

**May, 2006**

**433rd Meeting**

**Vol. 27 #9**

*Tonight's Program:*

## **Union Jacks: Yankee Sailors in the Civil War**

**Michael Bennett**

After the battle of Gettysburg, a Union soldier expressed the opinion of many a common soldier when he wrote, "Generals and Admirals win high renown for the military achievements of their men, but personal deeds of heroism by simple privates or subalterns are rarely recorded." While this statement is not entirely true, his point is valid. Much has been written about the military leaders of the Civil War, even the inept ones. But the courageous and astounding actions of the frequently faceless combatants who brought the accomplishments of their leaders to fruition exist mostly as anecdotes in the volumes on the war's celebrities. The speaker for the May Roundtable meeting, Michael J. Bennett, has worked to rectify that inequity, at least for the legions of men who served in the Union navy. Mike examined the diaries, letters, and journals of Union seamen to construct a detailed account of their everyday life and provide a description of the backgrounds of these little known individuals. The book resulting from his efforts is a tribute to those who served aboard the decks of the Union navy. As Mike points out, Union seamen were cut from a far different cloth than their land-based military counterparts. Their living and fighting conditions were different and, while the soldiers operated in that era's fullest possible media attention, the sailors often served on the fringes. Mike will bring those fringes to center stage and show us what life and combat were like for "Union Jacks: Yankee Sailors in the Civil War."

*Tonight's Speaker:*

## **Michael Bennett**

Michael J. Bennett, Ph.D., J.D. is the author of *Union Jacks: Yankee Sailors in the Civil War* and numerous articles on the Civil War. Mike holds a Ph.D. in History from Saint Louis University and is currently on the faculty at Kent State University and Penn State University. Mike received his J.D. from Case Western Reserve University and addresses mergers and acquisitions, corporate governance, and real estate matters with the Cleveland office of Yormick & Associates. Mike is working on a social history of Confederate sailors. He resides in Bay Village with his wife and son.

**Date: Wednesday,  
May 10, 2006**

**Place: The Cleveland  
Playhouse Club  
8501 Carnegie Ave.**

**Time: Drinks 6 PM  
Dinner 7 PM**

**Reservations: Please Call  
JAC Communications  
(216) 861-5588**

**Meal choice: Beef Pot Roast or  
Vegetarian Dinner**

## CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

FOUNDED 1957

*President:* **Dave Carrino** (440) 843-9088  
*Vice President:* **John Fazio** (330) 867-1535  
*Secretary:* **Marilyn DeBaltzo** (440) 461-6804  
*Treasurer:* **Lynn Loritts** (216) 491-9853  
*Historian:* **Dale Thomas** (440) 779-6454

### Directors:

Mel Maurer  
Warren McClelland  
Hans Kuenzi

Lisa Kempfer  
Eddie Myers  
Jon Thompson

website: clevelandcivilwarroundtable.com

email: a-bell@adelphia.net

Editor - THE CHARGER - Dan Zeiser

### Cleveland Civil War Roundtable Past Presidents

2005 Mel Maurer	1980 Charles Spiegle
2004 Warren McClelland	1979 William Bates
2003 Maynard Bauer	1978 Richard McCrae
2002 Bill McGrath	1977 James Chapman
2001 William Vodrey	1976 Milton Holmes
2000 Bob Boyda	1975 Thomas Gretter
1999 Dick Crews	1974 Nolan Heidelbaugh
1998 John Moore	1973 Arthur Jordan
1997 Dan Zeiser	1972 Bernard Drews
1996 John Sutula	1971 Kenneth Callahan
1995 Norton London	1970 Frank Schuhle
1994 Robert Battisti	1969 Donald Heckaman
1993 Kevin Callahan	1968 Frank Moran
1992 Bob Baucher	1967 William Schlesinger
1991 Joe Tirpak	1966 Donald Hamill
1990 Ken Callahan Jr.	1965 Lester Swift
1989 Neil Glaser	1964 Guy DiCarlo, Jr.
1988 Martin Graham	1963 Paul Guenther
1987 George Vourlojianis	1962 Edward Downer
1986 Tim Beatty	1961 Charles Clarke
1985 Brian Kowell	1960 Howard Preston
1984 Neil Evans	1959 John Cullen, Jr.
1983 William Victory	1958 George Farr, Jr.
1982 John Harkness	1957 Kenneth Grant
1981 Thomas Geschke	

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### MAY, 2006

Hdqrs. Cvlnd. Civil War Rtbl.  
May 10, 2006

The Roundtable speaker for April, Richard McMurry, treated us to a cogent and witty presentation in which he made a compelling case that focusing on the war in the east leads to incorrect impressions. As Richard pointed out, while the war in the east appeared to be, from the Union perspective, at best a stalemate, the war in the west was virtually one unbroken string of victories. By Richard's accounting, a focus on the war in the west leads to the correct conclusion that there was no real turning point, but that it was a gradual, inexorable progression toward Union victory. Richard cleverly explained how the Union's western armies were so successful that they essentially ran out of territory to capture and moved eastward, resulting in the eastern Confederacy being assimilated into the western theater. Richard's knowledge, insight, and humor made his presentation outstanding. My thanks for an interesting, engaging, and thought-provoking presentation.

Congratulations to Rick Maurer for winning the Mort Künstler print *Morgan's Ohio Raid*. I know Rick will find a nice place to display his prize. Thanks to everyone who purchased tickets for the raffle. At the May meeting, there will be a final raffle of a print of the *Monitor* and the *Virginia*, which was donated by William Vodrey. Tickets for this raffle will be sold at the May meeting.

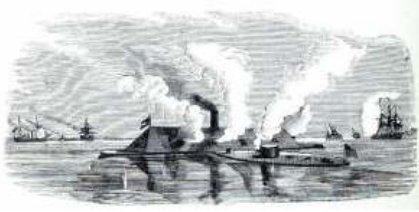
Since this is my last message for *The Charger*, I want to end by thanking everyone for making the 2005-2006 session so enjoyable. Nothing with the Roundtable is accomplished without the dedicated efforts of many people. Space does not allow me to mention everyone by name, but I am grateful for all of your help. My sincere thanks to all of you.

Very respy. your obt. srvt.  
D.A. Carrino

**CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE  
2005/2006 SCHEDULE**

September 14, 2005

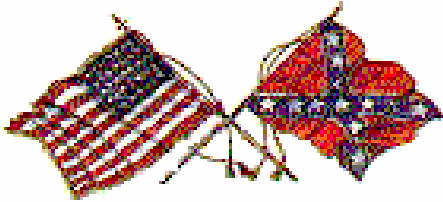
**T h e y  
H a d  
N a v i e s,  
T o o???**



**Bruce Smith**

October 12, 2005

**How the Civil War Still Lives**



**James I. Robertson Jr.**

November 9, 2005

**The Transformation of  
Abolitionism in War and  
Peace: Oberlin, Ohio as a Case  
Study**

**Carol Lasser and Gary J.  
Kornblith, Oberlin College**

December 14, 2005

**The Supply for Tomorrow  
Must Not Fail: The Civil War of  
Captain Simon J. Perkins Jr., a  
Civil War Quartermaster**

**Lennette Taylor  
Summit County Historical Society**

January 11, 20056

**The Great Debate**

*The Most Overrated Leader  
(Military or Political) of the  
Civil War*

**Moderator: William Vodrey**

February 8, 2006

**Joshua Lawrence  
Chamberlain:  
Scholar, Citizen,  
Soldier  
William F. B. Vodrey**



March 8, 2006

**The Trial of Henry  
Wirz  
A Play by  
Dale Thomas**



April 12, 2006

**A New Framework for Civil  
War Military History**

**Richard McMurry**

May 10, 2006

**Union Jacks:  
Yankee Sailors  
In the Civil  
War**



**Michael Bennett**



# “Wounded Lion”

## U.S. Grant’s Last Campaign

By Mel Maurer



Ulysses S. Grant, his wife, Julia, and their family had always enjoyed their annual vacations at their summer home on the beach in New Jersey. The summer of 1884, however, would be different from the rest. Grant was no longer president nor was he a wealthy former president. This time Grant had not come to relax, but to seriously consider his future. How was he to recover from the financial ruin brought on by the failure of the firm - Grant and Ward – to which he had lent his name and much of his fortune? (Although the firm appeared to be successful for several years, it was, in fact, a financial sham – a swindle perpetrated by the firm’s unscrupulous partner, Ferdinand Ward, on bankers, investors, and the Grant family. The firm collapsed in scandal and debt in May 1884 leaving the Grant family in financial ruin.)

Although Grant had never wanted to write anything - especially not anything about his life and war experiences (Grant said he did not like to retrace his steps, a superstition since childhood), preferring to leave that to others. But now he felt he had no choice – he would not accept the many offers of financial help. He would save his family with his words – his memoirs. Unsure of his writing ability - he had only written military orders, reports and dispatches as a general, and reviewed others’ writings as president - he did not know how to start and where to find a publisher. As he stood with Julia in their pantry on June 2 to have some fruit, he bit into a peach and cried out in pain. He told his wife that as he swallowed he had an “almost unbearable pain” in his throat, but then the pain was gone.

In mid-June, Robert Johnson, associate editor of Century Magazine, visited Grant to see if he could get him to write some articles for a new series to be written by Civil War participants. Grant had turned him down earlier that year, but now, after explaining his financial crisis, he agreed to write articles on Shiloh, Vicksburg, the Wilderness, and Appomattox. Johnson said after this meeting “Grant gave me the impression of a wounded lion.”

Later that month, the pain in his throat recurred more frequently, especially when he ate. Concerned, Julia had him seen by a doctor in Long Branch. The doctor noted that Grant’s throat was inflamed and wrote a prescription for him, advising him to see his family doctor immediately. The family doctor was in Europe, however, so Grant delayed a visit. His pain then seemed to again subside.

Grant went to work almost immediately with the help of his son, Fred, as his researcher, and soon produced the Shiloh article. However, his first draft read like a battlefield report. With the guidance of Johnson, who explained in more detail what he was looking for – a conversational, insightful, anecdotal style, Grant rewrote Shiloh and began his work on Vicksburg. Johnson was pleased with the new work, noting that it “portrayed a confidence and had a style now that brought readers into his narrative – his added anecdotes gave special color to his work.” Grant, who had found writing to be a chore, now found it enjoyable.

As pleased as Johnson and the Century Publishing Company were with Grant’s articles, they were even more interested in eventually publishing his memoirs. Grant was seriously considering Century as his publisher by October when he returned to New York City to continue his article work and finally see his doctor.

His visit to the doctor quickly led to an appointment with a throat specialist. This doctor concluded immediately that the inflammation in Grant’s mouth and throat was “cancerous, malignant and likely to kill him – and it was spreading.” The specialist saw multiple problems: three small growths on the roof of the mouth, a swollen gland on the right side of the mouth – the main source of the pain - an ulcerated tonsil, and, most serious, a carcinoma at the base of his tongue. The specialist knew it would gradually spread into Grant’s throat, infecting, enlarging, and making it almost impossible for him to eat

and eventually even breathe. A later analysis of the specialist's findings by another doctor concluded, "The general is doomed." The doctors also knew that Grant would go through periods of "excruciating pain, spells of exhaustion and would die within a year." (Among other things, Grant was told to limit his cigar smoking, too. A few weeks later he lit a cigar and announced that it would be his last.)

Grant was not surprised by the diagnosis. Once the doctors had confirmed his suspicions, he went immediately to the Century Company to arrange for the publication of his memoirs. He was bankrupt, in personal debt and mortally ill. Now the Lion would plan his last campaign - the writing of his memoirs. Before a final deal was made with Century, Mark Twain, a casual friend, told Grant that the Century offer was fair, but that he could do much better for him financially as his publisher. "Strike out that 10% (Century's royalty offer) and put in 75% of net returns." Twain told him. Grant signed with Twain.

While Grant visited his doctor twice a day (by street car) to have his swollen tongue swabbed with a muriate of cocaine and other medicines to help relieve his pain, he put together his team of assistants - his son Fred, and his friend, Adam Badeau, one of his closest aides during the war his presidency. Badeau, later a stenographer, had already published a three-volume account of Grant's war years. His valet and close friend, Harrison Tyrell, his African-American servant, was also said to "have done as much as anyone to ease Grant's suffering and enable him to write his memoirs."

Grant, wearing a knit cap, shawl, and scarf around his neck to keep warm, began working in earnest in November in a small room on the second floor of his house. He worked at a small desk filled with notes, some from research done by assistants and others he made to himself as reminders. One reference book used was "The Memoirs of William T. Sherman." At first, before becoming too weak, he wrote in longhand and made revisions after editing by Fred and Badeau. He reviewed his work at the end of each day and planned the next day's work. Although it was demanding and physically tiring, he took great pride in what he was doing and sometimes read passages he particularly liked to Julia.

Grant planned to work first on his background, then his major campaigns, and, finally, indexes and battle maps. His battle against time became even more apparent as the cancer continued to weaken him - milk twice a day was much of his nourishment. He could no longer hide his pain, just swallowing caused a burning discomfort. He told a friend that drinking water was "like swallowing molten lead." Sprays to ease his pain helped for a short time and his food beside milk was soup and oatmeal. His throat was closing and he often had difficulty breathing, but on he worked through the winter, only conceding to give up the streetcar trips for visits by his doctor. He would write for hours without a break, going days without water rather than feeling the pain drinking would cause.

He began to have trouble sleeping in December. This weakened him even more. By the end of the month, he was weary, depressed, and unable to work. Julia wrote to Sherman for advice. He told her that this was just Grant's style - he would always go silent in a time of crisis, especially when things were very bad. "Don't worry," he said, "he will soon emerge from his funk." In January, his doctors told Julia that Grant was going through the end of life process of accepting his mortality and, knowing him, would revive and fight to continue living as long as possible.

At this time, the world did not know of Grant's illness, but word was gradually getting out. Sherman, who had visited Grant and realized what the bankruptcy had done to his family, put together with some financiers a nest egg of \$150,000, but Grant politely declined the money. Sherman, however, would not give up and immediately went to work to have Grant reinstated in the regular army on its retirement list as a Lt. General so he and then Julia would receive pensions. (Grant had resigned from the army and had not retired). While the Senate passed a bill to do this, the House would not.

Grant's mood and strength improved by the end of January and he began to work again. While the first reports of Grant's illness had him "doing well," the fatality of his condition became known in late February and by March 1 The New York Times printed a bold headline declaring "**Grant is Dying.**" Reporters from across the country were soon set up near Grant's house for what was called a "death watch." The police were eventually needed to control the people that gathered on his street. His doctors began to issue bulletins on his health. Sherman persisted in his campaign for Grant's reinstatement.

ment and after much work, the House passed a bill reinstating him at the very last hour of its session at noon on March 4. The bill was rushed to the Senate where the clock was literally turned back nine minutes to allow the Senate to remain in session and vote. The outgoing president, Chester Arthur, signed it immediately, delaying the inauguration of his successor by twenty minutes. The official commission papers were presented to new president Grover Cleveland for his official signature by Robert Lincoln, outgoing Secretary of War. (Grant would receive a pension of \$13,500 a year and, upon his death, Julia would receive \$5000 per year.)

The eventual widow's pension for Julia did much to relieve Grant's mind and now he focused on his writing, interrupted occasionally by many old friends stopping by to briefly pay their respects. Twain visited often, serving as friend and sounding board. The first volume of the memoirs was completed in March and Twain hurried it to his printer. He compared Grant's work to Caesar's "Commentaries," saying that "High merit distinguished both books- clarity of statement, directness, simplicity, manifest truthfulness, fairness and justice towards friend and foe alike, scholarly candor..."

Grant continued his work, but a choking and coughing fit that almost killed him (during which he accepted Baptism) slowed him down. Defying the odds, he recovered some strength and returned to his writing – pausing on April 9<sup>th</sup> to take a few puffs on a cigar, with doctors' permission, to celebrate the anniversary of Lee's surrender. He celebrated his 63<sup>rd</sup> birthday on April 27 with a refreshing carriage ride in Central Park. Grant's articles had also started to appear in Century Magazine and were well received – its subscriptions increased 40% over six months in part due to Grant and its series on the Civil war. (Around this time, Badeau left Grant when Badeau's various demands were not met. An item appeared in a paper falsely claiming that Badeau wrote the memoirs. Twain wanted to sue, but Grant just denied the claim – "The composition is entirely my own.")

By May, as he devoted more and more time to his writing, Grant's neck became even more swollen and he could hardly talk or even swallow. The cancer had spread into the back of his throat and jaw, "literally eating him alive." The pain kept him awake and he worked through many nights. "I could do better," he said, "if I could only get the rest I crave." He finished his "rough draft" of Volume Two on June 8<sup>th</sup>, almost a year from the date he first considered writing his memoirs. Twain wanted to take the work to the printers immediately, but Grant refused, saying he had to go over everything to be sure it was right and add a few more of his "plums and spices."

Grant's doctors recommended the cooler air of the Adirondacks for the summer, so the family moved to a cottage at the Balmoral Hotel twelve miles from Saratoga. Crowds gathered in New York to say good-bye to the family. Grant tried to enjoy as much as possible his time at the cottage – seeing a few nearby sights and continuing his work on polishing his memoirs while his health declined further. He put his pencil down for the last time on the afternoon of July 19, telling his stenographer in a soft raspy voice "The book is finished." So was his life. He died three days later at 8:08 a.m on July 23. Starvation was the official cause of death.

"The Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant" Volume I was published on December 10, 1885, becoming a best seller, as was Volume II. A few months later, Julia received her first royalty check in the amount of \$200,000. The family would eventually receive between \$500,000 and \$1,000,000. The great Grant, "The Wounded Lion," had won his last campaign!

**Note:** Many of the facts for this article were taken from the excellent book, "Grant and Twain," by Mark Perry published by Random House in 2004.

**Mel Maurer was President of the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable in 2004-5. He is a frequent contributor to the Charger, leads the Roundtable's contact with Lee Burneson Middle School and its program on the Civil War, and judges the winner of its poetry contest. This year's winning poem is on the next page.**

## Annual Poetry Contest Winner

### *The Widow*

*There he lies, may he rest in peace,  
As his wife looks over and quietly weeps.*

*Her heart is torn, as it will be forever,  
While she yearns to remember their times together.*

*She peacefully sits and tries to be strong,  
And thinks to herself how war is so wrong.*

*She solemnly cries and misses him dear,  
“My, how I wish my loved one was here.”*

*But it is all over, what else can be said?  
Oh how she wishes her husband weren't dead.*

*She longs to hear his whisper in her ear,  
And suddenly feels that his spirit is near.*

*He kneels down besides her and holds her close,  
Yet she cannot feel it for he is just a ghost.*



*There he lies, may he rest in peace,  
As his wife looks over and quietly weeps.*

*Marie-Andrée Belzile*

## **WHO WOULD LIKE TO DEBATE?**

As part of the CCWRT 2006-7 program, the Dick Crews Annual Debate will be held on January 10, 2007. The debate will be held in an inter-scholastic formate, i.e., two persons on the Affirmative and two on the Negative, and will last for a to be determined length of time followed by questions and answers and a vote of the membership as to which side won. The Resolution to be debated will be:

**RESOLVED: THAT THE INSTITUTION OF SLAVERY WAS THE CAUSE OF THE CIVIL WAR.**

The Affirmative is expected to argue that all other issues between the regions could have been resolved peacefully, but not this one, and that if there were other causes, they were tied directly or indirectly to this one. The Negative is expected to argue that there were other causes of the war and that slavery could have been abolished peacefully.

If you would like to participate, please contact John Fazio at 330-665-3000 or [johncfazio@verizon.net](mailto:johncfazio@verizon.net) and let him know if you would like to argue the Affirmative or the Negative.

## **2006 FIELD TRIP**

**SEPTEMBER 28-SEPTEMBER 30**

**THE BATTLE OF PERRYVILLE AND CINCINNATI'S NEW NATIONAL UNDERGROUND RAILROAD FREEDOM CENTER**

**CONTACT JOHN FAZIO IF YOU ARE INTERESTED  
330-665-3000 OR [JOHNCFAZIO@VERIZON.NET](mailto:JOHNCFAZIO@VERIZON.NET)**