



# LOWCOUNTRY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

October 2007 Issue 67

## Overland Campaign: Wilderness to Cold Harbor

**T**he appointment of U.S. Grant as commanding general of all Northern armies in the spring of 1864 saw a new level of coordination in the orders given to the various Union armies. Central to Grant's plan to end the Civil War were two main campaigns - Sherman's advance from Chattanooga to Atlanta in the west, and in the east an advance against Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, by far the most effective of all the Confederate armies.

General Meade, the victor of Gettysburg, was retained as commander of the Army of the Potomac, but



There were those who would not see Spotsylvania. Caught in the accidental fire of his own Confederates, the popular and talented young South Carolina Brigadier Micah Jenkins took a bullet in the brain on May 6. In his delirium he urged his men 'forward, forward'. (GHS)

Grant would accompany him, issuing orders through Meade rather than directly to the army. Despite this, Grant was clearly in command, and Meade can rather disappear from some accounts of the campaign.

The Overland Campaign got underway on May 4 when Grant and the Army of the Potomac crossed the Rapidan River, hoping to march through the Wilderness before Lee could hit them. Instead, Lee attacked while Grant's men were still in the tangled forests. The Battle of the Wilderness (May 4-7) set the tone for the next month's fighting. Lee won a tactical victory, inflicting 17,000 casualties while only suffering 7,500. Despite that, at the end of the battle Grant did not retreat back to his camps to recover, but instead moved south east towards Spotsylvania Court House, in an attempt to get past Lee's right wing.

Lee moved in time to prevent Grant from seizing

the road junction at Spotsylvania. Fighting continued around Spotsylvania from May 8-21. The best known incidents occurred around a salient in the Confederate line, known as the mule shoe. After a small scale attack there achieved limited success, Grant tried a full scale attack at the same place on May 12. This too met with some success, but then bogged down. The area today is known as the Bloody Angle. Grant's losses in these first two battles exceeded 30,000 men, while Lee lost some 18,000 troops.

From Spotsylvania, Grant continued his movement to the south east, around Lee's right and keeping

*(Continued on page 5 OVERLAND)*

### BIOGRAPHY OF GORDON RHEA, HISTORIAN AND AUTHOR



Gordon Rhea received his M.A. in history in 1968 at Harvard University and was a Woodrow Wilson Fellow and his J.D., Stanford University Law School in 1974. He was in the United States Peace Corps in Ethiopia from 1968 to 1970. He worked as a teacher and as a community development worker in remote villages in the Ethiopian highlands and in the Ogaden desert, near Somalia. Mr Rhea is also a member of many State Bars.

He has been involved with major class action litigation involving some three thousand residents in the Virgin Islands claiming damages flowing from exposure to silicas and heavy metals, including chromium-6, re-

*(Continued on page 7 RHEA)*

# WHISTLING IN DIXIE

BY BOB HAM

**A**s you read this we will have kicked off another exciting LCWRT year. I don't have to remind our veteran members that we are not just a "meet and eat" organization. This past week I attended the September meeting of the Program Committee. They are presenting us with an outstanding array of programs this year and are already working on programs for next year, highlighting 1865 and the final months of the Confederacy.

Our Membership Committee has had a busy time with new enlistees and re-enlistments as well as preparing our new badges. This is a monumental task.

While you and I were sipping "cool ones" on the veranda our Editors were hard at work preparing this issue and a dedicated group makes sure each Minie Ball Gazette is labeled, stamped and/or distributed.

THANK YOU TO ALL WHO TOIL IN THE BACKGROUND.

**T**he Fort Mitchell Project is now on the front burner and offers our LCWRT a unique opportunity to support this most worthwhile local endeavor. We have pledged both manual and financial support. Bill Trapp is our "point man" and will give us a progress report at the October meeting. Guys take your sweetie to dinner at the Old Fort Pub and while there walk around this historical Civil War site. You "Sun Citians" can take advantage of their early bird special.

I look forward to seeing you in October when Gordon Rhea, an outstanding Civil War historian and author, will bring us GRANT'S OVERLAND CAMPAIGN.

Bob Ham

## Lowcountry Civil War Round Table Inc.

The Minie Ball Gazette

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*Dedicated to Historic Preservation and Enlightenment*

Editors: Mitch & Marian Sackson

The Lowcountry Civil War Round Table Inc. is a Not-For-Profit, charitable organization as qualified under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code

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### Major General John Sedgwick

Confederate sharpshooters were about 1,000 yards away on May 9, 1864 and their shots caused members of Sedgwick's staff and artillerymen to duck for cover. Sedgwick strode around in the open and was quoted as saying, "What? Men dodging this way for single bullets?

What will you do when they open fire along the whole line? I am ashamed of you. They couldn't hit an elephant at this distance." Although ashamed, his men continued to flinch and he repeated, "I'm ashamed of you, dodging that way. They couldn't hit an elephant at this distance." Just seconds later he fell forward with a bullet hole below his left eye.

Join us at the *MORNING AFTER*  
 On Thursday October 11th at 10:00am  
 At Palmetto Electric (Route 278)  
 Refreshments Will Be Served

## Black Civil War Soldiers Honored in Ceremony

By Daniel Brownstein of The Island Packet published September 3, 2007

**A** project to adorn the graves of more than 2,100 black Beaufort County Civil War veterans with proper headstones officially began Sunday night at Hilton Head Island's first black church.

And it won't end until each of the 200,000 black soldiers who fought for the Union from across the nation has an official marker from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, said Howard D. Wright. Wright, a Beaufort native, founded a group more than 30 years ago, called the Sankofa Restoration Project, to reconnect African-Americans with their heritage. The headstone project is its latest undertaking.

"Today, we stand on their shoulders and shout to the rest of the world -- thank you, thank you, thank you," said Wright during the celebration for the fallen soldiers at First African Baptist Church. "We are here today because a bunch of people who were enslaved and powerless stood up and said, 'I want future generations to do better than us.' "

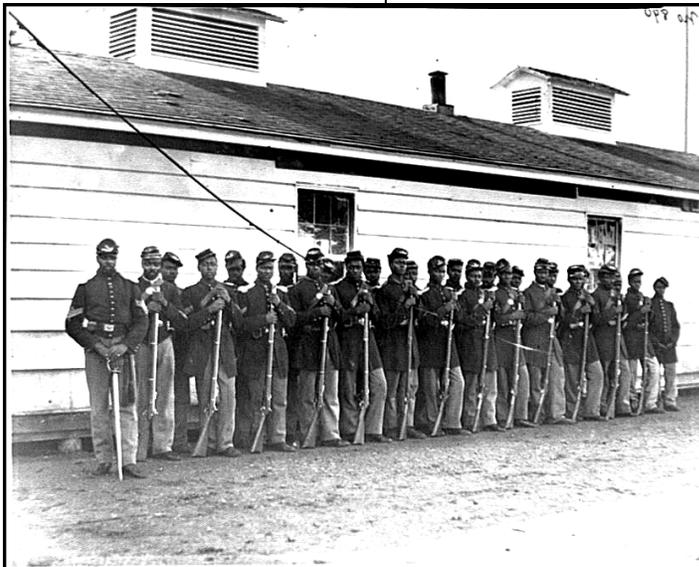
At times, the boisterous crowd singing and clapping to hymns nearly shook the wood-paneled walls of the church, founded by freed slaves in 1862 when they were allowed to build homes and places of worship in Mitchellville.

Wright began the headstone initiative after research into the life of his great-great-grandfather uncovered he was a veteran, but his grave in a makeshift family plot didn't have the standard military tombstone. Those markers, issued free-of-charge by the federal government, display a soldier's name, company, date of death and an inscription denoting service in the United States Colored Troops.

Beaufort County was home to the Army's first formal black regiment: the First South Carolina Voluntary Infantry. The infantry regiment was mustered among much pomp and circumstance on Jan. 1, 1863, on the grounds of present-day Naval Hospital Beaufort, just after the Emancipation Proclamation was read.

Between 5,000 and 10,000 black South Carolinians enlisted, some while still in bondage and others after freedom became official, according to Stephen Wise, director of the Parris Island Museum. Many of those soldiers came from Beaufort County because the Army had an outpost on Hilton Head.

So far, Wright has succeeded in getting a marker for his ancestor, and another 20 have just arrived. His goal is to have the headstone for each of the county's black Civil War soldiers and a flag for their families by Veterans Day in November.



COMPANY E, 4TH US COLORED INFANTRY AT FORT LINCOLN. THESE MEN ARE IN THEIR FULL DRESS UNIFORMS HAVING THEIR LAST PICTURE TAKEN TOGETHER. THE CIVIL WAR HAS ENDED, AND THEY ARE NOW FREE MEN

From the ARLINGTON CEMETERY Web Site

"...Sixteen-thousand Civil War soldiers were buried at Arlington during those turbulent years, among them many U.S. Colored Troops (blacks who served in the Union Army) who were buried in sections 27 and 23. Their headstones are marked with the Civil War Shield and the letters U.S.C.T. Three of these men were Medal of Honor recipients.

"Although 180,000 blacks served with the Union forces, less than 100 of them were officers. Maj. Alexander T. Augusta (Section 1, Grave 124) was the first black surgeon in the Army. Although given an officer's rank, he was paid black-enlisted wages during much of his service...."

# The 2007-2008 Lecture Series

Nov 14, 2007 *The Battles of Spring Hill and Franklin*: Brian Wills, Professor of History at Wise University VA



The **Battle of Spring Hill** was fought November 29, 1864, in Maury County, Tennessee, as part of the Franklin-Nashville Campaign and the prelude to the Battle of Franklin. On the morning of November 29, 1864, following the inconclusive Battle of Columbia, Confederate General John Bell Hood's Army of Tennessee marched from Columbia toward Spring Hill to separate major portions of Union forces from each other, hoping to defeat each in turn before they could unite and overwhelm him.

The Confederates positioned their corps where they could attack the Union force, but erred by allowing the Union army to maintain possession of the road and keep a route open for withdrawal. Believing the battle largely finished, Hood left command of the field to his most capable commander, Maj. Gen. Patrick Cleburne (the "Stonewall of the West"), Cleburne never received the message to attack. **The Battle of Franklin** followed the Battle of Spring Hill on November 30, 1864 and was one of the worst disasters of the war for the Confederacy.

The Confederate Army suffered devastating losses in its unsuccessful frontal assaults against the Union defenders, sometimes called the "Pickett's Charge of the West." Hood's Army failed to stop the Union force in Tennessee, allowing the Army of the Ohio to escape. Hood had hoped to destroy the Union forces before he could link up with the Army of the Cumberland, commanded by Maj. Gen. George Henry Thomas, farther north in Nashville, Tennessee.

Jan 9, 2008 *To Be Announced* Bud Robertson or Jack Davis.



For the January program we will have either Bud or Jack. Unfortunately Bud has a personal problem and is unable to commit this far in advance. We have arranged to have Jack Davis substitute should that be necessary. Bud would very much like to be with us and we wish him the very best and hope that he can. We will keep every one updated closer to January as to who will be presenting and the subject matter.

Feb 13, 2008 *Widows in the Civil War*: Steve Bacon & Brenda Bacon



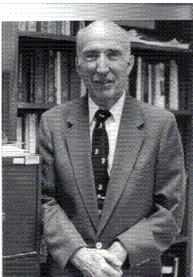
In February we will have a special program by two of our members: Steve and Barbara Bacon. The program will be a living history reenactment of the traditions and rituals of widowhood at the time of the civil war. Steve and Barbara will be joined by other re-enactors for what promises to be a very interesting program.

The term living history describes attempts to bring history to life, either for an audience or for the participants themselves. The primary distinction between reenactment and a period dramatic performance is the degree of immersion and the amount of improvisation. Historical Activities related to "reenactment" are not new.

Tournaments in the middle Ages had Roman or other earlier themes (while the Romans themselves staged recreations of famous land and sea battles within their Coliseums as a form of public spectacle), and the Victorians recreated medieval furnishings such as tapestries.

However, historical reenactment in pursuit of practical historical interest, beyond merely re-inventing history as an entertainment to suit contemporary convenience or sensibilities, seems to be an invention of the 20th century. Reenactment can be considered a form of live-action role-playing within a historical context.

March 12, 2008 *The Crater and the Siege of Petersburg*: Ed Bearss



The Richmond-Petersburg Campaign was a series of battles around Petersburg, Virginia, fought from June 15, 1864, to March 25, 1865. Although it is more popularly known as the **Siege of Petersburg**, it was not a classic military siege, in which a city is usually fully surrounded and all supply lines are cut off. It was ten months of trench warfare in which Union forces commanded by Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant assaulted Petersburg unsuccessfully and then constructed trench lines that eventually extended over 30 miles around the eastern and southern outskirts of the city.

Petersburg was crucial to the supply of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee's army and the Confederate capital of Richmond. Lee finally yielded to the overwhelming pressure—the point at which supply lines were finally cut and a true siege would have begun—and abandoned both cities in April 1865, leading to his retreat and surrender in the Appomattox Campaign.

The Siege of Petersburg foreshadowed the trench warfare that would be common in World War I, earning it a prominent position in military history. The **Battle of the Crater**, part of the Siege of Petersburg took place on July 30, 1864. Lieutenant Colonel Henry Pleasants, commanding the 48th Pennsylvania Infantry of Maj. Gen. Ambrose E. Burnside's IX Corps, offered a novel proposal to solve the problem, a mining engineer from Pennsylvania in civilian life.

He proposed digging a long mine shaft underneath the Confederate lines and planting explosive charges directly underneath a fort in the middle of the Confederate First Corps line. The result was a disaster for the Union troops who pored into the resulting crater where they became "fish in a barrel" for the Confederates.

**April 9, 2008 *The Battle of Fort Fisher:* Craig Symonds, Chief Historian at the USS Monitor Center at the Mariners' Museum in Newport News, Virginia.**



The **Battle of Fort Fisher** was a joint assault by Union army and naval forces against Fort Fisher, outside Wilmington, North Carolina. Sometimes referred to as the "Gibraltar of the South" and the last major coastal stronghold of the Confederacy,

Fort Fisher had tremendous strategic value during the war. Wilmington was the last major port open to the confederacy. Ships leaving Wilmington via the Cape Fear River and setting sail for the Bahamas, Bermuda or Nova Scotia to trade cotton and tobacco for needed supplies from the British were protected by the fort. Fort Fisher was constructed mostly of earth and sand. This made absorbing the pounding of heavy fire from Union ships more effective than older fortifications constructed of mortar and bricks.

The fortifications were able to keep Union ships from attacking the port of Wilmington and the Cape Fear River. On December 24, 1864, Union forces under Benjamin F. Butler launched a two-day attack. The battle was the largest amphibious operation until the Second World War.

**May 14, 2008 *The Port Royal Experiment:* L Rowland & Steve Wise**



L ROWLAND

The **Port Royal Experiment** was a program begun during the Civil War in which former slaves worked on the land abandoned by plantation owners. In 1861, the Union liberated the Sea Islands off the coast of South Carolina and their main harbor, Port Royal. The white residents fled, leaving behind 10,000 slaves.

Several private Northern charity organizations stepped in to help the former slaves become self-sufficient. The result was a model of what Reconstruction could have been. The former slaves demonstrated their ability to work the land efficiently and live independently. They assigned themselves daily tasks for cotton growing and spent their extra time cultivating their own crops, fishing and hunting.

By selling their surplus crops, the locals acquired small amounts of property. In 1865, President Andrew Johnson ended the experiment, returning the land to its previous white owners.

(OVERLAND *Continued from page 1*)

close to the coast. Between 20 and 23 May, Grant and Lee were engaged in a race to the North Anna River. Lee won, and was able to hold the line of the river against attacks (23-26 May).

Grant's constant movements to the south east now brought him to the Peninsula battlefields of 1862. On 31 May Sheridan's cavalry captured Old Cold Harbor and managed to hold it against Confederate counterattack. By the time the main Union army had caught up, Lee's men had dug themselves seven miles of elaborate trenches, creating some of the strongest defenses yet seen on the battlefield. On June 3rd Grant launched an utterly futile attack on this position. It cost him over 4,000 casualties in an hour, and achieved nothing. Grant later said it was one of only two attacks he regretted ordering (the other being the second attack on Vicksburg).

The attack at Cold Harbor ended the overland campaign against Richmond. There was very little potential left for flanking maneuvers in the vicinity of Richmond, and the

swamps around the Chickahominy proved as great a barrier to movement as they had been two years earlier. However, one of the many ways in which Grant differed from McClellan was that he was not easily discouraged. Once it was clear that he would not achieve his aims outside Richmond, he began to look for another target. He soon found that target. In mid-June, Grant's men crossed the James River, shifting the focus of their attack from Richmond to Petersburg.

Grant's campaign against Richmond was widely misunderstood at the time. Even after the war, some Confederate writers criticized him for marching to Richmond when he could have reached the Confederate capital by sailing up the James River. This entirely missed the point. Grant wasn't interested in Richmond. He was interested in Lee's army. His aim was to maneuver Lee out of his fortifications, and force him to fight on an open field, where Grant's numbers would make the difference. In the best of all possible worlds, Grant hoped to force Lee to attack Union forti-



GRANT SENT HIS CAVALRY ON A RAID INTO THE HEART OF VIRGINIA TO DISTRACT LEE. CONFEDERATE CAVALRY FOLLOWED, EXCEPTING THE DIVISION OF LEE'S SON. BRIGADIER GENERAL WILLIAM H. F. LEE. ONE OF "ROONEY" LEE'S TROOPERS WAS THE MAN ABOVE OF THE 10TH VIRGINIA CAVALRY, PRIVATE BENJAMIN FRANKLIN LINCOLN. HIS SECOND COUSIN ABRAHAM WAS PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES. (COURTESY OF DALE SNAIR)

(Continued on page 6 OVERLAND)

# Lowcountry Civil War Round Table

(OVERLAND Continued from page 5)



IN MAY 1864, WHEN BRADY & COMPANY MADE THESE IMAGES, EVERY BLANKET IN FREDERICKSBURG SEEMED TO HAVE FEET. (USAMHI)

fications. This was the purpose of the move to Spotsylvania and of the race to the North Anna River. If Grant had beaten Lee to either of those places, then he would have been in a position to keep Lee away from Richmond and his supplies. This campaign gave Lee very little chance to demonstrate his great skills on the battlefield. Instead, the best he could do was insure that he was in the right place to block each of Grant's moves. In this he was successful,

but by the end of the campaign he had been forced back almost to Richmond itself, inexorably reducing his potential for maneuver and leading, ultimately, to the Siege of Petersburg and the end of the war at Appomattox Court House.

## Dr Anne Bailey on 'Sherman, the Dancer'

The presentation by Anne Bailey on *Sherman's March to the Sea* was overwhelmingly received by over 180 avid listeners on the 12th of September. Her down-to-earth characterization of Sherman as a focused leader and a man who had a woman friend in almost every Southern city painted a picture which was quite different than many people previously had.

During the *Morning After*, Dr Bailey went into greater detail as the group participants zeroed in on why Sherman bypassed specific cities. It was also pointed out that he deferred encounters with Confederate units as much as possible during the march. This caused one historian's appraisal of the march as capable of being lead by a 'private'.

All-in-all, both meetings were among the best that the LCWRT has had and we eagerly look forward to Dr Bailey's return.

# MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please Print All Information NEW  RENEWAL  (besides name, fill in only changes below)

Last Name _____	First Name _____	Badge Nickname _____
Additional Member Name _____	Badge Nickname _____	
Address _____		City _____
State _____	Zip Code _____	Phone( ) _____ E-Mail _____

### New Enlistment:

Single: \_\_\_\_\_ One Time Initiation Fee \$25.00 + Annual Membership \$28.00 = \$53.00   
 Household: \_\_\_\_\_ One Time Initiation Fee \$35.00 + Annual Membership \$40.00 = \$75.00

### Re-enlistment:

Single: \_\_\_\_\_ Annual Membership: \$28.00   
 Household: \_\_\_\_\_ Annual Membership: \$40.00

Mail to \_\_\_\_\_  
 or leave in "lower" box:  
 Make Check Payable to LCWRT Inc  
 Any questions, please call Brenda at 705-3432

**BRENDA BACON**  
 53 Murray Hill Dr  
 Bluffton, SC 29909

# The Dinner Menu for October 10 2007

## Salisbury Steak • Rotisserie Chicken • Tilapia

House Salad with Carrots, Cucumbers, Onions, Peppers, Tomatoes, Cheese and Several Types of Dressing (Ranch, Blue Cheese, Italian, Thousand Island, Catalina, Honey Mustard, Caesar)

Spinach, Okra & Tomatoes, & Rice Pilaf • Dinner Yeast Rolls with Honey Butter

Bread Pudding • Fruit Bowl • Apple Pie • Cookie Tray

Sweet & Unsweetened Tea • Lemonade, Decaffeinated Coffee

Served on Dinner Plates with Silverware and Glasses

Catered by Golden Corral, Bluffton, SC

**Dinner Reservations no later than October 6th. Meeting at Bluffton High School.  
Social @ 5pm • Buffet @ 5:45 • Meeting @ 6:45 • Presentation @ 7:00**

All Members are invited to the General Meeting. Reservations are required ONLY for DINNER.

### Dinner Reservation For October 10 2007

**NO LATER THAN THURSDAY OCTOBER 6TH 2007**

Number of Dinners: \_\_\_\_ @ \$12.50 each = \$\_\_\_\_\_

Name 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Name 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Make Check Payable to: LCWRT Inc.

Mail check with this Form to: →

Or place it in the Verwer's Lower Box



Johanna Verwer  
16 Trescot Lane  
Bluffton, SC 29909

Guests: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

List Guests on additional paper if necessary

*(RHEA Continued from page 1)*

leased from a bauxite refinery. Currently he is a member of a law firm handling a variety of complex civil and criminal cases with a specialty in toxic torts, groundwater and industrial pollution, and business torts.

His many Civil War publications include:

The Battle of the Wilderness, May 5-6, 1864 (LSU Press: Baton Rouge, 1994).

The Battles for Spotsylvania Court House and the Road to Yellow Tavern: May 7-12, 1864 (LSU Press: Baton Rouge, 1997)

To the North Anna River: Grant and Lee, May 13-25, 1864 (LSU Press: Baton Rouge, 2000)

Cold Harbor: Grant and Lee, May 26-June 3, 1864 (LSU Press: Baton Rouge, 2002)

In the Footsteps of Grant and Lee: From the Wilderness to Cold Harbor (LSU Press: Baton Rouge, 2007) (

The Battles of Wilderness and Spotsylvania (National

Park Civil War Series: Eastern National Park and Monument Association, 1995).

The Battle of Cold Harbor (National Park Civil War Series: Eastern National Park and Monument Association, 2001).

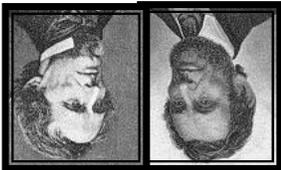
"Federal Cavalry in the Wilderness: The Education of Phil Sheridan and James Wilson," in Gary W. Gallagher, comp., The Wilderness Campaign (UNC Press: Chapel Hill, 1997).

"Lee, Grant, and 'Prescience' in the Overland Campaign." In Peter S. Carmichael, comp., Audacity Personified: The Generalship of Robert E. Lee (LSU Press: Baton Rouge, 2004).

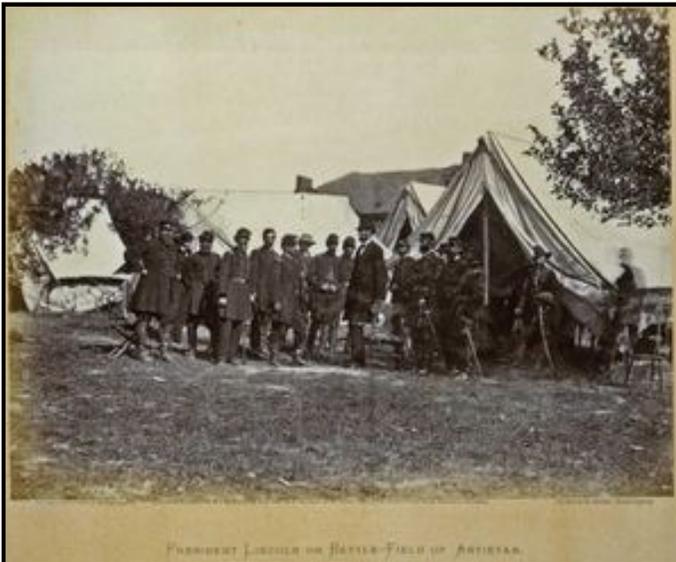
Has appeared on History Channel, A&E Channel, and Discovery Channel in programs related to the Civil War history and has written scores of articles for various scholarly and popular publications.



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 Presented by  
 Gordon Rhea



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President Lincoln visiting the Army of the Potomac at the Antietam battlefield, September 1862. Photo by Alexander Gardner.



Battle of Cold Harbor by Kurz and Allison, 1888



We thank Palmetto Electric for their allowing the LCWRT usage of their meeting room for our *Morning After*.