

THE SENTINEL

MIDWEST ANACONDA: Grant Seizes the Rivers

In the first days of the Civil War, Union General-in-Chief Winfield Scott constructed an idea he thought would end the war quickly. Known as *The Anaconda Plan*, this strategy envisioned a twofold blockade of Southern ocean seaports and the Mississippi River. This strategy would thus prevent export of Southern goods, such as tobacco and cotton, while also guaranteeing Union Midwestern farmers the ability to ship and export their own crops. Unfortunately, at least for the Union, the North possessed at that time neither the Navy nor Army capable of such a plan. Thus, an idea that could have ended the war in a matter of months, died quickly on the strategy room floor.

At the final 2008 meeting of the Monroe Civil War Roundtable in June, member Deborah K. Cronin, presented a program about the Anaconda Plan. After explaining, as cited above, the impossibility of executing Scott's plan, she described how Union Forces, under General Ulysses S. Grant, made slow but steady progress in the Civil War's Western Theater. Using a travelogue approach, she invited the Roundtable members to journey with General Grant to Union victory sites including Fort Henry (2/6/1862), Fort Donelson (2/16/1862), Shiloh (4/6-7/1862), and Vicksburg (7/4/1863) on the way to securing the South's river ports and the Corinth, Mississippi, railhead.

She also invited Roundtable members to take a look at the *Cairo*, the U.S. gunboat salvaged from Yazoo River bed, as well as how Cairo, Illinois, Island #10, and New Madrid, Missouri, played a role in the western campaign of the Civil War. To conclude the program, Cronin read a poem she wrote in the aftermath of her journey, *Visit to Shiloh's Bloody Pond (With a Nod to Walt Whitman)*. Cronin urged Roundtable members, especially those who have not been to the historical sites listed above, to make a similar journey exploring this vitally important, but lit-



The Sunken Road at the Shiloh battlefield

tle understood aspect of the American Civil War. In her own words, "Gettysburg was not the only major turning point in the war; there is strong evidence that the capture of Vicksburg,



This cartoon map gave a name to General Scott's plan, which seemed too slow in early 1861, but became the winning strategy as the war wore on.

Mississippi, was as important as, or even more important, than Gettysburg." She suggested that those wishing to make such a trip plan at least 10 days for the journey and travel in the winter, if possible, since the battle sites are easier to understand when there is little foliage. Cronin also noted that those wishing a less adventuresome excursion could visit Fort Donelson, about five hours southwest of Bloomington, near Fort Campbell, a present day US Army installation. .

The Passing of a Civil War Legend

Alan T. Nolan, 85, of Indianapolis, died on Sunday, July 27. Mr. Nolan was a distinguished Civil War author. In 1961, Macmillan published *The Iron Brigade*, a military history, which has been named by *Civil War Times Illustrated* as one of the "100 best books ever written on the Civil War." It remains in print 47 years. He also wrote *Lee Considered: General Robert E.*



*Alan T. Nolan
1923-2008*

Lee and Civil War History, in 1991; *Rally Round the Flag Boys; Rally Once Again; Giants in their Tall Black Hats: Essays on the Iron Brigade*, with Sharon Vipond, and *As Sounding Brass*, a contemporary novel. He was a regular contributor to numerous Civil War publications, the *Indiana Magazine of History*, *Traces* and other periodicals. His last article appeared in *Traces* in 2008. He lectured widely on Civil War topics at various colleges, universities, round tables and the Smithsonian Institution. In 1994, he was given the Nivens-Freeman award by the Chicago Civil War Roundtable. He was a Fellow of the Company of Military Historians. His deep interest in history led to an active role at the Indiana Historical Society where he served on the board and was Chairman for twelve years during the planning and construction of the present facility.

Lincoln Lore in September

Join the Indiana Historical Society and Friends of Riverdale as they travel to Springfield, Illinois, to enjoy gardens, architecture and Abraham Lincoln!

The trip will start in Indianapolis at Marian College, where guests will enjoy a morning stroll and breakfast in the **Jensen Landscape at Riverdale**, designed by famous landscape architect Jens Jensen. Then, travel by deluxe motor coach to Springfield for tours of the **Abraham Lincoln Museum and Presidential Library**, Frank Lloyd Wright's **Dana-Thomas House** and the **Abraham Lincoln Memorial Garden** (also designed by Jensen.) In addition, the itinerary includes time to explore Springfield's historic downtown.

The group will depart from the Eugene and Marilyn Glick Indiana History Center at 450 West Ohio Street in downtown Indianapolis on Thursday, September 18 at 7:30 a.m. and return on Friday, September 19. The cost per person for IHS members is \$180 (double occupancy) and \$235 (single occupancy) – cost for non-members is \$195 (double occupancy) and \$250 (single occupancy).

The cost covers transportation, accommodations, tours and most meals. To make a reservation, please call the IHS membership office at 317-233-5658. [On a personal note, I just visited the Lincoln Home National Historic Site, Lincoln's New Salem State Historic Site, the Lincoln Museum and the Lincoln Presidential Library, along with some other attractions in the vicinity. I heartily recommend a visit to this new, world-class museum and all the other historic sites in the Springfield area. Contact me if you have questions.

— Steve Rolfe, MCCWR President

Lincoln Cottage Update

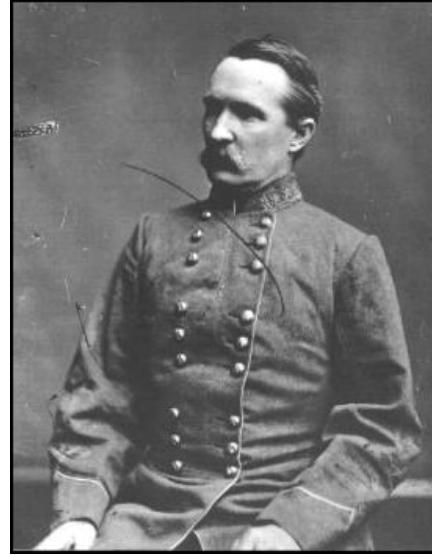
The link below will take you to the newsletter of one of the newest historic sites in The Washington, DC, the cottage that Lincoln used as a sort of “summer White House” during his presidency. With the Lincoln Bicentennial upon us, this should be on all our lists to visit if we are in the region.

<http://www.lincolncottage.org>



In the sparsely furnished bedroom of the Cottage at the Soldiers' Home is a reproduction of a desk used by Lincoln to write the Emancipation Proclamation.

Join Us for These Upcoming Programs



*Henry Heth, General, CSA.
West Point, 1847, 38th in a class of 38*

Sept 9: Mark Acres on Henry Heth at Gettysburg

“What was Harry Heth thinking on the morning of July 1, 1863? How did he get Lee into a battle that Lee's orders plainly said Lee did not want? And where did that stuff about shoes come from, anyway?” Join Mark for a rollicking, frolicking look at this “engaging falsifier” as he answers these and other questions.

Oct. 14: Dick Worsena on “The Navy in the War”

Dick gave us a great two-parter on Col. Oates of the 15th Alabama at Gettysburg most recently, and now takes us to a lesser examined aspect of the war- the navies.

Nov. 11: Dave Sutherland on “The Virginia Military Institute in the War”

Dave visits us from the Indianapolis Roundtable and highlights VMI in Lexington, Virginia, where Stonewall Jackson taught before the war and whose cadets figured into the fighting in more ways than one.

Contacts

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| Steve Rolfe, President | 336-0757 | srolfe@indiana.edu |
| David Wiley, Secretary | 337-0649 | davidwiley@sbcglobal.net |
| Carol Wise, Treasurer | 824-8708 | CWise30099@aol.com |
| Deborah Cronin, Hospitality | 323-9615 | d.cronin@comcast.net |

On the web at <http://mypage.iu.edu/~rawatson/roundtable/>.