Banks was relieved of command in May; his campaign became a subject of a congressional investigation and official censure.

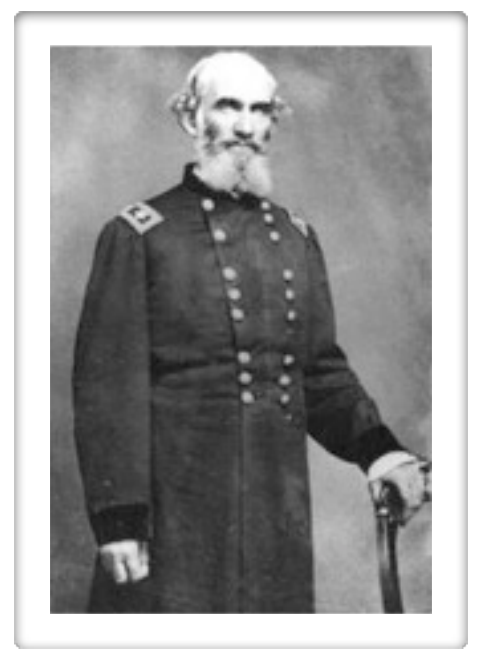
Source: *Civil War Dictionary* by Mark M. Boatner III



Gen. Edmund Kirby Smith, C.S.A.



Adm. David Dixon Porter



Brig. Gen. A. J. Smith

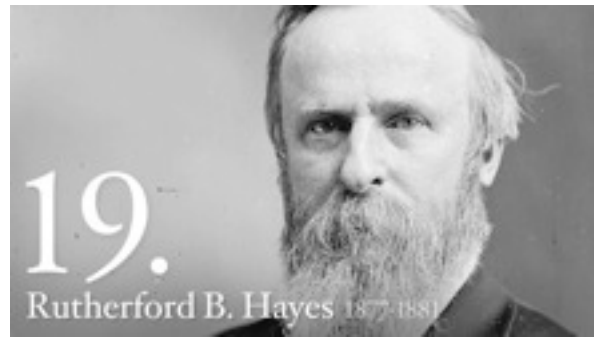


NEXT MONTH
ROBERT TODD LINCOLN
JASON EMERSON

This Day in History, October 4



1777 - Battle of Germantown



1822 - Rutherford B. Hayes is born



1861 - Abraham Lincoln watches a balloon ascension



1861 - Frederic Remington is born in Canton, New York



1927 - Work begins on Mount Rushmore

This Day in History, October 3



1863 - President Lincoln declares that the last Thursday of November would be recognized as Thanksgiving Day



1944 - US troops break through the Siegfried Line



1990 - The Berlin Wall is almost completely dismantled and East and West Germany are formally reunited, ending 45 years of division.



1922 - Rebecca L. Felton becomes the first female to hold office of [U.S.](#) Senator. She is appointed by Governor Thomas W. Hardwick of Georgia to fill a vacancy



1974 - Frank Robinson is named manager of the Cleveland Indians, becoming the first black manager in the history of major league baseball