



ABOUT the ALCWRT

- *The Abraham Lincoln Civil War Round Table is the oldest Civil War Round Table in Michigan, founded in 1952. Our JUBILEE (65th) anniversary was September, 2017.*
- *Meetings are each 3rd Thursday, September through May (except December), 7:30 pm, at the Charter Township of Plymouth City Offices, 9955 N. Haggerty, in the Chamber Council Room.*
- *For more information, contact ALCWRT President Liz Stringer at stringerL@aol.com*
- *Our web site is ALCWRT.org*
- *Like us on **FACEBOOK**...!*
"Abraham Lincoln Civil War Round Table"

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with a *list of future meeting topics*

LARISSA FLEISHMAN and KEN GIORLANDO will be our featured speakers for the APRIL 19th meeting of the Abraham Lincoln Civil War Round Table.

DAILY LIFE in the CIVIL WAR ERA

ABOUT OUR SPEAKERS & THEIR PRESENTATION --

Though Larissa Fleishman and Ken Giorlando have been presenting history together since 2012, the two have been involved in living history for upwards of two decades. Their list of historic programs includes Victorian Farming, Colonial Farming, and the 18th century patriots Paul Revere and Sybil Ludington.

For the April meeting of the ALCWRT, Larissa and Ken will focus on **daily life in America in the Civil War era**. They dress in period clothing, accompanied by accessories and replicated artifacts specific to the time.

Larissa and Ken have presented at numerous reenactments, schools, libraries, historical societies and even to a group of senior farmers in Eaton Rapids. Come and take a step back in time with them!

MAY SPEAKER:

John Simmons will be the featured speaker at our May 17th meeting, on
The Maryland Campaign of 1862: 21 Days in September

Homework...!

John will provide handouts at the April meeting, so that we each can come prepared to participate in the May discussion.

(If you miss the April meeting, there will be a copy of the handouts for you at the May meeting).

Thanks! to **Dr. ROGER ROSENTERER** for his March 15th presentation
"BOLD, BRAVE & BRASH: Michigan's Civil War Generals".

See **What Did We Learn** on p.4 for a quick quiz about his engaging presentation!

WHEN LILACS LAST in the DOORYARD BLOOM'd: Walt Whitman's Poems Honoring Abraham Lincoln

Those of us of a certain age remember reading in school Walt Whitman's elegy to Abraham Lincoln, "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd". Here are the opening verses:

*When lilacs last in the dooryard bloom'd,
And the great star early droop'd in the western sky in the night,
I mourn'd, and yet shall mourn with ever-returning spring.*

*Ever-returning spring, trinity sure to me you bring,
Lilac blooming perennial and drooping star in the west,
And thought of him I love.*

*O powerful western fallen star
O shades of night—O moody, tearful night!
O great star disappear'd—O the black murk that hides the star!
O cruel hands that hold me powerless—O helpless soul of me!
O harsh surrounding cloud that will not free my soul.*

*In the dooryard fronting an old farm-house near the white-wash'd palings,
Stands the lilac-bush tall-growing with heart-shaped leaves of rich green,
With many a pointed blossom rising delicate, with the perfume strong I love,
With every leaf a miracle—and from this bush in the dooryard,
With delicate-color'd blossoms and heart-shaped leaves of rich green,
A sprig with its flower I break.*

*In the swamp in secluded recesses,
A shy and hidden bird is warbling a song.*

*Solitary the thrush,
The hermit withdrawn to himself, avoiding the settlements,
Sings by himself a song.*

*Song of the bleeding throat,
Death's outlet song of life, (for well dear brother I know,
If thou wast not granted to sing thou would'st surely die.)*

.....

THE 1865 VERSION

Whitman wrote this long poem in the summer of 1865, a time of deep mourning in the nation after the assassination of its sixteenth president. In these first few stanzas above, the poet introduces the **three symbols** that repeat throughout the poem: the **lilacs** (representing the poet's perennial love for Lincoln), the **fallen star** (representing Lincoln), and the **hermit thrush** (representing death, or its chant).

THREE OTHER ODES to LINCOLN

"*When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*" was one of four poems by Walt Whitman honoring Lincoln.

The first, "*Hush'd Be the Camps Today*", was written very quickly, just four days after the assassination in April, so that it could be inserted into *Drum-Taps*, a book of Whitman's Civil War era poems that was in the process of being printed.

The third poem, "*O Captain! My Captain!*", was published along with "... *Lilacs* ..." and other poems in the pamphlet *A Sequel to Drum Taps* in October.

The fourth poem, "*This Dust Was Once the Man*" appeared in 1871.

WHITMAN's RISE to FAME

Whitman's reputation as a poet had been established ten years before Lincoln's assassination with publication of his volume of poetry *Leaves of Grass*. Some at that time had found it controversial, but praise from the essayist, lecturer, and poet Ralph Waldo Emerson helped to foster interest in Whitman's work. His four poems honoring Lincoln would eventually be incorporated into later editions of *Leaves of Grass*. The last version of "...*Lilacs*..." – he did make some modifications over the years – appeared in the 1881 edition. *Leaves of Grass* has never been out of print since its first publication in 1855.

WHITMAN's CIVIL WAR EXPERIENCES

Whitman's experiences during the Civil War are reflected in the increasing maturity of his work since the first edition of *Leaves of Grass* was published. When the war began, Whitman moved from his home in New York to Washington, D.C., where he worked at the Army Paymaster's Office and later at the Bureau of Indian Affairs. He also volunteered as a hospital missionary in army hospitals. Whitman's brother, George Washington Whitman, was imprisoned for five months in the Confederate Libby Prison near Richmond beginning in September, 1864. When George was granted a furlough in early 1865 due to poor health, Walt traveled to New York to visit his brother at their family home.

It was during this visit to his family home in New York that Whitman learned of Lincoln's assassination.

He later wrote that he recalled stepping outside the door to the yard that day where the lilacs were in bloom, and that his deep sorrow was thereafter strongly associated with the scent of those blossoms.

Because of the timing of his visit to New York and travel back to D.C., it is unlikely that other images in the poem are based on Whitman's first-hand experiences. For example, Whitman biographer Jerome Loving notes that he didn't leave New York until April 21, so that he could not have been in D.C. for the public funeral on April 19. And Whitman also could not have attended ceremonies in New York on April 24th as he had already left New York for D.C. by then. It is possible that Whitman's train from New York to D.C. could have passed Lincoln's funeral train as it made its way to New York, possibly near Harrisburg, but that is not explicitly known.

SETTING "...LILACS..." to MUSIC

"*When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*" has been set to music as early as 1884 and as recently as 2004. This latest version was a commission from the Brooklyn Philharmonic to American composer Jennifer Higdon. She titled it *Dooryard Bloom* and adapted it for solo baritone and orchestra. The first performance of her work was on April 16, 2005.

Other adaptations include a version by the composer Paul Hindemith, written for chorus and orchestra to honor FDR after his death in April, 1945. In the 1960's, UC-Berkeley commissioned a version that, when finished in the 1970's, was dedicated to the memories of Martin Luther King, Jr and Robert Kennedy. In 1996 composer George T. Walker was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Music for his composition *Lilacs for Voice and Orchestra*. Walker's version, described as "passionate, and very American...", was premiered by the Boston Symphony Orchestra in February, 1996.

WHAT DID WE LEARN...?

Thanks to Dr. Roger Rosentreter for his engaging presentation at our March meeting,
Bold, Brash, and Brave: Michigan's Civil War Generals.

Here's a **quick quiz** to see what we learned..! (Answers in "This and That" below).

- (1) Several of the officers that Dr. Rosentreter told us about were described as breveted.
 What does it mean for an officer to be breveted?
- (2) Col. Henry A. Morrow of the Iron Brigade was not born in Michigan. He was serving as a capitol page in D.C.
 when he met a Detroiter who persuaded him to move to Michigan. Who was that Detroiter?
- (3) Prior to becoming one of Custer's Wolverines, **James Harvey Kidd** organized the Tappan Guard,
 a local guard comprised of University of Michigan students. Who was Tappan?

HOLD THESE DATES..!

~ Watch for emails from ALCWRT.NEWS@gmail.com, once the dates and other details are confirmed ~

ALCWRT's JUBILEE YEAR CELEBRATION -

**A celebration of the Abraham Lincoln Civil War Round Table's Jubilee Year is being planned
 for the spring of 2019...!!**

~ Yes, technically the Jubilee was this past Fall, but who could turn down what is expected to be
 a great celebration with a wonderful speaker
 at the fabulous **GAR Building** in Detroit..!

FALL TRIP -

Yes, the ALCWRT "powers that be" are planning a FALL TRIP for 2018...!!

Liz says "We're thinking about Kentucky in the early fall"

THIS and THAT ...

* BRING your FRIENDS ...!

~ The ALCWRT welcomes friends, relatives, acquaintances...

~ We're always looking for new members, and visitors are **always welcome..!**

~ Here's the current **list of future meeting topics:**

* May 17:	John Simmons:	"The Maryland Campaign of 1862"
* Sept 20:	Peter Gaudet:	"Gettysburg Photography Then and Now"
* Oct 18:	Michael Gillette:	"Chaplains of the Civil War"
* Nov 15:	Dr. David Stoddard:	"The Red River Campaign"

* STATION 885 –

~ Yes, the group still meets for dinner prior to the monthly meetings...

~ Please join us for spirited and enlightening conversation (and yes, dinner) !

* REFRESHMENTS for FUTURE MEETINGS –

~ Let Liz know if you're interested in bringing refreshments to a future meeting.

* ANNUAL DUES –

~ Worley is always happy to collect your dues

~ \$20 for a single ~~ \$35 for a couple

~ Dues are payable by the calendar year (January through December)

* QUICK QUIZ ANSWERS –

(1) A **brevet** is a warrant giving a commissioned officer a higher rank title as a reward for gallantry or meritorious conduct, but without conferring the authority, precedence, or pay of real rank. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, the term's first known use was in 1812.

(2) **Col. Henry A. Morrow**, born in 1829 in Warrenton, VA, was persuaded to move to Michigan by Michigan's senior Senator at the time, Lewis Cass. Morrow moved to Michigan in the 1850's.

(3) **Henry Phillip Tappan**, born in 1805 in NY of Prussian and Dutch parents, is considered the first President of the University of Michigan, serving from 1852 until 1863, when he was removed by a vote of the Regents. He was a strong proponent of the emerging German model of university curriculum, which emphasized research, lab study, elective courses, and a focus on science and engineering, rather than the British model of recitation in a core classical arts curriculum typical at that time in major American universities. He was popular with students and with the incoming group of newly-elected Regents, and so his firing was controversial.