



# THE drum roll

378th Regular Meeting Volume 39 Number 7 March 4, 2022

## Oval Office Press Conference

Friday, March 4, 2022, 7:30 p.m.  
Via Zoom



The President and Mrs. Lincoln have graciously returned to have a press conference before our esteem reporters from the Chicago area. They will try to answer your questions that you have wanted to ask the President and Mary.

Max and Donna have an extensive background in community theatre and have been portraying Abraham and Mary Todd Lincoln professionally since 1988. They are past Vice-Presidents of the National Association of Lincoln Presenters and have received its awards for "Best Abraham," "Best Mary," "Best Abraham and Mary Lincoln Team," and "Lincoln Legend."

They have been featured on C-Span Cable Network in the Lincoln-Douglas Debate series, the "Someone You Should Know" program on ABC/Channel 7 in Chicago, and the Investigating History series on the History Channel. They have performed at the Lincoln Home Visitor Center in

Springfield, Illinois and at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC. They participate in Memorial Day ceremonies at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery, and took part in the dedication of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum in Springfield, IL. They research and write their own original scripts, receiving many compliments for the entertaining way in which they present their programs. They are popular attractions at Civil War Reenactments throughout the Midwest and make over 200 appearances each year for schools, libraries, and other organizations. They take great pride in bringing history to life for audiences of all ages.

So as newsletter editor, I ask my beat reporters to have a few questions prepared for Mr. & Mrs. President Abraham Lincoln.

### ZOOM INFORMATION

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89174003826?pwd=QVd1SHVmbnNQmJb6MEhQb05DUE5kQT09>

Meeting ID: 891 7400 3826

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## FROM THE COLLECTIONS OF KENOSHA

Not too far north of us, just over the Wisconsin border, lies the Civil War Museum in Kenosha. On February 4, the museum's Doug Dammann gave the Round Table a sampling of artifacts in their collection, and their value as primary sources.

As Dammann explained, collections are the heart of museums. But museums must both collect and display. He also mentioned that, while primary sources are often considered to be of the two-dimensional type (writings), three-D objects can also serve the same purpose. In illustration of this fact, he guided us through a selection of the museum's artifacts, 2-D and 3-D. (Regarding the need for exhibit, these items are, or have been, rotated periodically between exhibition and storage.)

Dammann started with the 2-D artifacts – specifically, letters written by several individuals. William Welshams joined the 30<sup>th</sup> Illinois in 1864; his letters exhibit unusual attitudes for a late war Union soldier, expressing his preference against Lincoln's reelection and relating a January 1865 clash between members of his regiment and U.S. Colored troops in South Carolina, where - if his account is accurate and not rumor – ten of the black soldiers were killed. Another letter writer was Samuel Barritt of the 29<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin. His missives, written primarily from Camp Randall, deal with money – both as the source of his motivation for enlisting (bounty) and as it referred to finances on his farm. Most revealing was the role of his wife in handling the finances at home, negotiating crop prices and selling livestock – a major shift in gender roles. Another unusual letter-writer was Caroline Quarles, who, held in slavery by her own father, escaped on a train by “passing” for white. While being pursued, she made it to Wisconsin, then to Detroit and Canada, aided by a man named Lyman. 38 years after the escape, Lyman

somehow located Caroline and the letter in the museum collection is her response.

Not just letters serve as 2-D artifacts, however. A bill of sale from the estate settlement of one John Broadus includes humans (slaves) as far and away the most expensive items; for Doctor Benjamin Franklin White, Dammann presented White's medical diploma as well as his commission in the 1<sup>st</sup> Wisconsin Volunteers. Newspapers, too, can be valuable and informative artifacts. A copy of the German-language newspaper *Der Seebote* from September 1864 clearly indicates their Presidential preference by the illustrations (George McClellan looking very impressive and military while a beardless Lincoln looks disheveled), while a Sanitary Commission newspaper, “The Voice of the Fair,” gives an itinerary for appearances by Grant and Sherman.

The last 2D source – which is kind of a transition to 3D – is the diary. Dammann presented a couple of these. The first was from George Mebane, and the entry in question was from Camp Randall, Wisconsin. The kicker: Mebane was a member of the 55<sup>th</sup> Tennessee, and was a prisoner at Randall, having been captured at Island #10. Another type of diary is pre-printed with dates on each page, and room below them for daily entries, and one of these was shown as well. Continuing into 3D, photographs – in this case tintypes – were part of the program. Two different artifacts were shown, probably from the same photo shoot but of different personnel. In both cases, the backdrop was the same, a graphic pertaining to the 26<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin, the “Sigel Regiment.”

From tintypes it was on to other artifact types. James Pond was born in New York and later moved to Illinois. He wound up enlisting in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wisconsin Cavalry, and the museum collection includes his Medal of Honor, awarded for gallantry at Baxter Springs, Kansas in 1863. From a German First Sergeant in the 6<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Light Artillery, they have his blue shell jacket, complete with veteran's bars on the sleeves. (Its owner had been wounded at Corinth, Mississippi.) Another Wisconsin tunic presented was that of Milton Ewen of the 1<sup>st</sup> Wisconsin Volunteers. Being an early war unit, the 1<sup>st</sup> Wisconsin's first jacket is gray, rather than blue. And from Company E, 26<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteers – recruited in LaSalle County - a flag was presented. Covered in extensive battle honors from 1862-65, it also exhibited a series of mileage totals along the bottom, a most unusual feature.

The exhibition of artifacts wrapped up with a couple from Captain Edward Saxe of the 16<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Volunteers. As part of the initial reconnaissance from Peabody's brigade the early morning of April 6, 1862, Saxe became the first officer wounded at the battle of Shiloh. Dammann presented an inscribed cane that Saxe had made from part of a tree on the Shiloh battlefield, and a photo of Saxe and some relatives visiting Fraley Field in 1906.

Amazingly, the cane came to the Kenosha museum from an unlikely source: it was found at a flea market!

Whether 2-dimensional or 3-dimensional, the artifacts in a museum's collection are indeed the heart of the museum itself, and they tell stories – often unusual and surprising stories. On behalf of the Round Table, I would like to thank Doug Dammann for a fascinating sampling of the artifacts preserved in Kenosha.

## February Saturday Discussion

Saturday March 19, all members and guests are invited to participate in the session via zoom. Pat McCormick will lead the discussion on 1864 election. It will start at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday March 19.

Zoom info will be sent out via email

Join Zoom Meeting

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Meeting ID: 890 6040 9307

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## NICWRT Upcoming Schedule

Friday April 1, 2022 our presenter will be Robert E. Lee



## 2021-22 Officers and Trustees

President	Wayne Rhine
1 <sup>st</sup> Vice President	Laurie Schiller
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice President	
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Trustee	Tom Gavigan
Trustee	Fred Reczkowicz
Trustee	Danielle Kafka
Trustee	<b>Vacant</b>

### Appointed Positions

Book Raffle	
Newsletter Editor	Charlie Banks

## Upcoming Events

Tuesday March 8, McHenry County CWRT, 7:00 pm at the Woodstock Public Library in the basement, Gene Salecker will present Nathan Bedford Forrest's 1864 Railroad Raid. Masks are required.

Friday March 11 at the Kenosha Civil War Museum at 12 Noon, Wayne Rhine will present Chicago Mercantile Battery.

Friday March 11, The Chicago CWRT will present Mark Laubacher on The USS Rover: Hospital Of Firsts at 7:30 pm

## In Memoriam

In Memoriam a former member and presenter of our roundtable Larry Gibbs passed away on February 24. Our condolences to his family and friends.