



# the Maryland Line

November 2013

Volume 32, Issue 3

## Lincoln and Grant

By Edward Bonekemper

Book review by Richard M. McMurry

Lincoln, born in Kentucky, and Grant, a native of Ohio, were both citizens of Illinois when the Civil War began. Although the two would not meet until March 1864, Grant had an indirect connection to powerful politicians through Elihu B. Washburne, his Galena, Ill., neighbor, a leading Republican in Congress, and a longtime political ally of Lincoln.

Thanks both to Washburne's influence and to his own military background and qualifications, Grant secured an early appointment as colonel of the 21st Illinois Infantry Regiment in June 1861. His success in that role soon led to a brigadier's star and assignment to command the area around Cairo, Ill. From that assignment flowed his great 1862 and 1863 victories at Fort Donelson, Shiloh, Vicksburg and Chattanooga.

Those successes increasingly brought Grant to Lincoln's attention and led in early 1864 to command of all Union land forces. Grant spent the last year of the war campaigning against the Confederates in Virginia while his chief subordinates directed operations in other areas.

Through an examination of "Lincoln's and Grant's similarities and difference," Bonekemper seeks to understand the men's "extraordinary individual and collaborative achievements." Both, for example, were "men of the river—born near the Ohio," and both married into slaveholding families.

Both men were humble, decisive, persevering and excellent communicators. Each understood his role. Lincoln pretty much left military matters to Grant; Grant understood and accepted the fact that Lincoln was in charge, had political as well as military objectives and set policy.

Bonekemper sought to bring together the story of how these two remarkable men came to trust each other and work closely together. In so doing he gave us a work that shed light on the key relationship between commander-in-chief and his top general.

He will give much to ponder and many ideas to contemplate as we compare Lincoln and Grant with, say Jefferson Davis and Robert E. Lee, Franklin Roosevelt and George C. Marshall, and Harry Truman and Douglas MacArthur.

*Historian Edward H. Bonekemper III is the new Civil War News Book Review Editor, succeeding Blake A. Magner who retired after 20 years of service.*

*Bonekemper, a native and resident of Pennsylvania, has bachelor's and master's degrees in American history from Muhlenberg College and Old Dominion University, respectively, and his J.D. from Yale Law School.*

*He published four Civil War books since 1998: Grant and Lee: Victorious American and Vanquished Virginian; McClellan and Failure: A Study of Civil War Fear, Incompetence and Worse; A Victor, Not a Butcher: Ulysses S. Grant's Overlooked Military Genius; and How Robert E. Lee Lost the Civil War.*

*He writes and lectures widely on the topics of his books, slavery, turning points of the Civil War and Union and Confederate generals.*

*During his 34 years as a federal government attorney he wrote for Navy and Coast Guard publications and spoke on a variety of topics for the Coast Guard and the Interior and Transportation departments. He retired as a commander in the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve.*

*Bonekemper has taught several Civil War and other military history courses and is an adjunct lecturer on U.S. military history at Muhlenberg College. He has spoken at numerous Civil War Round Tables, given six lectures about the Civil War at the Smithsonian Institution, and lectured*

## Upcoming Round Table Speakers 2013-2014

- 12 December: Scott Patchan—Shenandoah Summer  
9 January: Kevin Knapp—Thaddeus Lowe & Civil War Balloons  
13 February: Ron Beavers—Civil War Railroads  
13 March: Hari Jones—Emancipation Proclamation  
10 April: Ben Hawley—History of U.S. Colored Troops  
8 May: Kim Bernard Holien—First Manassas

### Would You Like Your Newsletter by Email?



We are looking at ways to tighten our belts just like everybody else. One way is by receiving your newsletter by email. You'll receive your newsletter earlier than those who receive them by snail mail, in color, and most importantly—all in one piece! So if you would like to receive your newsletter by email, please contact Bob Clark at [BobClark3@aol.com](mailto:BobClark3@aol.com) or Vivian Eicke at [vive01@verizon.net](mailto:vive01@verizon.net) and they'll add you to the email list.

### Don't Forget Our Monthly Dinner!

Don't forget our monthly dinners before our presentations. It's a great time to meet others who are interested in the Civil War era, meet the speaker, and believe it or not some really good food. So come on out and join us for dinner? We'd love to see ya! Reservations for dinner are appreciated so we know how many meals the hotel will need to prepare. To make dinner reservations, contact Bob Clark by email at [BobClark3@aol.com](mailto:BobClark3@aol.com) or at 301-253-3485. Also, it's nice to see new faces at our meetings so invite your spouse, friend, co-worker, or just grab someone of the street and bring them with you.

### Civil War Book Group

For those of you interested in reading about the Civil War and discussing to books with other interested souls, the Civil War Book Group meets the second Tuesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. The location is:

Barnes & Noble Bookseller  
Montrose Crossing  
12089 Rockville Pike  
Rockville, MD 20852

This is the same shopping center as the Sports Authority, Giant and Hudson Trail Outfitters. For more information, contact Bob Jones at 301-299-7053.

### November Civil War Traveler Events

For further events go to [www.civilwartraveler.com](http://www.civilwartraveler.com)

- 2 VA Lecture, "From Unison Road to Fredericksburg," at the Unison Methodist Church, 21148 Unison Road, near Middleburg. 7:30 pm. [mosbyheritagearea.org](http://mosbyheritagearea.org)  
7 MD Discussion, "Imagining War," at the USG Library, the Universities at Shady Grove in Rockville. 7 pm. Free. [shadygrove.umd.edu/news/9967](http://shadygrove.umd.edu/news/9967)  
9 VA Living history walking tours of Fort Ward in Alexandria. 2 pm. Free. 703-671-7350.

13 MD "An Evening with James McPherson: Civil War on Land and Sea: Abraham Lincoln as Commander-in-Chief," exhibit tour and lecture at the Maryland Historical Society in Baltimore. Dinner follows at the Maryland Club. Begins 4 pm. \$25/lecture, book signing; \$125 for everything. [mdhs.org](http://mdhs.org)

14 MD "An Evening with James McPherson: Civil War on Land and Sea: Abraham Lincoln as Commander-in-Chief," exhibit tour and lecture at the Maryland Historical Society in Baltimore. Dinner follows at the Maryland Club. Begins 4 pm. \$25/lecture, book signing; \$125 for everything. [mdhs.org](http://mdhs.org)

16 DC Living history walking tour, "Courage! The Civil War in Washington," hear the stories, see the downtown sites. Meets at 1001 Pennsylvania Ave NW. 11 am. \$12. [historictrolls.com](http://historictrolls.com)

16 PA "Songs and Stories of a Civil War Hospital: Candlelight at Christ Church," 30 Chambersburg St, Gettysburg. 8 pm. Free 717-334-5212.

16-17 DC/VA Overnight Bus Tour, "Stonewall Jackson's Shenandoah Valley Campaign," with Ed Bearss. Leaves from Washington DC. For detailed information see [smithsonianassociates.org](http://smithsonianassociates.org) (click on Civil War) or call 202-633-8647.

17 VA Lecture, "Managing the Civil War," at the Central Library, 1015 N. Quincy St, Arlington. 6 pm. Free. 703-228-5990.

★ 150 19 PA Anniversary activities commemorating Lincoln's Gettysburg Address at the Soldier's National Cemetery in Gettysburg. Speaker and memorial. Details: 717-337-6590.

21 MD Discussion, "War and Freedom: Civil Rights for African-American," at the USG Library, the University at Shady Grove in Rockville. 7 pm. Free. [shadygrove.umd.edu/news/9967](http://shadygrove.umd.edu/news/9967)

21 MD Lecture, "Overland Campaign," at the Carroll Community College in Westminster, 6:30-9:30. \$39. Details 410-386-8100.

21 DC Book talk and reception, "Congressman Lincoln: The Making of America's Greatest President," at President Lincoln's Cottage in Washington. Talk at 6:30 pm, reception at 6 pm. \$10/Lecture, \$10/reception. [lincolncottage.org](http://lincolncottage.org)

22 PA "An Evening with the Painting," special two-hour, after-hours view of and talks about the Gettysburg Cyclorama. 4:30 and 6:30 pm. \$20/adult. Tickets: [gettysburgfoundation.org](http://gettysburgfoundation.org)

★ 150 23 PA Remembrance Day Parade and Ceremonies commemorating Lincoln's Gettysburg Address in Gettysburg. Parade starts 1 pm. [www.suvvw.org](http://www.suvvw.org)

★ 150 23 PA Remembrance Illumination at the Soldiers' National Cemetery in Gettysburg. 5:30-9:30 pm. Free. [www.gettysburgfoundation.org](http://www.gettysburgfoundation.org)

23 VA Lecture, "Messages from the Front: A Study in Civil War Reenacting," at Historic Blenheim in Fairfax. 2 pm. Free. 703-591-0560.



# Lincoln signs Ulysses S. Grant's Commission to Command the U.S. Army, March 10, 1864

[www.history.com/this-day-in-history/lincoln-signs-ulysses-s-grant-commission-to-command-the-us-army](http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/lincoln-signs-ulysses-s-grant-commission-to-command-the-us-army)



On this day in 1864, President Abraham Lincoln signs a brief document officially promoting then-Major General Ulysses S. Grant to the rank of lieutenant general of the U.S. Army, tasking the future president with the job of leading all Union troops against the Confederate Army.

The rank of lieutenant general had not officially been used since 1798; at that time, President John Adams assigned the post to former President George Washington, in anticipation of a possible French invasion of the United States. One of Grant's predecessors in the Civil War, Winfield Scott, had briefly earned the rank, but the appointment was only temporary—really, use of the rank had been suspended after George Washington's death in 1799.

In 1862, Lincoln asked Congress to revive the rank of lieutenant general in order to distinguish between the general in charge of all Union forces and other generals of equal rank who served under him in the field. Congress also wanted to reinstate the rank of lieutenant general, but only if Lincoln gave the rank to Grant. Lincoln had other ideas.

Lincoln preferred to promote then-Commanding General Henry Wagner Halleck to lead the Union Army, which had been plagued by a string of ineffective leaders and terrible losses in battle. He was reluctant to promote Grant and risk boosting the general's popularity; at the time Washington was abuzz with rumors that many northern senators were considering nominating Grant instead of Lincoln at the 1864 Republican National Convention. After Grant publicly dismissed the idea of running for the presidency, Lincoln submitted to Congress' choice and agreed to give Grant the revived rank. As lieutenant general of the U.S. Army, Grant was answerable only to Lincoln. Well-respected by the troops and civilians, Grant earned Lincoln's trust and went on to force the South's surrender in 1865.

Although Grant enjoyed a distinguished career in the military, he later wrote that he never consciously chose the life of a soldier. As a student at West Point, he never expected to graduate, let alone lead the entire U.S. Army in a desperate but ultimately successful struggle to preserve the Union.

In 1869, Grant became the 18th president of the United States.



## Did You Know?

<http://atyourlibrary.org/cultrue/ulysses-s-grant-portrayed-movie-lincoln-his-reputation-continues-grow>

Did you know that Ulysses S. Grant has been portrayed in more than 35 films and dozens of TV shows over the years? That's right!

Between the 1920s to the 1980s, Grant was portrayed as a brutal warrior general, an inept President and a drunk. However, though Grant's legacy as a military leader and President will always be entwined with the American Civil War and Reconstruction, revisionist historians have since begun to look at Grant from a new approach having appreciated his genius as general, his protection of African Americans during Reconstruction as commanding general and President, and his peace policy towards American Indians.

Historian H.W. Brands has said Grant's reputation suffered in the years after his presidency as "Southern Democrats forgot that secession was about slavery" and embraced the Lost Cause view of the war, while northern Republicans likewise "lost touch with the anti-slavery roots of their party" and embraced a more capitalistic view of politics. Brands states that since Grant's presidency stood against both party's revisions of history, he was attacked for scandals and failed actions while the positive aspects of his presidency were overlooked.

In terms of assessing President Grant from an "emancipationist" historical view, Grant's policies look "surprisingly good." Grant secured the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment and enforced the rights of African Americans to vote. Grant's reputation has improved due to his use of federal troops and the Justice Department under his Enforcement Acts to prosecute and shut down the Ku Klux Klan from 1871 to 1873; the result, according to historian James McPherson, was that Grant's victory in 1872 was one of the fairest Presidential elections in the United States.



E. Alyn Warren as Gen. Grant in *Abraham Lincoln*, 1930

Grant is the third most popular American president to be portrayed in movies and TV. Portrayals include:

- *The Birth of a Nation*, 1915 silent epic movie, played by Donald Crisp
- *Abraham Lincoln*, 1930, played by E. Alyn Warren.
- *They Died with their Boots On*, 1941, played by Joseph Crehan (uncredited)
- *The Horse Soldiers*, 1959 John Wayne movie, played by Stan Jones
- *How the West Was Won*, 1962, played by Harry Morgan
- *Legend of the Lone Ranger*, 1981, played by Jason Robards
- *Wild Wild West*, 1999, played by Kevin Kline
- *Jonah Hex*, 2010, played by Aidan Quinn
- *Lincoln*, 2012, played by Jared Harris

**Montgomery County Civil War Round Table  
10510 Moxley Road  
Damascus, MD 20872**

**Comments, Questions or Suggestions**

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions  
Contact Vivian Eicke at 301-681-6497

**Next Month's Meeting**

Speaker: Scott Patchan  
Topic: Shenandoah Summer  
Date: December 12, 2013

**The Maryland Line**

Vivian Eicke, Editor  
c/o MCCWRT  
10510 Moxley Road  
Damascus, MD 20872

**Layout and Production**

Vivian Eicke

**Substitute Meals**

If you have dietary restrictions, and require something other than what is on the menu, please let Bob know when you make your reservations.

Check out our website at [MCCivilWar.org](http://MCCivilWar.org), and our Facebook page at **Montgomery County Civil War Round Table**.

**Third Regular Meeting of 2013 - 2014 Season**

Date: November 14, 2013

Place: Hilton Hotel  
620 Perry Parkway  
Gaithersburg, MD

Time: 7:00 p.m. - Dinner  
8:00 p.m. - Speaker

Speaker: Edward Bonekemper

Topic: Lincoln and Grant

Dinner: \$25.00

Speaker only: \$5.00

Reservations: Bob Clark  
301-253-3485  
Email: [bobclark3@aol.com](mailto:bobclark3@aol.com)

Reservation Deadline: 9:00 p.m., Monday, Nov 11th.  
Please remember that if you have made a dinner reservation and are a no show, then the Round Table has to pick up the tab. So help us keep costs to a minimum by honoring your reservation. Thank you.



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