

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

AND

THE GRAND REVIEW

OF THE ARMY OF

THE POTOMAC

AT

BAILEY'S CROSSROADS, VIRGINIA

NOVEMBER 20, 1861

A STUDENT GUIDE

Support for this publication was provided by

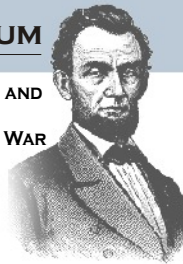
ABRAHAM LINCOLN BICENTENNIAL FOUNDATION



Dedicated to perpetuating and expanding
Lincoln's vision of America and
completing America's unfinished work

THE LINCOLN FORUM

TO ENHANCE THE UNDERSTANDING AND
PRESERVE THE MEMORY OF
ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND THE CIVIL WAR



Lincoln
at the
Crossroads
ALLIANCE

*"I like to see a man proud of the place in which he lives.
I like to see a man live so that his place will be proud of him."*

--Abraham Lincoln

A STUDENT GUIDE TO
THE 150th ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION OF
ABRAHAM LINCOLN
AND
THE GRAND REVIEW OF THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC
AT BAILEY'S CROSSROADS, VIRGINIA
NOVEMBER 20, 1861

“What an exciting day this is!” Perhaps one of the drummer boys pictured in the accompanying old photograph spoke these very words as they watched thousands of soldiers marching in a long procession for The Grand Review of the Army of the Potomac. The event occurred at Bailey's Crossroads, Virginia. This special souvenir booklet is presented to you courtesy of Lincoln at the Crossroads Alliance, the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Foundation, and The Lincoln Forum.

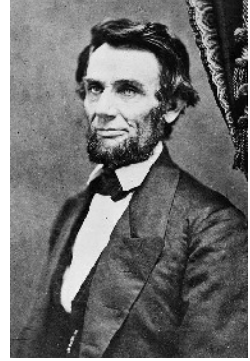


As you look around today, you see an exciting, bustling city of tall buildings, apartment complexes, shopping centers, a wonderful college, and many small businesses run by a diverse group of people from all over the world. Back in 1861, Bailey's Crossroads was very different--a much more rural area. Can you picture how it must have looked so long ago?

Probably you are asking yourself why The Grand Review happened. In addition, you may be wondering why we are commemorating something that occurred in the 1860s. This booklet will attempt to give answers to these and many other questions. Through both words and illustrations from those exciting times, you will meet many of the fascinating people who played important roles on that day.

Of course you know who is the current President of the United States. Did you know that in 1861, the new President of our country was named Abraham Lincoln? Take a moment to look at his picture. He faced many difficult challenges during his four

years in the White House. Perhaps the greatest of all was the Civil War that threatened to tear apart our country.



Why did this war occur? For many years people in the Northern and Southern sections of The United States had argued about slavery. Over time, Northern states had made slavery illegal. But slavery continued to expand through the South, and by 1860, millions of African-American slaves lived in bondage there. Slavery remained legal in all these states. White Southerners insisted that they had a right to continue owning their slaves, and forcing them to work without pay. That year, Abraham Lincoln was elected President, promising that slavery would never be allowed into new states and territories of the country.

When Lincoln won the White House, a number of slave-holding Southern States, eventually including Virginia too, decided that they were no longer willing to remain loyal to a Federal government they believed was against slavery. They seceded from the Union and formed their own country, the Confederate States of America, also known as The Confederacy. The Confederate army attacked Union forces by bombarding Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina, on April 12, 1861. The fort was forced to surrender.

That is how the Civil War started. President Lincoln knew that our country would not be as strong if it were divided. He also believed he had been legally elected and deserved to govern a united America. But he would not back down on allowing slavery, to expand. Instead, he took steps to force the Confederate States return to the Union. He called for men to volunteer for the army, and vowed to force the Southern states to end their rebellion.

How did this Grand Review come to take place? Earlier, President Lincoln had placed Brigadier General Irvin McDowell in command of Union forces. His army of 36,000 men met an equal number of Confederate soldiers and fought them at Manassas,

Virginia on July 21, 1861, a fierce contest known as the Battle of Bull Run. Although most people at the time believed Northern forces would win that fight, ending the rebellion quickly, the Confederate army won the day and forced Union troops retreat back to Washington, D.C.

It was obvious to President Lincoln that his soldiers needed a great deal of training and should receive it rapidly. That is why he next asked Major General George B. McClellan to take charge of the Union army. Please look at the photograph of General McDowell and General McClellan standing together. McClellan who is on the right in the picture, was well-liked and respected by his soldiers.



McClellan believed that he needed to bring all of his men together again after they had fled the Bull Run battlefield. He began teaching them how to be good soldiers who could fight effectively. The general also worked to train his officers on how to lead the soldiers under their command. To do this he formed his forces into twelve brigades in August 1861 and renamed the Army of the Potomac.

Training his soldiers was one thing, but General McClellan also understood that after that first battle, the morale of his men needed to be restored, too. They must develop confidence in themselves and in their fellow soldiers. That is why he decided to stage a grand review for Commander-in-Chief President Lincoln, as well as members of the U.S. Congress, and other influential leaders in the Washington area. So it was that thousands of men and women from this part of Virginia, along with boys and girls just like you, had the chance to see this amazing parade as well as their President. In fact, there were likely as many as 20,000 to 30,000 civilian spectators that day. It must have been remarkable to see the men dressed in the varied style of clothes of the 1860s and to view ladies in their wide crinolines and tiny bonnets as they sat with their children in their horse-drawn carriages.

Although General McDowell was blamed by many for losing the Battle of Bull Run, General McClellan believed he was a very skilled officer and selected him to organize the Grand Review. It was decided that it would be held at Bailey's Crossroads, in a part of otherwise Confederate Virginia that the Union controlled. Then and now, the Crossroads was centrally located and served as an intersection for many different roads such as Leesburg Pike, Columbia Pike, and Seminary Road. This meant that the Infantry (walking soldiers), the Cavalry (soldiers riding horses), and wagons carrying supplies or weapons could assemble in position easily and move along the road. Today these roads are filled with cars and buses that can travel much faster than the horse-drawn vehicles of those earlier days.

The Grand Review was scheduled for November 20. That morning, soldiers looked out of their tents to see traces of snow on the ground and felt the air to be cold and windy. Most of these soldiers were very young. Quite a few were in their early 20s, and a large number of them 19 or even younger. Before the sun had even risen, many of the troops had begun marching toward the assembly area. Sometime later, they watched nearly 1,800 soldiers, mounted on horses, accompany General McClellan as he arrived at Bailey's Crossroads.

A sergeant from Michigan spoke enthusiastically of the General's appearance: "The whole division took off their hats and commenced hollering!" Another soldier present, the regimental historian of the 40th New York Infantry Regiment, later wrote, "when General McClellan and President Lincoln, with their staffs appeared on the field, salutes were fired by all of the

[cannon]...and was quite impressive." He went on to say that "as the reviewing officers passed, each regiment presented arms and the bands played. Every soldier felt proud of the display and was glad to participate." If you look at the woodcut illustration on this page, you can see a large



collection of Cavalry and Infantry soldiers, along with a group of band members playing drums and oddly- shaped horns.

An officer from New Jersey provided an even more lively description of the 70,000 soldiers passing in review: “Cheer after cheer went up that made the valley resound with the din of human voices such as these hills and valleys had never before heard. The whole plain, far beyond what the eye could reach was covered with one dense mass of human beings and horses. The reviewing officers and their staffs passed by at a fast canter. Yet it took them more than an hour to pass the troops, though we were closed in massed formations by divisions.”

Many years later, Major General Newton Martin Curtis of the 16th New York Infantry recounted proudly that “President Lincoln now saw the raw regiments, which had passed before him on their arrival at the Capital, transformed into a drilled and disciplined army. For more than two hours, the President, escorted by the General-in-Chief and his staff, rode through the lines of battalions and batteries from the Eastern, the Middle, and the Western States; then for a longer time at the reviewing stand, he watched them march by with firm step and unbroken cadence, with the bearing and dignified deportment of men schooled in the profession of arms.” Take a look at another woodcut illustration



showing President Lincoln on horseback. What do you imagine his thoughts were at seeing this incredible sight? The Review ended around 5:00 p.m.; however, it took until dark for everyone to depart the area.

A foreign observer at The Grand Review, the Comte de Paris, wrote excitedly: “The all-pervading feeling was an enthusiastic and ardent admiration for the man who had created the Army of the Potomac. In the realization of all observers, even

the most experienced officers, the army was born that day... Everyone in and around Washington had felt the pulsations of momentous preparations and throes of a tremendous and vigorous growth going on about them since the 1st of August, but on the day of the grand review at Bailey's Crossroads, the eyes of all spectators, and even the army itself, were suddenly opened.”



Harper's Weekly, a popular magazine of the period, summed up The Grand Review as “brilliant beyond description.” But what you have just read is far from the whole story. One spectator that day was Julia Ward Howe. Please glance at her photograph. She was a writer from Boston who is remembered as a poet, a reformer, and an abolitionist. Those who believed that slaves should receive their freedom were called “abolitionists” because they wanted to abolish slavery immediately. Even Abraham Lincoln, who later issued the Emancipation Proclamation, did not yet believe that slavery should be abolished.

Julia Ward Howe had been making her first visit to Washington, D.C., along with her husband, Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe, who shared her hatred of slavery. On the way back from the Grand Review, she began to sing some of the popular army songs which she had no doubt heard that day. She concluded with “John Brown's body lies a-mouldering in the ground; his soul is marching on.”

That day, a friend in the carriage with Mrs. Howe noted that the soldiers seemed to like her singing of the song. He urged her to write “some good words for that stirring tune.” The next morning as she “awoke [at the Willard Hotel back in Washington] in the gray of the morning twilight, the long lines of the desired poem began to twine themselves in [her] mind.” The poem was soon published in another distinguished magazine, the *Atlantic Monthly*, and began to find its way to the Union Army camps to be sung by the soldiers. The new title given to this song by Julia

Ward Howe was “The Battle Hymn of the Republic.”

Have you heard that song? Or perhaps sung it in school? If you turn to the last two pages, you can read the words to the whole song. Maybe you can sing it with your friends and pretend that you, too, are marching in the Grand Review!

Now, after reading this booklet and looking at the illustrations, you can better imagine all the drama of that day. Then you may understand better how important The Grand Review of the Army of the Potomac was for the Union soldiers, their leaders, the many spectators, and everyone in our country at that time. It certainly inspired more volunteers to enlist in the Union army and showed Congress the importance of supporting President Lincoln's requests for a larger, better-equipped army. This eventually led to military success against the Confederates, and President Lincoln issuing the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863. That proclamation began the process of freeing the slaves. The Union Army finally achieved victory in 1865. Our divided country was re-united, and slavery ended, which has made a better life for all of us today.

A beautiful sculpture by Ron Tunison of President Lincoln observing The Grand Review will be installed at Bailey's Crossroads at a later date. You can learn more about this project by visiting Lincoln at the Crossroads Alliance at its website www.latcra.org. We enjoyed preparing this booklet for you. We hope you will keep it, re-read it often, and share it with your friends so they too will know the story of The Grand Review at Bailey's Crossroads.



LATCRA expresses appreciation to Kim B. Holien, Evelyn L. Hought and Harold Holzer for their contributions.

The Battle Hymn of the Republic

by

Julia Ward Howe

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord:
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;
He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword:
His truth is marching on.

(Chorus)

Glory, glory, hallelujah!
Glory, glory, hallelujah!
Glory, glory, hallelujah!
His truth is marching on.

I have seen Him in the watch-fires of a hundred circling camps,
They have builded Him an altar in the evening dews and damps;
I can read His righteous sentence by the dim and flaring lamps:
His day is marching on.

(Chorus)

Glory, glory, hallelujah!
Glory, glory, hallelujah!
Glory, glory, hallelujah!
His day is marching on.

I have read a fiery gospel writ in burnished rows of steel:
"As ye deal with my contemners, so with you my grace shall deal;
Let the Hero, born of woman, crush the serpent with his heel,
Since God is marching on."

(Chorus)

Glory, glory, hallelujah!
Glory, glory, hallelujah!
Glory, glory, hallelujah!
Since God is marching on.

He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat;
He is sifting out the hearts of men before His judgment-seat:
Oh, be swift, my soul, to answer Him! be jubilant, my feet!
Our God is marching on.

(Chorus)

Glory, glory, hallelujah!
Glory, glory, hallelujah!
Glory, glory, hallelujah!
Our God is marching on.

In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,
With a glory in His bosom that transfigures you and me:
As He died to make men holy, let us die to make men free,
While God is marching on.

(Chorus)

Glory, glory, hallelujah!
Glory, glory, hallelujah!
Glory, glory, hallelujah!
While God is marching on.

He is coming like the glory of the morning on the wave,
He is Wisdom to the mighty, He is Succour to the brave,
So the world shall be His footstool, and the soul of Time His
slave,
Our God is marching on.

(Chorus)

Glory, glory, hallelujah!
Glory, glory, hallelujah!
Glory, glory, hallelujah!
Our God is marching on.



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