

Old Baldy Civil War Round Table of Philadelphia



February 2004, The One Hundred and Forty-Third Year of the Civil War

February Meeting of 2004

The February 12th Meeting of the Old Baldy Civil War Round Table will start at 7:30 pm on Thursday at the Civil War Library and Museum at 1805 Pine Street in Philadelphia. The speaker will be **Bob Sprague**. Bob's topic will be "*The Day the War Began, April 12, 1861.*" Bob is a former member of the Old Baldy CWRT. He is now a retired high school teacher and president of the Brandywine Valley CWRT and has been a student of the Civil War for many years.

Bring a friend, neighbor and another Civil War buff to enjoy a fascinating subject and to support our speakers at Old Baldy.

Papers of the Colonel

At the January meeting **Bill Hughes** shared with us a fascinating look into his ancestor Lt. Col. Newton Colby of the New York Infantry. Bill has published a book on the military life of Colby. Bill gave us a look into his combat experiences, and how he was so excited to get into combat, and the effect it had on his life. A look into his position as commander of the old "Capitol Prison". The enemy prisoners he met and how he treated them with compassion. Some of the Lincoln assassination conspirators were housed in his prison. How he made a lifelong friendship with one prisoner, who he named his son after. Again a very fascinating presentation by Bill ...his book should make a fine addition to your civil war book library.



Photo - Pat Caldwell

The President's Letter

Hi Everyone,
Another month has gone by and what a cold one it has been!

Plans are well underway for our WWII seminar in conjunction with the Allentown and Delval RT's on May 15th, which should be a day well worth attending and another way for Old Baldy to expand and grow.

Congrats to member Bill Hughes on his wonderful presentation last month on Lt. Col. Newton Colby's papers (special thanks for the horse tidbits he fit into his talk!). Like I have said in previous months, our roundtable is a valuable source of information and talent.

This month we will listen to historian Bob Sprague who will speak to us on "*The Day the War Began, April 12, 1861.*" Come out and join us on February 12th which is also Lincoln's birthday! It's better than a Presidents Day furniture or white sale. We seem to have lost the meaning now that it is called Presidents Day. We forget the individual accomplishments of our first fathers. Some of our young people can't even tell you who are presidents were. To most it's just a day off from school or work. So what better way to honor Mr. Lincoln than to come to a Civil War Roundtable meeting in the Lincoln room of our museum!

Hope to see you all there!

Nancy

From the Membership Chairman

As you know almost 70% of Old Baldy CWRT memberships expire in January and February. Please check the address page of your newsletter to see when your membership expires. If it is 1/04 or 2/04 then your dues are due. We hope to have 100% renewals. We have a great lineup of speakers scheduled into the summer. Send your checks payable to the Old Baldy CWRT, 1805 Pine Street, Philadelphia, PA. 19103.

Members E-Mail List

We have maintained a list of the e-mail addresses for most of our members. This is important because we can notify you in the event that a meeting is

continued on next page

**Schedule of
Old Baldy CWRT Speakers for
Winter/Spring/Summer
2004**

February 12 - Thursday

Robert Sprague

President, Brandywine Valley CWRT, lecturer
Topic: *The Day the War Began: 12 April, 1861*

March 10 - Wednesday
(Note the change in meeting night)

Bradley Gottfried

Author and Gettysburg historian
Topic: *The Roads to Gettysburg*

April 8 - Thursday

Michael Dreese

Author, Gettysburg Historian
Topic: *Union and Confederate Battle Flags and
Color Bearers at the Battle of Gettysburg*

May 5 - Wednesday **Special Program**
Gordon Rhea

Author
The Topic: *The Battle of Cold Harbor*

May 13 - Thursday

William M. Welsch

Author
Topic: *"General Samuel Cooper, CSA"*

June 10 - Thursday

Edward Bonekemper

Author
Topic: *Was Ulysses Grant a Butcher?*

July 8 - Thursday

Nancy Caldwell

President Old Baldy CWRT
Topic: *Civil War Horses*

August 21 - Saturday

H. Wilson Greene

Executive Director of Pamplin Park, Author, Historian
Topic: *TBA*

Annual Fund Raising Dinner
Reservations Required
Radisson Hotel, Route One, Trevoise, PA

All meetings, unless otherwise noted, begin
at 7:30 PM at the
Civil War Library and Museum,
1805 Pine Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Questions to Mike Cavanaugh at 215.725.3602 or
chief96pbi@juno.com

canceled due to weather or some other emergency. Also, we can contact members if something needs to be acted on immediately. If we don't have your e-mail address please send it to Mike Cavanaugh at: chief96pbi@juno.com. Thank you.

**The Navy's first was built in
Philadelphia in the 1860s.**

Effort under way to find historic sub

By Edward Colimore

INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

Nobody had seen anything like it. Scores of people raced to the Delaware River to get a look at a sea monster "very like a whale," according to newspaper accounts.

What they found was a cigar shaped submersible vessel straight out of science fiction. It had been captured by the Philadelphia Harbor Police that morning in 1861 and "safely chained" to a pier.

It was in the river being tested by its French inventor, Brutus De Villeroi, who was living in Philadelphia. But its' potential was not lost on the federal government then fighting the Civil War.

Work soon began in Philadelphia on the **USS Alligator**. It was the Navy's first submarine, the first demonstrated for a U.S. President — Abe Lincoln and the first, slated for a war zone.

Efforts are now underway to locate and someday raise the historic vessel, which was lost in 1863 in a fierce storm off Hatteras, N.C.

The Office of Naval Research (ONR) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) have identified the general site of the sinking and are conducting further research.

Their efforts have brought them to Philadelphia. Here a Navy official and historian pored over records at the Pennsylvania Historical Society and the regional branch of the National Archives in Center City and visited houses where De Villeroi lived.

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**Old Baldy
Civil War Round Table
of Philadelphia
1805 Pine Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103
215.735.8196
Founded January 1977**

**President: Nancy Caldwell
Vice President: Pat Caldwell
Treasurer: William George
Secretary: Unappointed**

**Annual Memberships
Students: \$12.50
Individuals: \$25.00
Families: \$35.00**



Commander Richard Poole and Catherine Marzin

The trail also has led Navy and NOAA officials to the Library of Congress in Washington and to France, where the inventor is believed to have been the math teacher of Jules Verne, future author of 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea and other science-fiction books.

Among the recent discoveries in France, officials said, were the only design drawings of the Alligator ever found.

This summer, vessels equipped with the latest high-tech sonar will search for the Alligator in the depths off Hatteras ranging from 120 to 9,000 feet.

Jim Chrisdey, a naval historian and former submarine crewman who has served as a Consultant on the project, said the Alligator *"is not historically in-significant,"* though few people know its story.

"It's nice being one of the only people in the world to know about something - even if it's a little strange," said Chrisdey, who rattles off a long list of the vessel's achievements and innovations. The later included the first diver's lockout chamber and the first onboard air compressors.

Over the last few years, two other important Civil War ships also have been the object of searches. The **CSS Hunley**, a Confederate submarine, was recovered in 2000; and the gun turret of the **USS Monitor**, a Union ironclad, was retrieved in 2002.

The impetus for locating the Alligator came in 2002 when Navy Rear Adm. Jay Cohen became intrigued by a magazine article on the Union sub and ordered a research project.

"The story of the USS Alligator is an exciting one," said Cohen, chief of Naval Research. *"It's a mystery. ...If we can find the Alligator, we can find anything."*

The 33-foot vessel that prompted the Alligator made a big splash in Philadelphia in 1861 as well as catching the attention of the U.S. government.

"At an early hour in the morning, rumors spread like wildfire among the inflammable population crowding our wharves that a monster, half-aquatic, half-aerial and wholly incomprehensible, had been captured by the Harbor Police ...," according to The Philadelphia Inquirer.

"The monster itself, on a close inspection, proved to be a submarine propeller, invented by Monsieur

On the Web

For information, point your Internet Browser to <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/alligator>

De Villeroi, a French gentleman, who had devoted many years to experiments in this direction." (The "propeller" was actually a submarine.)

Shortly after the vessel was impounded, Christley said, three officers from the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard wrote a report that made its way to the Navy secretary. Six months later, the 47-foot-long Alligator was being constructed at the site of what is now Penn Treaty Park.

It was launched May 1, 1862, and towed to Hampton Roads, Va., for war service. As the rivers there were found to be too shallow, the vessel returned to Washington.

In April 1863, while being towed south by a steamer to take part in the attack on Charleston harbor, the Alligator went down in a storm. Among the documents recently uncovered by the Office of Naval Research was a letter by the tow ship's captain, which help locate the site of the sinking.

"The research has been a labor of love," said ONR's Cmdr. Richard Poole, who found, the letter and conducted research in Washington and Philadelphia.

A group of midshipmen at the Naval Academy in Annapolis helped research the sinking, according to Michiko Martin, education coordinator of NOAA's National Marine Sanctuary Program and manager of the Alligator project. *"They concluded that it was taking on water and would have sank quite rapidly,"* she said. *"It could be in extremely deep water."*

Navy officials said the cold depths would tend to preserve the vessel by reducing biological encrustation.

Catherine Marzin, a program specialist and marine researcher for the sanctuary program, shed more light on De Villeroi and his submarine during a visit last to naval archives at Vincennes, France, where she found original letters and plans.

"What makes the Alligator so compelling is that it combines history, mystery and technology," said Daniel Basta, director of the marine sanctuary program. *"Everyone has a role to play in the hunt for the Alligator."*



Winter with Old Baldy

Photo - Don Wiles

Today in Civil War History

February 12, 1809 *"I was born Feb. 12. 1809 in then Hardin county Kentucky,"* wrote Lincoln in June 1860 for Thomas Hicks, *"at a point within the now recently formed county of Larue, a mile, or a mile & a half from where Hodginsville now is. My parents being dead and my own memory not serving, I know no means of identifying the precise locality. It was on Nolin Creek."* [Thomas Lincoln possessed 348 1/2 acres of land when Abraham was born. Abraham's birthplace is approximately three miles south of present day Hodgenville, on Nolin River.] Roy P. Basler (ed.), *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, 4:75-76 (cited as CW).

Speaking About Lincoln

"He was calm, steady and even smiling, and in half a minute I was no longer conscious of the room, only of Abraham Lincoln filling the place brim full."

—William Stoddard in "Lincoln's Third Secretary"

"Lincoln had great respect for the superior knowledge and culture of other persons. But he did not stand in awe of them."

—From "The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz"

"Although one of the mildest of men, he was unyielding to efforts which were made to force him to acts which he considered erroneous in themselves, or erroneous because untimely."

—Hugh McCulloch in "Men and Measures of Half a Century"

"At the meeting to-day, the President read the draft of his Emancipation Proclamation, invited criticism, and finally directed that copies should be furnished to each. It is a good and well-prepared paper, but I suggested that a part of the sentence marked in pencil be omitted."

—The Diary of Gideon Welles, December 29, 1862

"Almost every day about ten o'clock I would accompany Mr. Lincoln to the War Department. He was exceedingly anxious about General Sherman's army, which was at that time marching through the South. On one occasion he remarked to me that he felt very uneasy about Sherman's army, since he had not been able to receive any information regarding it for three weeks."

—Thomas Pendel in "Thirty-Six Years in the White House"

"Criticised ever so unjustly, he would reply with no word of reproof, but patiently and uncomplainingly, if he answered at all, strive to prove that he stood on the rock of right."

—Address of Schuyler Colfax on April 30, 1865

"The soldiers were called out by the officers, arranged in a straight line, and Mr. Lincoln, in his unpretentious way, with his hat off, shook hands with each one, asking his name and the name of his regiment and company."

—Rebecca Pomroy in "Echoes from Hospital and White House"

"Mr. Lincoln was generous by nature, and though his whole heart was in the war, he could not but respect the valor of those opposed to him."

—Elizabeth Keckley in "Behind the Scenes"



"He was no fanatic, wedded to one idea, or any abstract principle. If one plan would not do, he would try another."

—Charles Hodge in "The Princeton Review," July 1865

[At Gettysburg] *"Mr. Lincoln was mounted upon a young and beautiful chestnut bay horse, the largest in the Cumberland Valley, and his towering figure surmounted by a high silk hat made the rest of us look small."*

—Henry C. Cochrane in "The Star and Sentinel," May 22, 1907

"He is exceedingly thin, not so very tall. His face denotes an immense force of resistance and extreme melancholy. It is plain that this man has suffered deeply."

—Marquis Adolphe de Chambrun in "Impressions of Lincoln and the Civil War"

"Mr. Edwards & myself ... told Mary & Lincoln that they had better not ever marry -- that their natures, mind, -- Education -- raising &c were so different they could not live happy as husband & wife..."

—Elizabeth Todd Edwards in "Herndon's Informants"

"He probably had as little taste or style about dress or attire as any man who was ever born. He simply wore clothes because it was needful and customary; whether they fitted or looked well was entirely above or beneath his knowledge."

—Henry Whitney in "Mr. Lincoln's Habits and Tendencies"

"Frequent letters were received warning Mr. Lincoln of assassination, but he never gave a second thought to the mysterious warnings. The letters, however, sorely troubled his wife."

—Elizabeth Keckley in "Behind the Scenes"

"...he remarked that he had made a vow, a covenant, that if God gave us the victory in the approaching battle, he would consider it an indication of Divine will, and that it was his duty to move forward in the cause of emancipation."

—Sept. 22, 1862 entry in the Diary of Gideon Welles

"Conversation ensued for some minutes, which the President enlivened by two or three peculiar little sallies, and I left agreeably impressed with his shrewdness, humor, and natural sagacity."

-William Howard Russell in "My Diary North and South"

"He was dressed in gray woolen clothing, and had upon his head a most ordinary broad-brimmed slouch. He was covered with dust and came in alone with the peculiar swinging gait that characterizes the old 'Rail splitter'."

-Benjamin French, September 4, 1861, in "Witness to a Young Republic"

"...in August 1835 Ann sickened and died. The effect upon Mr. Lincoln's mind was terrible; he became plunged in despair, and many of his friends feared that reason would desert her throne."

-Robert B. Rutledge in "Lincoln's Informants"

"...Mr. Lincoln was the central figure of our age, and on him were concentrated the love, the faith, the reverence, the hate, the fear, and the calumny, of half the civilized world. The 'plain people' understood him better than did the politicians; and he in turn had a wonderful perception of the real condition of the popular heart and will."

-William O. Stoddard in "White House Sketches"

"Mr. Lincoln entered Washington the victim of a grave delusion. A genial, quiet, essentially peaceful man, trained in the ways of the bar and the stump, he fully believed that there would be no civil war, - no serious effort to consummate Disunion."

-Horace Greeley in "Recollections of a Busy Life"

"The White House continued to be a very busy place, but it was never, during the Lincoln administration, a gay one. Yet probably no President laughed more often than he did."

-Helen Nicolay in "Lincoln's Secretary"

"As a Statesman, he was deeply imbued with the Principles of Henry Clay, but was conscientiously [sic] opposed to slavery all his life, & he expressed his views honestly & truly to the Ky delegation when he urged them so strongly to accept compensated emancipation."

-Orlando B. Ficklin in "Herndon's Informants"

"It turned out that the President, having business at the War Department, met Major Eckert, superin-

tendent of the military bureau of telegraphs, who congratulated him on his nomination. 'What! Am I renominated?' asked the surprised chief."

-Noah Brooks in "Washington in Lincoln's Time"

[in re 'House Divided'] "It was a speech made at the commencement of a campaign, and apparently made for the campaign ... Viewing it in this light alone, nothing could have been more unfortunate, or unappropriate; it was saying first the wrong thing, yet he saw it was an abstract truth, but standing by the speech would ultimately find him in the right place."

-January 17, 1866 Letter by Leonard Swett

"Twenty months ago he was without a party. The Copperheads hated him; the 'Conservative Republicans' thought him too fast; the 'Radical Republicans' thought him too slow; the War Democrats were looking for the chance of a return to political power. He held steadily upon his way."

-From the March 5, 1864 edition of Harper's Weekly

"If Mr. Lincoln was six feet, four inches high usually, at Bloomington that day he was seven feet, and inspired at that. From that day to the day of his death he stood firm in the right."

-From Herndon's "Life of Lincoln"

"When he was with me, I have seen him get a case and seem to be bewildered at first, but he would go at it and after a while he would master it. He was very tenacious in his grasp of a thing that he once got hold of."

-Stephen Logan in the Sept. 1, 1928, Lincoln Centennial Association Bulletin

"Standing, as, we do to-day, by his coffin and his sepulcher, let us resolve to carry forward the policy which he so nobly began. Let us do right to all men."

-From the May 4, 1865 Lincoln Burial Address by Rev. Matthew Simpson

"But Mr. Lincoln's death came at a time propitious to the glorification of his memory. He died at a time when he was preaching reconciliation and the forgetting of the past, when he was nobly repressing the blameworthy exultation of the victorious faction."

-Editorial in the April 28, 1865 Paris La Patrie

The Civil War Institute at Manor College - Spring 2004 Schedule

Life of the Common Soldier - Core Course
6 Thursdays - January 13 - February 17, 6:30 to 8:30 pm
Herb Kaufman, Instructor \$70

The Civil War Overview - Core Course
6 Wednesdays - January 21 - February 25, 6:30 to 8:30 pm
Members of Delaware Valley CWRT, Instructors \$70

Franklin & Nashville
3 Tuesdays - March 9, 16, and 23, 6:30 to 8:30 pm
Jerry Carrier, Instructor \$40

Ulysses S. Grant
3 Wednesdays - March 10, 17, and 24, 6:30 to 8:30 pm
Barbara Goll, Instructor \$40

Petersburg - The Nine Month Siege
3 Thursdays - March 11, 18 and 25, 6:30 to 8:30 pm
Mike Cavanaugh, Instructor \$40

Manor College
700 Fox Chase Road - Jenkintown, PA 19046
215-884-2218 Registration

What's News?

The only way you'll know what's happening in the Civil War today is
by reading

“The Civil War News”

The monthly current events newspaper for people with an interest in the Civil War today.

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1805 Pine Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**

