

THE CHARGER

January 2011

474th Meeting

Vol. 32, #5

Tonight's Program:

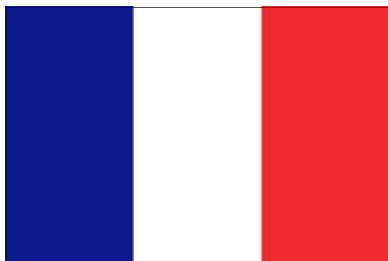
The Dick Crews Annual Debate

*Would foreign intervention have won the
war for the South?*

Moderator: William F. B. Vodrey



Flag of England



The Tricolor of
France



Flag of the Russian
Empire, 1858-1883



Flag of Spain,
Adopted 1785

Tonight's Debaters:

Tom Barnard Steve Wilson

Steve Pettyjohn Dennis Keating

What could be more fun than arguing about the Civil War? This year's topic is one about which we have heard little, if anything. Tom Barnard and Steve Wilson will argue that England, France, Russia, or Spain would have helped the Confederacy become independent. Steve Pettyjohn and Dennis Keating will counter that foreign nations would not have helped the South win the war. It should be a fabulous evening. Come and join in the fun.

**Date: Wednesday,
January 12, 2011**

**Place: Judson Manor
1890 E. 107th Street
Cleveland, Ohio**

**Time: Drinks 6 PM
Dinner 6:45 PM**

**Reservations: Please Call
Dan Zeiser (440) 449-9311
Or email ccwrt1956@yahoo.com
By 9 pm Sunday before meeting**

**Meal choice: Entree, vegetable,
salad, and dessert.**

**CLEVELAND
CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE**
FOUNDED 1957

President: **Lisa Kempfer** (440) 526-1318
Vice President: **Paul Burkholder** (440) 918-0222
Secretary: **Marge Wilson** (216) 932-6558
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website: clevelandcivilwarroundtable.com

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Editor - THE CHARGER - Dan Zeiser

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1988 Martin Graham
1987 George Vourlojianis
1986 Tim Beatty
1985 Brian Kowell
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1961 Charles Clarke
1960 Howard Preston
1959 John Cullen, Jr.
1958 George Farr, Jr.
1957 Kenneth Grant

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

JANUARY 2011

A December to Remember and the Great Debate.

The weather outside was frightful and the fire so delightful... on December 8 most of you wisely stayed home. Weather, like politics, is local. That evening, it was not snowing in Broadview Heights, 15 miles directly south of Cleveland. No reason to call off the meeting. I and many Cavs fans came to a grinding halt at I-77 and Harvard Ave. Snow. Everywhere. Dan called me. He was on his way. The Garfields, our speakers called. They were near Eddy Road. The show must go on! No turning back! Did inclement weather stop Washington from attacking Trenton or Grant from marching across Tennessee in the rain and mud to rescue the troops under siege at Chattanooga? No! I must press on! Two and a half hours later I arrived at Judson and was greeted by a small dinner party of nine members who were being entertained by the Garfields. In fact, our members' conversation with Ed Haney as Major General James A. Garfield and Deborah Weinkamer as Mrs. Lucretia R. Garfield was so engaging that they took the initiative (which I heartily approved!) to invite them back to read their Civil War letters to us on June 8. I hope you can all attend that meeting!

2011 Dick Crews Annual Debate: Would foreign intervention have won the war for the South? I chose this question for two reasons. First, the only discussion I have heard in our club about Europeans and the Civil War was a talk about CSS Alabama, which was constructed in England and finished on the Azores. It was a headache Charles Francis Adams had to address when he was Lincoln's ambassador to the Court of St. James. Adams himself is the second reason. I am an admirer of the Adams family and their many contributions to our country. Charles was the son of John Quincy, grandson of John Adams, and father of Henry Adams. As a teenager and young man, he served as his father's diplomatic secretary in Russia and England. He studied law at Harvard, practiced law, wrote essays and books, was a state and national congressman, and tapped by Lincoln to be the third Adams to serve as ambassador to England. He was experienced, capable, and understood British and European politics better than other Americans at that time.

I would like to thank our experienced and capable Moderator, William Vodrey, for developing a focused debate question and putting together two teams of talented debaters. Dennis Keating and Steve Pettyjohn will argue "No." Thomas Barnard and Steve Wilson will argue "Yes." The debate will take place on January 12, 2011. I look forward to seeing you there! It will not snow...it will not snow...it will not snow...

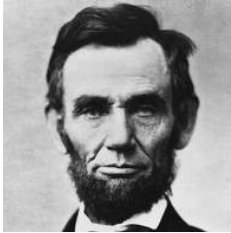
Happy New Year!

Lisa Kempfer

**CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE
2010/2011 SCHEDULE**

September 8, 2010

***Abraham Lincoln's Effect on
Constitutional
Interpretation***

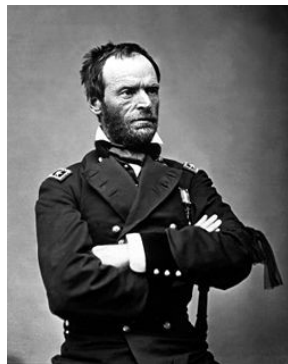


Wilson Huhn

October 13, 2010

***William Tecumseh
Sherman***

**Frank
Bullock**



November 10, 2010



Dr. Mary Walker

***Civil War Female
Spies***

December 8, 2010

***Letters From the Front:
General James A. and
Lucretia Garfield***

**Ed Haney and
Deborah Weinkamer**

January 12 2011

**The Dick Crews Annual
Debate**

*Would foreign intervention have won
the war for the South?*

Moderator: William F. B. Vodrey

February 9, 2011

***Lincoln's
Commando:
William Cushing***

William Vodrey



March 9, 2011



***Garfield's battles in
Eastern Kentucky***

Scott Longren

April 13, 2011

***The Fight for Money:
The Income Tax Laws
Of the Civil War***

Donald Korb

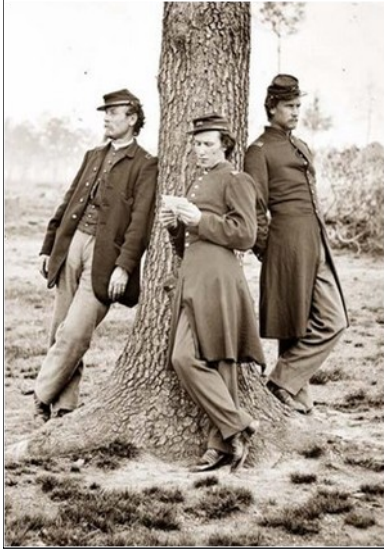
May 11, 2011



Ulysses Grant

John Marszalek

**For membership in the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable, please visit our web site:
<http://clevelandcivilwarroundtable.com>**



Conscripts in the Civil War

By Dick Crews

Conscript is not a word frequently used in discussing soldiers in the Civil War. In his book *Conscription in North Carolina*, Walter Hilderman III, a man of the south, said the following: “Naturally, I assumed that my great, great Grandfather had eagerly volunteered for the Confederate army when the first shots were fired. Such was not the case. Through his letters, I found that he and most of his army companions were known as *conscripts*. When I first came across the word, I had to look it up in the dictionary. The words **eager** and **volunteer** were not part of the definition.” (1)

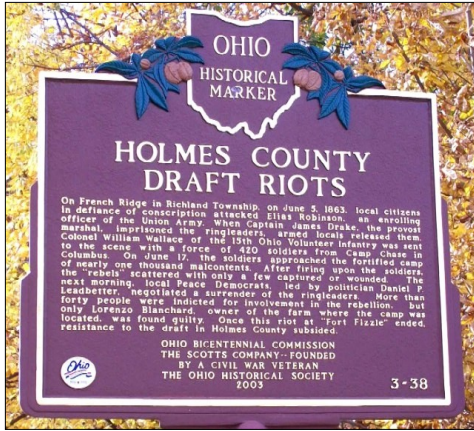
Surprisingly, the South had a draft almost a year before the North. This is surprising because one of the big reasons given by the southern states for leaving the Union was so they would not be ordered around by Washington. Now they were being given orders by the Confederate government in Richmond. The call was to join the Army or go to jail. Good grief, what happened to States Rights?

Ok, so much for States Rights. The capital at Richmond was under attack by McClellan's huge army. To survive, the Confederacy had a desperate need for men in uniform. The Union and Confederate armies had fundamental differences, but not on conscription. Both sides hated it. No soldier, North or South, wanted conscripted soldiers in his unit.

The New York draft riots are the most famous, but there were small riots in towns in the North and South. In North Carolina, agents were sent into the western mountains to bring in mountain men to be conscripted into the Confederate army. The mountain men in general had no interest in the war. They had very few slaves and many supported the Union. In any case, they were not going to die “*for no darkies*.” For a couple of months, these mountain men were dragged into the conscription bureaus at gun point. The mountain men got fed up. A group of them went down the mountain to Morganton, North Carolina and burned the conscription bureau office to the ground.

In Ohio and other places, the threat was to conscription officials. Many times these officials were simply escorted to the edge of town and told to get lost. In Holmes County (Millersburg), 900 armed men took matters in their own hands. They held the local draft officials under guard and asked the governor to recall them to Columbus. The Governor promptly sent Ohio troops to restore order. Typical of a mob, the demonstrators fired one round and then, after the troops opened fire, they hurried home for supper. There was no general military draft in America until the Civil War. The draft affected the South much more than the North. Southern conscripts were one-fourth to one-third of the eastern Confederate army. In the North, of the 250,000 men drafted only six percent actually served.

This also explains why the South collapsed so quickly in the spring of 1865. A good example was General Robert E. Lee's letter to the governor of South Carolina in February of 1865.



Forty (40) men were arrested for what became known as the battle of Fort Fizzle. Only one (1) was convicted, but Holmes County was quiet for the rest of the war.

The governor had requested troops be sent immediately to protect the capital in Columbia, South Carolina from General Sherman's approaching army.

Lee wrote back saying there were 34,000 Confederate troops in South Carolina and they should be able to defend the capital. However, the 34,000 troops were spread over five different cities in the state. More important, these troops were State Militia and garrison troops.

They were mostly conscripts who slept in their own bed every night. They had no interest in dying to protect South Carolina from Sherman's army.

Lee finally sent 1,500 cavalry to help take on Sherman's 60,000 troops. When Sherman approached the cavalry along with the State Militia fled Columbia without a fight. Clearly, conscription was unpopular, unwieldy, and unfair part of the American Civil War.



(1) "They went into the fight CHEERING," *Confederate Conscription in North Carolina* by Walter Hilderman III.

Dick Crews is a 20 year member of the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable.

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**NEXT MONTH
LINCOLN'S COMMANDO: WILLIAM CUSHING**

WILLIAM VODREY

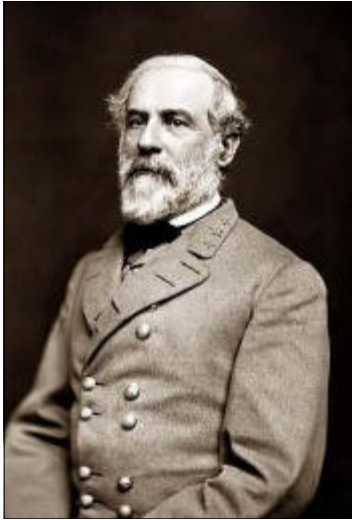
Grant vs. Lee

This article was originally printed in the Charger in 2002.
In anticipation of PBS's programs on Lee, January 3 at 9 pm, and
Grant, January 10, at pm, it is reprinted here.

The age old question. The two best-known generals of the war. The commanders who battled one other at the end of the war. Lee's surrender to Grant is generally, and incorrectly, considered the end of the war. Given his besting of Lee, is Grant the better general? Much has been written over the years, yet the question remains.

Here we go again.

Lee, second in his West Point class, an engineering officer, a career military officer, truly was a great general. As a tactician, he was head and shoulders above Grant. (Thomas, however, is another question.) Good defensively, Lee was even better on the offensive. He was bold and decisive, a calculating gambler. Can anyone who has studied the battle of Chancellorsville deny it? Splitting his army on several occasions, he surprised his opponents and won the day. Lee was a master of the holding attack, a tactic George Marshall would later instill as the only tactic taught at the Army War College prior to World War II.



As do all great generals, Lee knew his commanders and his opponents. With Jackson as his right arm, he had the confidence to divide his command and attack whenever he saw the opportunity. After Jackson's death, he realized his subordinates were not cut from the same cloth. Never again would he attempt a Chancellorsville type maneuver. He was a wise evaluator of his opponent's capabilities, also. Prior to Antietam, with McClellan again in command, Lee knew he would have time to take Harpers Ferry before McClellan attacked. At Gettysburg, Lee realized Meade was a solid, if not spectacular, commander who would likely not make a mistake.

Because of these traits, he won battles – one of the measures of a great general. His men loved him and would do anything for him. They fought when they were cold, tired, hungry, and hopeless. They did everything he asked, except win the war.

However good he was, Lee was flawed. Two flaws in particular come to mind, one minor, one major. As a minor flaw, Lee was not a good quartermaster. The Army of Northern Virginia was always poorly equipped. Much of its equipment and supplies were taken from the Army of the Potomac af-

ter their numerous victories, but there was never enough. Not all of this blame can be laid at the feet of Lee, though. The Confederacy was woefully short of the industry needed to supply its armies and the Northern blockade prevented adequate supplies from being imported as the war dragged on. Some may lay additional fault on the South's lack of railroads to deliver supplies. Virginia, however, did not suffer from this lack. Finally, northern Virginia was fought-over so much that it simply could not feed the army.

While these factors played a role, Lee, as commander, shoulders much of the blame. He never seemed overly concerned about the supply situation, leaving it to the government in Richmond. For instance, a major reason Lee invaded the North in 1863 was the lack of food to be found in northern Virginia following the wintering of both armies there. Rather than deal with the supply problem at home, he chose to invade Pennsylvania and live off the land. But how long could he possibly stay? This only solved part of his problems. More important, a battle was inevitable. He would have to return to deal with his wounded and replace his losses, even if he were victorious.

Lee's major flaw, though, was as a strategist. In a word, he was not. His concern was northern Virginia and nothing else. Throughout the war, he resisted attempts by Jefferson Davis to draw forces from the Army of Northern Virginia to reinforce the western armies. Only once did it happen, when Longstreet went west and fought at Chattanooga, but not without Lee's efforts to stop it. He also opposed attempts to make him commander-in-chief of Southern forces until it was too late for it to be of any benefit.

Additionally and most importantly, he failed to realize that the Confederacy's best hope of survival was to hold out. Since the South had a lack of fighting men compared to the North, its best hope was to keep casualties to a minimum, to live to fight another day. Lee's offensive tactics ensured the Army of Northern Virginia sustained greater casualties than it could afford. Had he fought defensively most of the time, Lee would have saved soldiers



who could fight again, perhaps outlasting the North's will to win.

In some ways, Grant is the mirror image of Lee. He was a mediocre student, 21st of a class of 39, and a failure as a career military man. He was not very good as a civilian, either, failing as a farmer and a president. And, unlike Lee, he was a good quartermaster who made certain his men were well-supplied. In other ways, they were very much alike. Like Lee, Grant was decisive and bold. The Vicksburg campaign alone proves this. Grant also was not afraid to fight. He won battles and his men loved him.

Grant also had his flaws. As a tactician, he was horrible. He seemed to know only one tactic – the frontal assault. Time and time again, he threw troops at entrenched positions, only to suffer incredible casualties. At Vicksburg, he attacked strong fortifications and suffered accordingly. Did he learn to try other methods? No. At Spotsylvania and Cold Harbor he did it again on an even grander scale, suffering even grander casualties. Grant seems to be one of those Civil War generals, of whom there are quite a few, who did not understand the changes the rifled musket forced on tactics. Frontal assaults no longer worked, but many a general seemed to think if only another division were thrown in, the result would be different. Only once did Grant try a flank attack. At Chattanooga, Sherman was to strike the right flank of Bragg's army, but was defeated by Cleburne's division. Seeing it fail, Grant seems to have discarded the idea as antiquated.

Grant's true talent lay as a strategist. He saw the big picture clearly. His Vicksburg campaign was brilliant, even though the battles were won in a pedestrian manner. He outmaneuvered his opponent and prevented him from combining forces. As commander of all the armies in 1864, Grant understood two aspects of the war that those before him did not.

First, the North had to keep pressure on all of the South's armies simultaneously to keep the Confederacy from using its interior lines of communication to shift forces quickly. Second, he realized the North had greater manpower and could replace its losses more easily than the South. If he kept pressure on Lee's army and kept it fighting, eventually Lee would run out of men. While this increased Grant's casualties in the short term, it shortened the war and lessened overall casualties.

So, who was the better general?

Both were fighters who won battles. Both were decisive, bold men. Lee was clearly the better tactician. In the end, however, Grant must be seen as the better of the two. No man, other than Lincoln, did more to win the war than Grant. His strategic vision enabled him to maximize his advantages and Lee's disadvantages. He forced Lee to fight and continue fighting without rest. Grant could replace his losses, Lee could not. In the end, this is what proved the difference. At Appomattox, the Army of the Potomac continued to grow stronger. The Army of Northern Virginia could field no more than 20,000 men, many of whom could no longer fight. As a result of Grant's strategic talent, the Army of the Potomac was able to do the one thing Lee's Army of Northern Virginia could not – win the war.