



# THE COURIER



## Northeast Ohio Civil War Round Table



**Tuesday, November 13th, 2012 Meeting #130**

**Dino's Restaurant at I90 & State Rt. 306 Willoughby, Ohio**

**Guest Speaker: Brian Kowell**

**Topic: "Big Bethel: The First Battle of the Civil War"**

**Canteen at 6:00 pm      Dinner at 7:00 pm      Guests are welcome**

**Reservations required      Please call Mike Sears**

**Phone 440 257 3956      e-Mail: [mikeanddonnas@roadrunner.com](mailto:mikeanddonnas@roadrunner.com)**

**Brian Kowell** is a Charter Member of the Northeast Ohio Civil War Round Table and a past president of the Cleveland Civil War Round Table. For six years, he was the editor of their newsletter, *The Charger*. Brian has spoken to our club before on a number of topics including: *General George Gordon Meade*, *The Dahlgren Raid*, *Island # 10*, *Horses in the Civil War* and *The Civil War Quiz*. He has presented talks to the Cleveland, Youngstown and Tallmadge Civil War Round Tables and the Baldwin Wallace University Institute of Learning in Retirement. He recently made a presentation at the Medina County Library. Mr. Kowell has had an article about the Buckland Races published in *America's Civil War* magazine.

Brian Kowell was born and raised in Cleveland. He and his wife, Carol now reside in Hinckley, Ohio. They have five children and four grandchildren. Brian is a graduate of Baldwin Wallace College and worked in the pharmaceutical industry for 35 years before beginning his second career, teaching tennis at Towpath Tennis Club in Akron, Ohio. Teaching has prevented him from attending as many of our meetings as he would like and seeing all of his friends at the NEOCWRT. Brian has attended a number of our field trips and enjoys them immensely.

Big Bethel was located at the Hampton – York Highway crossing of the Back River, (also known as Brick Kiln Creek) on the Virginia Peninsula. It was located approximately 8 – 10 miles from Fortress Monroe. Located on the tip of the Peninsula, Fort Monroe was the largest stone fort in America at the time of the Civil War and was commanded by General Benjamin Butler. The roads running up the Peninsula toward Richmond were defended by Confederate forces commanded by General John Bankhead Magruder. On June 10, 1861 these two forces collided at Big Bethel, the first land battle of the Civil War. Big Bethel was a small battle in comparison to what was to come over the next four years but many of its participants would eventually rise to the rank of general. *Join us on Tuesday, November 13, 2012 for one of the best and most interesting Civil War speakers we have ever had, our own. Brian Kowell!*

## A CIVIL WAR Battlefield VACATION by Arlan Byrne

The Northeast Ohio Manassas Expedition, consisting of Joe Abazzio, Alan Byrne, Arlan Byrne, Tom Horvath, John Sandy and Franco Sperrazzo left Cleveland at 10:00AM Thursday morning September 27<sup>th</sup> 2012; and arrived on the battlefield of Antietam that afternoon. We explored the battlefield for a few hours before attending a meeting of the Hagerstown Civil War Roundtable to which George Deutsch, a member of both our own Northeast Ohio Civil War Roundtable, and the Hagerstown group, had invited us. It was held in a barn on the Mumma Farm in the middle of the battlefield.

The speaker was the nationally known Civil War historian, author, guide and our friend, Dennis J. Frye. Dennis discussed his latest book "September Suspense: Lincoln's Union in Peril". Since he was raised next to Antietam Battlefield Park and spent his childhood running around the park grounds, he was able to bring many interesting side bars into his talk. After the meeting it was reunion time with Dennis with much handshaking, picture taking and reminiscing. We ended our day with an exciting ride through a heavy rain and electrical storm to our hotel in Chantilly, Virginia. *Photograph on the right: George Deutsch, Arlan Byrne, Dennis Frye, and Franco Sperrazzo*



Friday morning we began our actual Manassas adventure with the Second Battle of Manassas. Our guide was National Park Ranger Henry Elliot. He began his outstanding tour of the battlefield with a short overview of the battle, in which he explained the situation in the summer of 1862; including the plans of Generals Lee, Longstreet and Jackson and the reactions of General Pope. Then he walked us through the individual fights at Brawner Farm, Sudley Springs Church, the Big Cut, Chinn Ridge and Henry Hill.



The park has spent an enormous amount of time and money removing trees and underbrush; trying to restoring the land to the way it was at the time of the battle. Thus, at Brawner Farm and the Big Cut, for instance, you can see what the Union soldiers saw preparing to attack. As you look across the open rolling fields ahead of you with cannon pointing at you in the distance; you can almost see the enemy battle line at the top of the far ridge waiting for you. You experience the excitement and the anxiety building as the troops around you begin their assault. And, as you walk across the ground in the footsteps of those long dead men, hearing in your mind the noise of the cannons and muskets, and the shouts and screams of the soldiers; you can feel the spirits of them rushing past you. It is a very emotional experience.

*Left photograph: George Deutsch, Joe Abazzio and Alan Byrne*

Saturday our guide for the First Battle of Manassas was our own George Deutsch. He started the tour at the Stone Bridge where he discussed the battle plans of both Union General McDowell and Confederate General PGT Beauregard. Our next stop was at the top of Matthews Hill. Here George explained the fighting during the morning of July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1861. Then we descended Matthews Hill, crossed the Warrenton Turnpike and Young's Branch and climbed Henry Hill where George explained and made sense of the confused fighting on that hill in the afternoon. We ended the day with the Confederates following the defeated Yankees north, back up the Warrenton Turnpike, and across the Stone Bridge toward Centreville.

We also visited the Stone House at the bottom of Matthews Hill and the intersection of the Warrenton Turnpike and the Sudley Springs Road. Because it served as a hospital in both battles, it was never destroyed. Both before and after the war it served as a tavern and overnight rest stop. It also had a cannon ball imbedded in the front of the house. Since nobody knew which battle it came from; I think it must have been cemented in the wall by the owner himself as an early example of a tourist attraction.

Sunday morning before we headed home we visited the Chantilly Battlefield. This battle, fought a few days after Second Manassas, was Lee's last attempt to destroy Pope by getting between him and his Washington defenses. The small, neatly kept, two acre memorial park is located in the midst of huge sprawling commercial and residential sub-divisions. The interesting thing to me was since part of the original battle took place in a corn field, the park volunteers had planted a small plot of corn at one side of the park. A local visitor told us it was probably the only cornfield in this densely populated county.

Our final stop was at Thoroughfare Gap. The narrow, rough 200 foot wide break in the Bull Run Mountains with Pond Mountain on the South side and Mother Leathercoat Mountain on the North side of the gap played an important role in both battles. In 1861, at the First Battle of Manassas, a railroad transported Confederate troop reinforcements from the Shenandoah Valley through the gap to the Bull Run Battlefield just in time to give the victory to the Confederates. Thirteen months later the gap allowed Jackson's half of Lee's army to get behind Pope and a few days later allowed Longstreet's half of Lee's army to join him. The only problem occurred when a wandering Union detachment happened to trap Longstreet's Wing of the Confederate Army in the gap for a few hours. Rebel troops charged up the western sides of both mountains and drove the Yankees off the top of the mountains and opened up the gap so Longstreet and Lee could continue through.



*Above left photo of Tom Horvath*



*Above right: Second Manassas Battlefield Deep Cut*



*Above left photo: John Sandy, Arlan Byrne, Joe Abazzio; back row: Franco Sperrazzo, Tom Horvath and Alan Byrne*



*Above right photo: Chantilly Battlefield*

*Photographs by Arlan Byrne*

In 1862 a visitor described the gap as a “dark and gloomy spot.” Well, it is “dark and gloomy” no longer. The gap has been widened to accommodate a modern interstate highway; and if you are not careful you will zoom right through it and not even know it is there. As the final event of our trip we climbed to the top of [Mother Leathercoat Mountain](#) and saw where the battle to open the gap was fought in a stone quarry. It was so much fun I am willing to climb anything named Mother Leathercoat.

In conclusion: It was a perfect trip. The guides were excellent. Their explanations were clear and easily understandable. John reserved rooms at the modern Chantilly Hyatt Hotel. They were large, spacious and only cost \$70 per night. The hotel even threw in a free meeting room for us. There are many good restaurants in the area and we ate each meal at a different one. Brent and Sharon Morgan drove up from their home near Richmond and went to dinner with us on Saturday night. John, Tom and Franco rented a seven passenger van so we were all able to travel together. The weather was perfect each day, just right for walking. It only rained at night. **We watched Ohio State beat Michigan State. What more could you want?**

## *The Autobiography of Ovid Butler Knapp, Great Grandfather of Steve Abbey*

This is January 1929, and I am in my eightieth year. I have had in mind for a long time to write an autobiography of my life, or perhaps it might more properly be called a history of my life's experiences. I am not doing this on account of any desire to raise in the estimation of any who read it, but because it has occurred to me that it would be interesting to some of my grandchildren in years to come to know something of what took place in my life and to note the great advancement in the world that has taken place within my recollection.

I have in my files, letters from my grandfather and my father, written more than fifty years ago, which, as time goes on, become more and more interesting to me, and I often read them.

By these memoirs, which I am going to write, I do not mean to intimate that there has been anything in my life but which is common to almost all men. My life's experiences have been very ordinary and have kept pace only with the average man.

I have read somewhere that "There is neither picture nor image of marble, nor sumptuous sepulcher can match the durability of an eloquent biography, furnished with qualities which it ought to have." To those who read this I will say--- do not look for eloquence or qualities, but for plain statement of facts and of incidents in my life as they may come to my memory.



I was born August 12, 1849, in Queensville, Jennings County, Indiana, a small village in the southern part of Indiana, about 25 miles north of the Ohio River. My father was Elijah Washington Knapp, son of Amos and Polly Butler Knapp. My mother was Sarah Ann (Goodwin) Knapp, daughter of Elijah and Jane Moore (Davis) Goodwin. My father and grandfather, as well as several uncles, were ministers of the Christian church.

My grandfather was known as one of the pioneer itinerant preachers of that church and was the editor of their church paper for a number of years. In consequence of the above stated facts my earliest recollections are of preachers and of going to church. My father's house was always a home for preachers, I was always closely associated with religious people and lived in a religious atmosphere, for which I now sincerely thank the Lord. In fact, had it not been so, it is hard to tell what my life would have been, for, like most men, I am "As prone to do wrong as it is for the sparks to fly upward." And I sometimes feel that I am the weakest of the weak.

*Ovid Butler Knapp is the elderly gentleman sitting on the right*

Church going and family worship as I remember it in my childhood days was the principal part of our lives. Protracted meetings were frequent. I remember attending one that lasted more than one hundred days. One man known as "Blue Jeans" Williams did all the preaching in this instance. His texts were all the book of Revelations. These sermons were afterwards published and called "The Voice of the Seven Thunders." The appointments for night meetings were always given out for "Early Candle Lighting." The churches were lighted with candles placed in candle holders with tin reflectors behind them. Many additions were made to the church in those meetings.

Frequently the candidates were baptized the same hour of the night, the creek, where the baptizing was done, being but a short distance from the church. Candidates were received into membership after baptism by coming to the front seat and each member of the Church going forward and shaking hands with them during the singing of some familiar hymn.

I have led a very busy domestic life, not however through choice, for I do not think I was ever very ambitious, but rather through force of circumstances. I was the eldest of the children and my mother's health not being the best, I was expected to help her and in that way I became quite familiar with housework of all kinds.

My father would always insist upon my first earning whatever money he gave me. He furnished the work and set the price and when the work was done, I got my pay. But this did not give me all the money I wanted. I remember one summer

after school; I was out following Uncle John M. Brown, as we called him, in the cornfield removing clods from the corn at five cents per day. A day meant from sun up to sun down. The next year, I received ten cents per day but had to carry a hoe. From this time until 1872, I followed farming most of the time.



The first political campaign that I remember was the organization of the Republican Party in 1856 and the struggle between John C. Fremont and James Buchanan, Democratic candidate for the Presidency. It was along about this time, that the slave question agitated the whole nation. I remember distinctly of hearing my father read each day of the doings of John Brown, his fight at Osawatomie, Kansas and his march with his followers through the country to Harper's Ferry, Virginia, where he was captured and finally hung. I remember very vividly of my father reading the account of John Brown's execution and as he read it he and my mother wept, for they were both strong Abolitionists. *Photograph on the left of John Brown from the Library of Congress*

This reminds me of an incident that occurred in our village, along about this time. As we lived, only about 25 miles from the Kentucky line, it was quite a frequent occurrence for slaves to run away and many of them came to our town. Near town, there was a Negro by the name of Madison Smith who owned his own farm. These runaway slaves would go to his underground railroad to hide. This was along about the time of what is known as the Dread Scott Decision by the Supreme Court regarding the return of runaway slaves. Two slaves had run away and were hiding at Smith's place. Their master came after them and brought them into town where he got a couple of trace chains (these chains were about six feet long, with a ring at one end). He had our blacksmith make handcuffs, one for the right and one for the left wrists. After riveting the chains, the chains to the cuffs, he riveted the cuffs to the wrists of each Negro, mounted his horse and placed one on one side and the other on the other, putting the rings of the chains over the horn of his saddle and rode off down the road toward his old Kentucky home at a brisk trot. The last I can remember of them was seeing those darkies on the run, being almost dragged along. It is needless to say that this forever confirmed my already strong feeling against the slave question.

As I remember it, it was about this time that the Lincoln and Douglas debate was published and also it was at this time that I got hold of Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin." This book was considered almost sacred by all Abolitionists and made a very profound impression upon the minds of all who read it. I consider this book as the foremost and leading cause of the final abolition of slavery.

Those were certainly stirring days in the history of our great nation as well as in my own experience. Leading as it did up to the political struggle between Lincoln and Buchanan and the first triumph of the Republican Party, which shortly lead up to the Civil War. At the time, it did not seem very civil and I do not think it was called civil until it was all over.

Living so close to the Mason Dixon line, I presume we saw in our neighborhood more of the real hatred manifested between the union people and the rebel sympathizers, than was seen farther north. Quarrels and fistfights were common, although I do not remember any of our lives being taken.

I remember well, it seems but yesterday, that Fort Sumter was fired on. My father had been down in town and a telegram had been received giving the news. Father came home to tell us. I was hoeing in the garden and he came to me and said, "The war has commenced. Ft. Sumter was fired on last night." I stopped and listened, expecting that I might be able to hear the roar of the cannon. I was about eleven years of age.

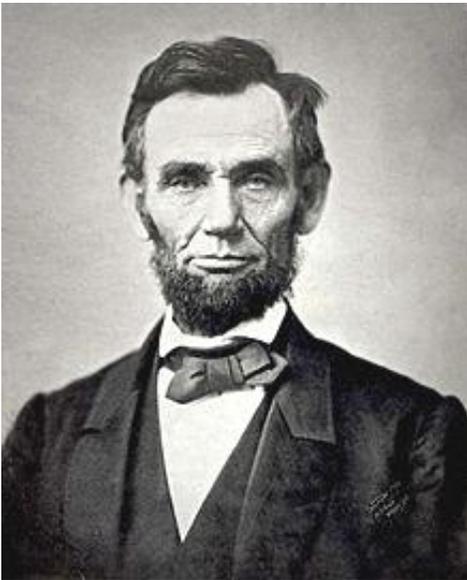
It was soon after this that Lincoln made his first call for seventy five thousand, three month soldiers. I never can forget the thrill that I experienced as a crowd would gather under the stirring music of the fife and drums with "Old Glory" waving proudly over our heads and some speaker would mount a dry-goods box and deliver an oration on the cause of the war, winding up by calling for volunteers. The boys and the old men too, would crowd up to see who could get their names down first. It was but a short time until troops began to gather here and there in camps and officers from the regular army were sent out to drill them and teach them the art of war. Young people nowadays talk about getting a "Thrill." If they had lived in those days and seen what I have seen and gone through what I and all the others at that time experienced, they would have thrills enough to last a lifetime. Even now, when I see a company of soldiers and hear the shrill notes of the fife and the rat-atat tat of the snare drum and the boom of the base drum, I acknowledge, I still get a thrill and I wonder whether it is a thrill or a feeling of patriotism. It does not seem possible to me that a person living through those days north of the Mason and Dixon line could be anything but patriotic. I remember reading one of Horace Greeley's speeches, when he was a candidate for President, in which he made the remark that all Democrats are not horse thieves but all horse thieves were Democrats. So I say that during the Civil War days all Democrats were not rebels but all rebels were Democrats.

It might be interesting to know that at the time of the Civil War, there still remained many of the old soldiers of the war of 1812. And I heard of some of the Revolutionary soldiers living but do not remember that I ever saw one. There was a warehouse near our town that was full of the old flint-lock guns left over from the Revolutionary War which the government took and made over into muskets for our soldiers. It occurs to me just now that a remark concerning President Lincoln's first call for troops for only three months might be in order as the propriety of such a call has been questioned. After a close study of this I am sure that Mr. Lincoln was right. Had it not been for the fact that England furnished boats for the blockade, guns and ammunition for their soldiers and money to finance the war against the union, the war would not have lasted three months. Then to think that they asked us to pay the Confederate war debt is certainly the limit. But this is the kind of friend we always have had in England and it will never be any better except when they got in such a mess as they did in the World War and needed our help to get them out of it. England today would have been German territory but for Uncle Sam's help,

I remember well the principal battles of the Civil War and especially the battle of Gettysburg. As the history of the Civil War is known to all I will only mention a few of my experiences. I well remember the time of the Morgan Raid, in Indiana, which occurred the latter part of June 1863. We had no warning of this raid and did not know he was in the state until he was within a few miles of Vernon, our county seat. I was plowing corn a few miles from there when I received word that Morgan was coming. I remember I stopped my horse in a row of corn, tied the lines to the plow and ran for home. I suppose I went back and got the horse but cannot remember how long I left him there. This was on a Saturday morning. Immediately, preparations began for the expected battle, which never occurred. All valuables were hid. Doors and windows of all public buildings were boarded up. Women met to prepare cotton bandages and lints for the wounded.

I remember one incident that happened that day. An old man who was a strong sympathizer with the rebels went into a place where these women were busy with their work and inquired what they were doing. When told he made some slighting remark which offended the ladies. A number of us boys were standing around and one of the women turned to us and said, "Hang the rebel." Some of us got a rope and I expect we would have executed the sentence had we not been stopped by older heads.

Preparations went steadily on all that day. About dark we were told of a few guns and some ammunition that a farmer had, who lived about two miles from town. It was near the direction from which we expected the rebels. I was selected as the one to go and get them. The night was very dark but I mounted my horse and started. I rode very slowly so as to make as little noise as possible for fear of running into the rebels. I arrived there safely and got the guns and ammunition but on road back into town there was a little stretch of hard road and the people hearing the clatter imaged the whole rebel cavalry was right after them. When I reached town, it seemed to me as if there was a prayer meeting being held on every corner.



The next event of importance that stands out on my memory was the assassination of President Lincoln. These were the darkest days of the war. Many thought the war had been a failure and the union cause was lost. I verily believe that God raised Lincoln up for just such a time as that and looking at it from a human standpoint; it would seem that his death came just at the wrong time. This reminds me of the speech made in Chicago by James Garfield on April 25, 1865. A crowd had gathered in front of his hotel early in the morning and they called for a speech. He commenced by saying "The God of Heaven still reigns. Justice and judgment are the habitation of His throne. Mercy and truth shall go before thy face and the government at Washington still lives." It was just such courageous words as these, spoken by brave hearts that in the Providence of God saved the Union. Perhaps, he wished to teach us that no man could save the Nation and to have us remember that He had said, "Blessed is the Nation whose God is the Lord." And again, "That the living may know that the Most High ruleth in the Kingdom of Men and giveth it to whomsoever He Will" *President Lincoln photograph from the National Achieves*

That April morning after Lincoln's assassination, I will never forget. There had been some rain and wind during the night and before starting to school my father said we had better go over the pasture fences to see if they had blown down. The fence was along the railroad track and while we were there an early passenger train passed and we noticed the engine and coaches were all draped in black crape. My father remarked that he presumed that some of the officials of the road must be dead. Soon after, this lady who lived on the farm just above us, who had been to town came walking up the track. She called to us and asked if we had heard the news. Father replied that we had not. (He had a nail in his hand just ready to put it on the fence,) and when she said that Lincoln was assassinated last night, father dropped the nail and sat down on the ground and cried like a child. Presently, he got up and said, "Let us go Home." I went to school and when it was time for singing and prayer, as was the custom to open school, many tears were shed.

## CIVIL WAR JOURNAL of Franco M Sperrazzo Program Coordinator

**October 9<sup>th</sup> meeting, Dr. Robert G. Stabile:** Charter Member Bob “Gino” Stabile, gave an emotional talk on “Bloody Kansas, A Little Civil War before the Big Civil War.” Bob recreated the economic and social climate of the time. Bob translated how the common citizen was challenged by the outbreak of war. Using compassion and citing examples, it became evident that specific incidents would lead to a major Civil War, and the facts were difficult to debate. Dr. Bob Stabile, has become a popular speaker for his Civil War peers, giving 3 previous talks on personalities and philosophy of war. Wife Rebecca, accompanied Bob and drew the winning ticket number for the 50/50 raffle, much to the liking of newer member Troy Long, from Michigan. Two year member Kenny Godnavec recruited his business associate and friend Troy, who is our only out of state active member.



**WRHS, Presents A Fugitive’s Path: November 9, 10 & 11<sup>th</sup>.** Escape on the Underground Railroad at the Hale Farm and Village. This event was enjoyed by Brent & Sharon Morgan, my Wife Cyndy and I back around 2000. Call 330-666-3711 x 1720 for reservations and more information. Or visit halereservations @wrhs.org. Member Arlan Byrne who recently commanded his troops to Manassas Battlefield, is currently using the WRHS Library to research a future talk and tour the new museum exhibits with daughter Rebecca and his family. If you are in need of passes for admission contact me to make arrangements .

**James A. Garfield @ Mentor Library:** The next “Major Battles of the Civil War “Program will be on November 14<sup>th</sup>. The National Park Service will explore the Battle of Stone’s River (also known as Murfreesboro). These

battles were fought in Tennessee from late December 1862 to early January 1863. Presenter will be JAG NPS volunteer Dan Vermilya, who has conducted a previous program and is worthy of an encore. The Garfield room holds about 50 people and the attendance tends to be hearty. The program starts at noon to about 1:15pm. The library location is 8215 Mentor Avenue. For call ahead confirmation phone 440- 255-8722. You can bring your lunch for this free series if you desire.

**Friends of Garfield @ Lawnfield:** Several members of our round table have attended planning meetings and expressed interest in becoming involved in a volunteer fundraising association for the James A. Garfield National Historic Site. The purpose is to raise monies to commission a painting of General Garfield on horseback commanding his troops at the “Battle of Mine Creek”. This is strictly an individual endeavor and not an NEOCWRT organized group effort. If you wish to know more please contact John Sandy, Arlan Byrne, President Abbey or Franco.

### **President Lincoln Movie:**

This column rarely promotes motion pictures.

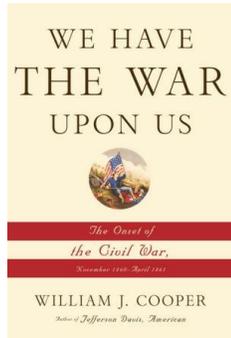
The past couple of years I did attend 3 movies and they all became standout box office successes. Those acclaimed were *King’s Speech*; *Moneyball* and *The Conspirator*, about the Lincoln assassination orchestrated by John Wilkes



Booth. The latest , “*Lincoln*,” will be in the theatres **November 16<sup>th</sup>**. This movie was directed by Steven Spielberg. The cast includes: Daniel-Day Lewis, Tommy Lee Jones and Sally Field. Based on previews, the ensemble and reviews like the one in the November issue of Smithsonian Magazine, it appears to be a sure fire winner.

**November 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting, Brian Kowell:** Our past Fall Field Trip assistant has given a handful of previous presentations. His most memorable might be a Civil War trivia quiz with his best friend and relocated member Peter Holman. Brian leaves out nothing and includes the suspense. He is an expert on the Cavalry of the Civil War. We hope you were spared from Hurricane Sandy.

## ***We Have the War upon Us* by William J. Cooper – book review by Tom Horvath**



Because they cover the same period of time, late 1860 to early 1861, I thought it would be interesting to compare this book with *1861*, the last one I reviewed. Despite that similarity, the books are very different. While *1861* was about people, this one is about politics. Certain individuals, like Lincoln, Seward, Davis, and Crittenden, are addressed as individuals, but only in the political aspect of their lives. Aside from a few key players, like those mentioned, Mr. Cooper deals with groups. Of the various groups, the fire-eaters and staunch abolitionists were at the fringes.

Fire-eaters wanted secession and saw Lincoln's election as a prime opportunity. They pushed hard for immediate secession, fearing that if the states delayed and Lincoln proved to be less of a threat to the South than was generally feared, the momentum toward secession, even in the Deep South, would probably wane. South Carolina might find herself alone again, as she did in 1832.

At the other end of the spectrum were the hard line abolitionists who, without regard to the drastic impact on the southern economy, wanted an immediate and complete end to slavery.

Everyone else fell somewhere in between and most of them hoped for another compromise. They felt that failure to do so would lead to collapse of the nation or a civil war. The numerous attempts to reach a compromise are the central theme of this volume.

Crittenden and Seward were central players in those attempts, though many others were involved. Initially, everyone looked to Congress, where previous compromises had been constructed. As the Cotton States seceded in December and January and their Democratic representatives and senators left Congress, Republicans gained a stronger position. With their new found majority, they blocked any attempt that was contrary to their platform -- and their platform was unacceptable to the South.

As Congress failed to act, Seward worked behind the scenes. After the first seven states seceded, he used his contacts in the South and his considerable prestige to keep the remaining slave and Border States in the Union. While many Republicans were unwilling to back away from their platform, Seward was more flexible. The platform had won them the election and had served its purpose. Now it was time to save the Union. Seward risked his political future trying to work a deal. He promised that Fort Sumter would be evacuated when that decision had not been made and was not his to make.

On the other hand, Lincoln was less flexible and showed only occasional openness to any kind of compromise. He said nothing of substance publicly from the time of his election until he began his trip to Washington in February. He felt that his previous speeches showed where he stood, and any new speech would not change anyone's perception of him. The one speech he did make only solidified that opinion. However, Mr. Cooper points out that the Cooper Union speech, where Lincoln made his "house divided" comments, could sound very ominous to the South. In tone, if not in words, Mr. Cooper implies that Lincoln could have avoided Civil War by, initially, saying some calming words or, later, by compromising.

Mr. Cooper also seems to feel that extending the 1850 Compromise would have kept the remaining slave and Border States in the Union, leaving only the Deep South outside. Nor would slavery actually have been extended, because climate would have kept slavery from flourishing in new states south of the line.

Despite the book appearing to be well researched and the premises being argued well, I have a difficult time not looking at the larger picture and feeling, as Lincoln did, that the tug had to come sometime. Mr. Cooper is aware of that, but manages to sublimate that fact to his more immediate and restricted concern – could a compromise have been reached and civil war avoided at that time?

Because the book dealt strictly with politics, I found it much drier and less interesting than *1861*. It really did not catch my interest until late in the book, after Lincoln's inauguration, when Seward risked his political life to try and save what remained of the nation. In general, although the writing was good and the information well researched and much more detailed, I found it unsatisfying. I think it proves that more detail does not necessarily provide more knowledge.

Published in 2012 by Alfred A. Knopf, the book contains 332 pages, including a notes section, an index, a few maps (and a list of them), and a section of photographs. Amazon has the hardcover version available for \$19.80 and a Kindle electronic version for \$14.99. Barnes and Noble has the hardcover edition available for \$19.99 and the Nook electronic version for \$14.99. Mentor Public Library has one copy. The ClevNet System has 10 copies with three on order.

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***The Courier is the monthly newsletter of the Northeast Ohio Civil War Round Table***

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