

# © **MARINE SOUNDINGS** SBN 1406-6506

## The Newsletter of the **PROVINCIAL MARINE RE-ENACTMENT GROUP**

Thoughts on Our Thirty-Third Newsletter

**SURVIVING A DOWNTURN** In our first newsletter we had so little to work with—no boat, no cannon, few tents, but our members re-acted with enthusiasm and ingenuity. The dream of a replica *HMS Detroit* was fading as money got used up paying for an overly large staff at the Gordon House, and the ship got enlarged beyond what the Founders of the HMS Detroit PROJECT ever envisioned. So as the *Detroit* faded, we rose to somewhat take its place in the Amherstburg scene.

These days our task is to keep the lights burning ready for the inevitable turn around. We've cut back on many expenses as our revenues have fallen. Our rent on our headquarters now includes the utilities, and we're not mailing out many copies of our newsletters instead relying on the web. I'm a magazine reader myself but I appreciate the superior quality of the images on my computer screen.

With government focused on saving industry, I'm afraid we'll have to cut our cloth to our savings. Our capital is the huge number of costumes, and cannon, and muskets and training aids we have built up over the years. To keep our name in front of the public we may have to do more local engagements. We'll need ingenuity to survive: we need more sponsors, not the same few all the time, but ones for spring, summer and fall. Whatever has worked well in the past needs to carry on, for if it's not broken, don't fix it

The result of our careful stewardship, we hope, will be smaller groups joining our own and with them younger members. We were in negotiations with a couple of such groups in the fall but decided not to announce them until arrangements were finalized.

There are a number of anniversaries coming up that may help us garner new members: this year marks the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Founding of the Halifax Naval Base, and in a few years the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the War of 1812. This is an awfully important war to Canada, where the different colonies by aiding one another showed that we could survive as a nation. The American Civil War about 50 years later gave us the motivation to get the process under way. Preparations for celebrating the War of 1812 should bring new interest in re-enacting and new members to our group.

### *Inside This Newsletter*

**P1 Surviving a Downturn  
Our Spring Events**

**P2 List of Executives and Sponsors**

**Captain's Corner: Vic Suthren reminds us that important events are coming up, which should be attended and which afford us chances to recruit.**

**PP3,4 Preliminary List of Events 2009  
February 12, Darwin Day. Paradox of American non acceptance of evolution  
Abraham Lincoln, Railway President.**

**PP5, 6 Lincoln Man and Myth  
Men of their times. Standards have moved on. Obama election**

### *Spring 2009 EVENTS*

*Thanks to Marty Burnet and Vern Coon who represented us at the very cold January Battle of the Raisin River Re-enactment and Memorial Service.*

*February 28 History Conference at Mohawk College, Hamilton*

*April 25, Crown Forces School of Instruction for Officers and NCOs, Fort George, Niagara-on-the-Lake*

*May 2-4 Battle of Longwoods, London*

*May 9 Education Day at Fanshaw, London, Ontario*

*May 23-24 Fort Meigs, Ohio*

*May 31<sup>st</sup> to June 1<sup>st</sup> Maidstone Museum, Lakeshore, Ontario*

MARINE SOUNDINGS is a quarterly newsletter provided as part of membership in the PROVINCIAL MARINE RE-ENACTMENT GROUP of Amherstburg and Southwestern Ontario. It is put out in JANUARY, APRIL, JULY, and OCTOBER. Members are encouraged to submit ideas, questions, articles which are needed at the beginning of the month of publication.

## Marine Soundings

is published by the Provincial Marine Amherstburg, a Re-enactment Group.

Membership is 15 dollars a year, which includes the right to go in our encampments, train on our equipment, learn sailing on our vessels. It includes an insurance component and our quarterly newsletter. In addition we have many social events each year. In addition active re-enactors pay \$7.00 towards insurance.

If you are a member of a similar organization you may apply for just a subscription to our newsletter. At \$6.00 Canadian funds and \$6.00 US, we are simply looking to recover our costs.

### The Executive for 2008 (Elections in the spring)

David May Sr.—President

Peter Rindlisbacher—Vice-President

Ellen Rindlisbacher—Treasurer

Secretary-- vacant

#### Board Directors:

David May, George Marshall, Bob Ferguson, Peter Rindlisbacher, Ellen Rindlisbacher, Vern Coon, Jim Ouellette, Jane Teeple, James Whyte, Tom Hurlbut

### Committees (chairs highlighted) These stand until the next month's meeting.

Newsletter: **George Marshall**, Carol Ferguson (membership matters), Dale Kidd, Sarah Reavley

Education: **G. Marshall**, C. Ferguson, Peter Rindlisbacher

Membership: **Jane Teeple**

Boats: **Tom Teeple**, Bob Ferguson, Vern Coon, P. Rindlisbacher

Events: **Marty Burnett**

Black Powder: **M. Burnett**, David May

Drill: **James Whyte**, Dale Kidd

Social: **Diane Freeman**

Promotions: **Jenny Lajoie**

Brick Campaign: **Carol Ferguson**, Bob Ferguson

Commissariat: **C. Ferguson**

Period Clothing: **Jane Teeple**, Elizabeth Kersey

Bingos: **Brenda Mayer**, E. Kersey, Michele Chiponski

### Our Sponsors and Supporting Organizations:

#### Essex CFDC

Trillium Corporation

Windsor Charity Bingos

Royal Canadian Naval Association

Royal Canadian Navy

The Legion Branch 157 Amherstburg

The CAW Branch 200 *Computers for Kids*

*Hbc (Hudson Bay Company) has helped us with a grant to celebrate some of our earliest settlers.*



To submit articles, questions, ideas e-mail

[gtmar@allstream.net](mailto:gtmar@allstream.net)

or contact our President David May

To Read articles in our newsletter on the web, visit

[www.provincialmarine.org](http://www.provincialmarine.org)

To contact Marty Burnet, our events coordinator

[Martyb17@hotmail.com](mailto:Martyb17@hotmail.com)

Naval Establishments

Crown Forces North America

### Projected Events for the years 2009-2013

In addition to participating in as may be possible in the main Crown Forces event schedule, and the activities that will be generated by the War of 1812 Bicentennial, you, as members of the Naval Establishment, will be invited to take part in the following events. (Dates in brackets indicate different time period clothing required.)

#### 2009

Founding of the Royal Navy Dockyard, Halifax, Nova Scotia (1759)

The D'Olobaratz Voyage, Lake Champlain (1759)

#### 2010

School of the Sailor, Royal Military College, Kingston, Ontario

The Amherst Voyage, St Lawrence River (1760)

#### 2011

School of the Sailor (date, location TBD)

Mahogany Jones 2: The Return of the Privateers (1775), Northumberland Strait, Prince Edward Island

#### 2012 and subsequent years

School of the Sailor (date, location TBD)

The Yeo Cup, Toronto to Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario

#### Under Consideration:

Schools of the Sailor 2013-2015

The Miller Worseley Voyage, Georgian Bay

Yeo Cup 2: Kingston to Sackets Harbor

Yeo Cup 3: Amherstburg to Put-in Bay (Bass Islands)

Co-programming with American Sail Training Association Fleet during Great Lakes deployments

Chesapeake Bay 1814-2014 commemorations e.g. off Fort McHenry

Proposed Longboat Flotilla Voyage, Yorktown to Baltimore, with escorting schooner.

Yours aye,

**Victor Suthren**

**Commodore pro tem**

**Naval Establishments Crown Forces North America.**

**MARINE SOUNDINGS** promotes the history of the Provincial Marine, most particularly in the War of 1812, and is available as part of the membership of the Provincial Marine. For members not on the web we mail their copies and send it to organizations at cost for \$ 6.00 CAD or US including postage and handling.  
**MARINE SOUNDINGS/JANUARY**

Please submit contributions in the form of photos or articles, links to other groups that might interest members.

David May  
 President  
 Provincial Marine Amherstburg  
[mrdavemay@sympatico.ca](mailto:mrdavemay@sympatico.ca)

Please contribute to our new website. Google "Provincial Marine" to find our website. To go directly use:  
[www.provincialmarine.org](http://www.provincialmarine.org)

Preliminary List of 1812 Events for 2009

Feb 28 . . . History Conference,  
 Mohawk College - Hamilton, ON

**Apr 25, Crown Forces Infantry Officer & NCO School of Instruction, Fort George \***  
**Apr 26, All Units Drill Day, Fort George, Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON\*\***

May 2-4, Battle of Longwoods, London  
 May 23-24, Fort Meigs, Perrysburg, OH  
 May 9, Ed Day at Fanshawe, London,  
 May 31-June 1, Maidstone Museum : Lakeshore, Puce Rd., Essex County

**June 6-8, Stoney Creek :Hamilton**  
**June 19-21, Port Dover Marine Heritage, Port Dover, ON**

July 1, Canada Day, Fanshawe Village, London, ON  
 July 11-12 1812 Grand Tactical - July 19-20 School of the Sailor Penetanguishene, ON  
 July 17-19 200th Anniversary, Founding of Royal Navy Dockyard - Halifax, NS

July 12-13, Crysler's Farm : Morrisburg, ON. (Distant so only a possible.)

July 24-26 Wasaga Under Siege, Wasaga Beach, ON

**Aug 1, 2 & 3, Heritage Weekend Amherstburg, Ft Malden & PM**  
**Aug 8-9, Seige of Fort Erie, Fort Erie**

Sept 6-7, Backus Mill, Port Rowan, ON

Sept 13-14, Backus-Page House, Wallacetown, ON

Sept 5-6, Fairfield, Thamesville, ON  
 Also Fanshawe 1812, London, ON

Oct 3-5, Chatham  
 October 2-4, Fanshawe 1812, London, ON

\* for officers and NCOs  
 \*\* for other ranks

compiled by George Marshall from preliminary lists of re-enactor groups in Ontario. For more details Google the sites

**February 12, Darwin Day,**

is also the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's Birthday. This year we are celebrating the 200<sup>th</sup> birthday of two very great and influential men. Lincoln's head graces almost all US one-cent coins and also their five dollar bills. Darwin has been pictured on stamps from Great Britain and also on the currency. Neither man's life started auspiciously.

Let's look at Darwin's life first. (Pictured at right at age 51.)

Charles Darwin's book *The Origin of Species* (1859) was a scientific bombshell in its day and remains a much-discussed work 150 years later. It remains one of the easiest to read of major scientific papers ever written and popularized the ideas

presented to the general public and not to just the privileged few.

His early school life showed few signs of his later greatness. He was a poor Classical scholar and therefore unsuitable



as a cleric, and chose medicine instead. The family had had a long association with the learned professions. But Darwin did not like anatomy classes and cutting people up. So that profession also seemed closed to him. He did luck out in getting a position as the Captain's companion and unofficial naturalist of H.M.S. *Beagle* during its world voyage of 1831-36. His keen observations and clear unpretentious style got him a readership as a *geologist* and supporter of Lyell's theory about the gradualist theories (slow formation of sediments and metaphoric rocks), but he still lacked the academic qualifications to launch a major examination of evolution. (During the *Beagle* voyage, observations led him to believe his grandfather's notion of evolution. He went further with his theory: species evolve as the fittest members survive and pass their traits on to future generations.) The expression survival of the fittest originated, however, *not* with Darwin *but* his friend and promoter Thomas Henry Huxley, a doctor and author of many influential papers.

Darwin had only what we would call an undergraduate degree, but highly specialized work on barnacles done at home gave him the equivalent of a Ph. D.

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His vast correspondence with people all over the world on this topic gave him very much needed credibility. Darwin announced his initial ideas of natural selection in 1858 at the same time as his co-discoverer Alfred Russel Wallace, and in 1859 he formally published *The Origin of Species*. The book was both popular and controversial: although Darwin had been a religious man himself and once considered a career in the church, his theory of evolution was attacked by those who felt it was contrary to the teachings of the Bible.

The vast fortune accumulated by his doctor father and his grandfather Erasmus allowed him the leisure to develop his theories. Today Darwin's theories are embraced by nearly all scientists, and his theories are the starting point for the modern study of evolutionary biology, even as the religious arguments continue. Darwin published many other books and pamphlets on the topic in later years, most notably *The Descent of Man* (1871). Darwin carried on publishing even as he aged and his health declined. His last work gave us valuable insights into the role of worms in maintaining soil health.

In recognition of Darwin's pre-eminence, he was one of only five 19<sup>th</sup>-century UK non-royal personages to be honoured by a state funeral, and was buried in Westminster Abbey, close to John Herschel and Isaac Newton. When a theory such as his has stood the test of time and has informed so many different lines of research even to this day, when its insights propel all sorts of scientific work, it stands above mere isolated facts as a unifying way of understanding the world, and people are grateful and call it great. Darwin's theories have been singled out as the most influential theory of all time. All subsequent theories—those of Mendel (discoverer of dominant and recessive genes) in 1866, and of Watson and Crick (DNA and the double helix) in 1953 have always added to and extended the theories of Darwin. Modern work on finches on the Galapagos Islands show that evolution is working **not over hundreds of thousands of years but over single life times** as the birds react to changes in climate. Now that the human genome has been cracked, there is evidence that humans have not stopped evolving but are evolving **even** more quickly because the environment is changing more quickly. Think of the recent changes creating "white skin" and food allergies that affect some races but not others. These are all well known variations that have occurred after the period 50,000 years ago when our

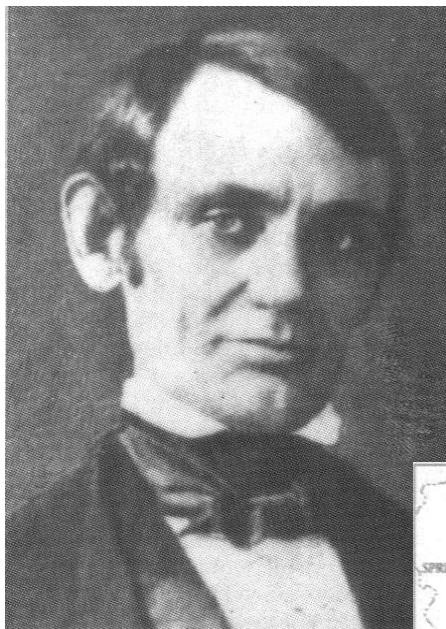
evolution supposedly ceased.

Darwinism has entered religion, mathematics, economics and robot production. Small robots are sometimes given minimal instruction and allowed to evolve in stressful conditions. Those that make successful changes are retained but those that are less successful eliminated. ***Darwinism was also abused to justify genocide and slavery, denying the vote to blacks and rights of entry to Indians and Chinese. So if you are into re-enacting, an understanding of evolution and the uses and abuses of this theory seem obligatory.***

## An American Paradox

Probably no country uses DNA more than the USA for identifying rapists, murder victim identification, artificial insemination and so on than the USA, yet studies suggest that as many as 50% of Americans do not believe in evolution. "Juries are willing to put people to death on evidence based on variations in DNA, but they are not willing to understand the mechanism that creates the variation and shapes what makes humans different from other things. It's a blindness. I think it's a phase that we'll eventually get through. Other countries have come to peace with DNA. I don't know how many decades or centuries it's going to take us." Sean Carroll, American geneticist interviewed in *Discover Magazine* (FEB 2009)

## Abraham Lincoln 1809 -1865



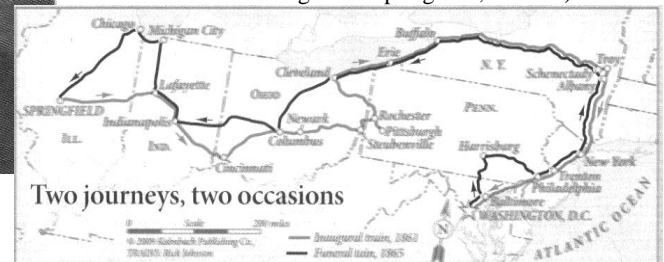
(pictured above at about age 49, before assuming of a beard.)

## The Man of the Frontier

A popular mythology holds that Lincoln was a backwoods philosopher who failed at almost everything until he suddenly burst fully formed and ready to assume the Presidency and lead the country through a Civil War to victory. Now he was a man of the frontier, but not a frontiersman. Born in 1809 in Kentucky he moved as a young lad to Indiana and Illinois always on the fringes of civilization. His early life was almost unimaginably primitive, but he was indifferent to its arts. He shot a turkey at eight years of age, but it was not something he cared to repeat. He disliked tilling the soil, preferring instead to read the few books he could lay his hands on. And he lost his mother and sister to the rigors of the frontier. At age 19 he got a real break being put in charge of taking a flatboat down to New Orleans. At 22 a boat got caught on a mill dam, and he devised a way to get it free. The merchant recognized a valuable employee and gave him a job running a store in New Salem.

There he joined a debating society, studied for the law in his free time, and strove to move on to big and better things. He believed strongly in the value of transportation, and got involved in politics. He won four two year terms to the state legislature—1834-1842. He was an early promoter of railways—"not interrupted by either high or low water or freezing weather." He was often involved with railway cases which he argued with great acclaim. His most famous work involved defending the railroads, but he tried to act fairly for whoever hired him. So he sometimes acted against them in civil actions in courts that traveled in a circuit. Except for the Civil War he would be the railroad president for his work in promoting railroads and especially the Union Pacific.

As he rode from Illinois to Washington by train, the confederate states did not wait to see what compromises he might come up with but seceded. Still he hoped for a compromise that might preserve the Union. (The map below shows his accession route and the longer route taken by his funeral train from Washington to Springfield, Illinois.)





# Provincial Marine

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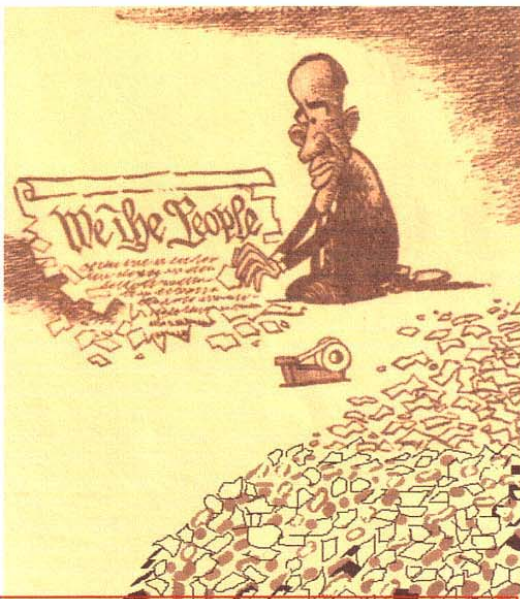
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Windsor Charity Bingos, and Hbc**

Carol Ferguson's **Membership Matters** does not appear this month as Carol is away.



## Lincoln Man and Myth

This train is believed to be the one used for Lincoln's Funeral Procession. Lincoln's association with one of the great engineering projects of the day, the building of the Union Pacific which allowed the realization of the founders of the country—that it should spread from



sea to sea. This was called the Manifest Destiny of the country. Some people saw this as a God given right to extend to cover the continent. Lincoln was a very skillful lawyer able to secure agreements and compromises in his negotiations. One dream he held as he struggled to win the Presidency was to gradually free the blacks buying them from their "owners" and sending them back to Africa. He still held it as he rode to Washington, even as the states of the Confederacy seceded. He still had such notions in 1864 as the War dragged on. He certainly did not believe in black-white equality. Sometimes when we read him, we are shocked. "The man's a racist," we think. Sometimes when you read Darwin, you get the same impression. We have to remember that ideas evolve with the times. We are repelled by some of the stories in the Old Testament and by early church fathers who revelled in the thought of sinners burning eternally in Hell. **In fact he was ahead of his time in his views—not too far ahead. Then he would not have got elected, but ahead. He saw his chief role as the preserver of the Union.**

**Obama has been compared with Lincoln. But we must remember that our Lincoln is partly myth. Lincoln has been canonized by his assassination. Obama is his own man to be judged on his own merits.**

The freeing of the slaves came in stages—the freeing of slaves in the capital, the freeing of slaves in the breakaway states by proclamation (The Emancipation Proclamation), and then by Amendment to the Constitution. When he was killed the nation lost a man who would have diligently used his skills to achieve a real peace and reconstruction. We know what happened after Reconstruction was over, the South got slavery by another name, it got lynchings and a lessening in the values of lives—

certainly of the whites, but also of the oppressed blacks. Notice I say the values of the whites were lessened. I say it deliberately. What if your only lifetime achievement was the wrongful suppression of another people. Surely your life would be worth less than nothing. So after Reconstruction we had slavery by another name, the country went backward, and one hundred years later it resumed its progress toward equality. So to have a black (Half white in most countries) elected after only 40 years is a real accomplishment.

January Issue of **Marine Soundings** page 5

WE KEEP HISTORY ALIVE!



# Provincial Marine

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Union Pacific Rail Road Company  
Secretary's Office  
13 WILLIAM ST  
New York, New York  
1864

To His Excellency  
Abraham Lincoln  
President of United States

You please the honor to ask your approval of the permanent location of the first one hundred miles of the Union Pacific Rail Road as indicated by the map forwarded to the Department of the Interior on the 24<sup>th</sup> ult.

With great respect  
Yours Truly  
C. F.

Executive Mansion  
November 4<sup>th</sup> 1864.

The permanent location of the Union Pacific Rail road for one hundred miles west from Omaha, Nebraska, as shown by the map thereof certified by the President and Secretary of said Company, Oct. 19, 1864, is hereby approved.

Abraham Lincoln

## Expediency

Though there are some things that I wish Lincoln had never said, it's only recently that I learned he was complicit in using **slavery by another name** to build the Union Pacific Railroad. In reading about the Union Pacific Railroad, I came across the use of forced labor to

complete the railroad during war time. Such labor involves kidnapping, armed guards, and killing people trying to escape. The book alleged that the President knew Durant the first president of the railroad, and approved of such labor or at least acquiesced. I know that the building of the railroad was expedient. The country, already torn by Civil War, needed a railroad to tie parts of the country together. But when you are fighting against slavery, surely it is a bad thing to use a kind of slavery.

The letter above (taken from *Trains, the Magazine of Railroading, February 2009*) is not about this forced labor, it's a short note scrawled by one friend to another with an equally short friendly reply. The letter simply shows that the two men were friends, and suggests that, yes, the President could indeed look the other way while his friend did some unsavory things for expediency.

But of course after the Civil War the South was bankrupt and looking for ways to get back on its feet. One of the ways it chose, **for expediency**, was to use forced labor. And the South had no further to look than the methods used by Union Pacific during its race towards the Pacific. How to get this forced labor? Charge someone on some trumped up charge, get him in the forced labor system, and keep him there by whatever means were expedient. Any wonder that blacks distrust the police and the judicial system. So the election of Obama meant a great deal to the USA. It meant a great deal to blacks throughout the world. It also gives hopes to the first nations of both Canada and the USA.

The cartoon on page 5 reflects how much Obama is being asked to do. Repair the Constitution, repair all the damage done by torn up treaties. Of 370 treaties with the first nations, how many do you think have been honoured? If you guessed none you would be correct. If you are interested in this question, you might want to read Ronald Wright's *What is America?* or John Ralston-Saul's *THE FAIR COUNTRY*. The first one looks at the USA and the second looks at Canada.