

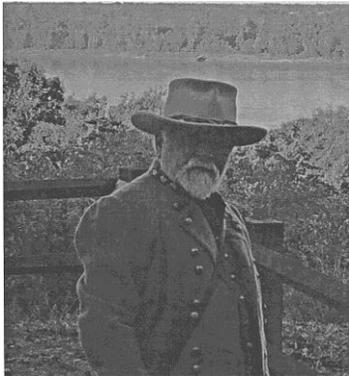


# THE drum roll

379th Regular Meeting Volume 39 Number 8 April 1, 2022

## Meet General Robert E. Lee

Friday, April 1, 2022, 7:30 p.m.  
Arlington Heights Public Library



Alas we are going to meet in person at the Arlington Heights Library in the Henderson Room - 2nd Floor at 7:30 p.m. with re-enactor Paul Wolf portraying General Robert E. Lee.

He will tell his military history starting from the Mexican War including service between the Mexican War and John Brown's Raid concluding with the War of the Rebellion. The General will finish up with his life after the war until his death in 1870.

### Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84714324965?pwd=V2EzRGNDROVrk2J1NG9OYWplVTdmUT09>

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## THE LINCOLNS HOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE

On March 4 (coincidentally, the anniversary of both of his inaugurals), the Round Table was graced with the presence of President Abraham Lincoln and First Lady Mary Lincoln, as portrayed by Max and Donna Daniels.

The format was one previously unknown to the Lincolns, or any other American of the time: a press conference, in which the Round Table members (assuming the viewpoint of various newspapers, North and South) submitted questions for the First Couple. (The conference was set as April 13, 1865 – thus the Lincolns were spared any questions about the assassination.) The President began with an opening statement, during which he covered a variety of basics (working in some classic quotes along the way) while admitting that the format was new to him and Mary.

Then it was on to the questions, which will be sampled throughout the balance of this article. The initial query was about Lincoln's intention for treating the captured Jefferson Davis (assuming he eventually gets captured.) The President responded with his general attitude for the Confederacy as a whole: "Let 'em up easy." He reflected that if Davis should escape the "chicken coop" entirely, that would be all right with him, and that he intended to treat the beaten ex-Confederates with no malice – as leniently as possible. Related to this subject, in response to a question about how Reconstruction would be handled, Lincoln referred to the Wade-Davis plan requiring 50% of the former rebels taking the loyalty oath as being too stringent – he preferred his own 10% plan.

When asked about how he appreciated the high percentage of soldiers that voted for him, Lincoln opined that they did so because, although they had loved McClellan, they realized that had they voted for

Little Mac they would have essentially wasted their efforts thus far in the war. The President faced the possibility of having lost the 1864 election by declaring that he would have done everything possible between November and March to secure victory in the conflict. In particular, he mentioned his "blind memorandum" of August 1864 as an indication of his resolve.

A question about how the First Couple found solace during the war brought contributions from the First Lady as well as the President. Abe mentioned that he found comfort in the Bible (despite he himself not being a member of any particular church), citing its "good messages." He also enjoyed Shakespeare in particular, both tragedies and comedies – but stressed that his reading time was limited due to the exigencies of war. Mary admitted to having great difficulty during the conflict, particularly concerning the death of their son Willie in 1862. She said she did not handle it particularly well, but that she found comfort in meeting with spiritualists, through which she could communicate with the departed Willy. As for their eldest son, Robert, Mary related that she and Abe had been in conflict about whether to let him join the war effort (as Robert strongly desired to do), and that his eventual position on Grant's staff was a compromise allowing Robert to serve with minimal risk.

A Southern paper asked if the former slaves in New Orleans (and elsewhere) would be given the vote; Lincoln responded that this was up to Congress, but that he himself at the very least favored the vote given to the more intelligent blacks, and those who had served in the military. He expressed concern that the new freedom needed to be codified in writing, and specifically cited the newly-passed 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment (not yet ratified) as vital to that concern. Another potential concern here in April 1865 was the presence of the French in Mexico. The President considered it a minor issue, citing the Juarez resistance as mitigating the threat, and stated that although troops might be sent to Texas, they would be for defensive purposes only; no alliances would be made.

Another question jumped back to the war's outset: Had Lincoln anticipated armed resistance? He answered that, no, he did not; he had promised to abide by the Constitution, and that he meant no harm, but that the first seven states had jumped the gun and illegally declared secession. (In the case of South Carolina, Lincoln mentioned that it had been trying to leave for years.) It was only when he got to

Washington that the President began to realize how much in earnest the Southern states were – though he stressed that the Confederacy existed in name only, not as a legal entity. The Union did not have its own destruction codified within its structure.

Mary was asked about the possibility of divided loyalties, given that she had several relatives who had fought for the rebels. She admitted the conflicted nature of her native state of Kentucky, but stressed that the decision by her relatives to go South was their decision, not hers; her loyalty was to Abe and the nation. In this she left no doubt. Meanwhile, Abe was asked about civil liberties during his Presidency, in particular the suspension of habeas corpus and the jailing of newspapermen. Regarding the former, Lincoln posed the question: “Should all laws be abandoned except one, or should the one be abandoned?” He further stated that sometimes a limb must be lost to save a life, but not the reverse. He further added that he had no personal reason for arresting journalists, but that they should not be allowed to give aid and comfort to the enemy – and that in many of these cases, some of his generals “overstepped.”

When asked about their post-Presidential plans, both of them mentioned travel, particularly to Europe and the Holy Land (the latter particularly favored by Abe), and then ultimately back to Springfield and the Herndon law office. The final question of the evening involved the President’s iconic Gettysburg Address. Lincoln stated that its length (2 minutes, as opposed to Edward Everett’s 2-hour oration) was the right length for the occasion, since he had been asked to make a “few remarks.” He further revealed that, although he had made notes, he did not need to refer to them during the address, and stressed that the “new birth of freedom” had been given legs by the Emancipation Proclamation.

Overall, the Lincolns handled the unfamiliar “press conference” format with a great deal of skill, candor and enlightenment. On behalf of the Round table, I would like to thank Abraham and Mary Lincoln – not to mention Max and Donna Daniels – for a great evening.

## April Saturday Discussion

Saturday April 16, all members and guests are invited to participate in the session via zoom. Pat McCormick will lead the discussion on Brown Water Navy. It will start at 10:00 a.m

Zoom info will be sent out via email

Join Zoom Meeting

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## Book Raffle

There will be a book raffle as per our usual raffle tickets. Also the roundtable is looking for someone to take over the book raffle -

**PLEASE HELP!**

In accordance I will bring a couple of boxes of books to sell for a price to help with our preservation fund.



## 2021-22 Officers and Trustees

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2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice President	
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Trustee	Danielle Kafka
Trustee	<b>Vacant</b>

### Appointed Positions

Book Raffle	<b>Vacant</b>
Newsletter Editor	Charlie Banks - Temp.

## Upcoming Events

Tuesday April 12, McHenry County CWRT, 7:00 pm at the Woodstock Public Library in the basement, Steve Alban will present "The Actual Causes of the Rebellion According to the words of Joshua Giddings and Abraham Lincoln".

Friday April 8, The Chicago CWRT will present Jeffrey Hunt on Meade and Lee at Rappahannock Station and Mine Run at 7:30 pm