

## **BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ROCK RIVER VALLEY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE**

In November 1998, Edwin (Ed) Hunt and Anthony (Tony) Toback taught a class at Rock Valley College through the Learning in Retirement program in which they presented and discussed, with charts, maps and printed materials, the basics of what they considered to be the four most influential battles of the Civil War: Antietam, Gettysburg, Vicksburg and Chickamauga.

At the conclusion of the presentations, several members of the class expressed the desire to continue further study of the various aspects of the War including but not confined to the battles.

So, in mid-December 1998, Ed phoned Tony to ask if he would like to continue what we had started with his agreement we set a schedule of meetings on the first Monday of each month. The sessions were to start with a lunch at Wesley Willows at 11:45 followed by a discussion of the chosen topic until 2:00 pm when the meeting would be promptly ended.

Together Tony and Ed phoned those who had expressed interest in further study at the Rock Valley sessions. And, on the first Monday in January 1999, the first meeting was convened at the Willows. With Ed Hunt and Tony Toback being the co-conveners and leaders, the following charter members were present: Dave Bond, Dick Baller, Verne Eklund, Jon Gramzow, Shirley Rolf, Ray Schoenfield and Marv Webber.

The casual origin name given to the group was "Rociregs" which stood for Rock River Irregulars. For the first several meetings, Ray Schoenfield took on the large task of summarizing each program and his typed story of each was printed and handed out to those attending.

Those early meetings were very informal. The cost of the meal was \$4.00 and those attending paid .50 cents or \$1.00 for the costs of the materials. It was at first agreed that we should keep the membership small in order to give those in attendance the opportunity to discuss and ask questions, etc. The average attendance was about 12.

However, with this nucleus and as time moved along, other interested people were invited or personally petitioned to become members. The group eventually grew into the present title and organization, "Rock River Valley Civil War Round Table", with Robert (Bob) Ash as President. As of this date there is an attendance of roughly 30 at each meeting.

Prepared by Ed Hunt, Tony Toback and Ray Schoenfield. July 1, 2006