

THE CHARGER

October 2009

462nd Meeting

Vol. 31, #2

Tonight's Program:

Behind the Scenes at a Civil War Movie

Our speaker tonight will regale us with what goes on behind the scenes of a Civil War movie. He has been involved in two, "Gettysburg" and "Cold Mountain." If you have not seen them, "Gettysburg" depicts not only the three day battle, but many details leading to the struggle. The battle is shown from the point of view of the North and South. The defense of Little Round Top on the second day and Pickett's Charge on the third are highlighted. Two characters dominate the film, Joshua L. Chamberlain and James Longstreet. The relationship between Longstreet and Robert E. Lee is also a focus. It is, of course, based on Michael Shaara's book "The Killer Angels," which was the first working title for the movie.

"Cold Mountain," though opening with a depiction of the Battle of the Crater, concentrates on the effects of the war on the home front. The protagonist, a Confederate soldier, is wounded in battle and decides to desert and head home, where he left behind a woman with whom he was just beginning a relationship. The film focuses on the woman's life while the soldier has been away and the soldier's trek home and his encounters with other Southerners.

There is much more to a movie, however, than what is shown on the screen. Michael Kraus will give us an idea of the trials, tribulations, and victories in putting together a Civil War movie. Come join us for the show. You will have to bring your own popcorn.

Michael Kraus

Michael Kraus is the curator of the Pittsburgh Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hall and Museum. The Hall and Museum is the nation's only military museum dedicated to honoring the men and women of all branches of service, the citizen as well as the professional soldier. Mr. Kraus is a Civil War historian. He served as the military coordinator for New Line Cinema's "Gettysburg" and military history advisor for Miramax Film's "Cold Mountain." Mr. Kraus is a captain in the 116th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry and a charter member of the Irish Brigade.

Date: **Wednesday,
October 14, 2009**

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

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

Reservations: **Please Call
Dan Zeiser (440) 449-9311
Or email ccwrt1956@yahoo.com
By 8 pm Tuesday before meeting**

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

CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

FOUNDED 1957

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1997 Dan Zeiser	1971 Kenneth Callahan
1996 John Sutula	1970 Frank Schuhle
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1986 Tim Beatty	1960 Howard Preston
1985 Brian Kowell	1959 John Cullen, Jr.
1984 Neil Evans	1958 George Farr, Jr.
	1957 Kenneth Grant

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

OCTOBER 2009

Greetings,

During the last weekend of September, 23 of us visited many Civil War sites in and around Richmond and Petersburg, Virginia. Guided by retired military historian Lynn Sims, we first followed the 1862 Seven Days battles - Lee's counterattack against McClellan. Next, we followed Grant's 1864 Overland campaign from North Ana to Cold Harbor. Finally, we went south of the James River to City Point and then the 1864-1865 siege of Petersburg, including the battles at the Crater and Fort Stedman. Some also visited Civil War sites in Richmond and Pamplin Park in Petersburg. Some were re-visiting many of these sites, others had the experience for the first time. I encourage you to consider going on a future field trip.

This month's speaker, Michael Kraus, will take us behind the scenes of Civil War movies, including those he has worked on himself. These include Gettysburg and Cold Mountain, which will be of special interest to those of you who went to Gettysburg last year and those who visited the Crater last month. Michael has often spoken to the Pittsburgh Civil War Roundtable.

Respectfully,

Dennis Keating

**CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE
2009/2010 SCHEDULE**

September 9, 2009

**Plenty of Blame to
Go Around: Jeb Stu-
art's Controversial
Ride to Gettysburg**



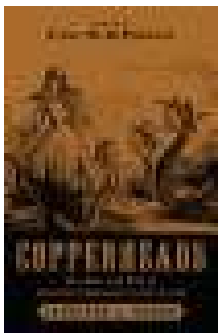
Eric Wittenberg

October 14, 2009

Behind the Scenes at a Civil War Movie

**Michael Kraus
Curator of the Pittsburgh Soldiers &
Sailors Military Museum & Memorial
Advisor on Cold Mountain and
Gettysburg movies**

November 11, 2009



**The Copperheads:
Lincoln's Oppo-
nents in the North**

**Prof. Jennifer L.
Weber**

December 9, 2009

Three Soldiers and the Negro

**David L. Forte
Professor
Cleveland-Marshall College of
Law**

January 13 2010

**The Dick Crews Annual
Debate**

*After Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E.
Lee, William Tecumseh Sherman Was
the Greatest General of the War*

Moderator: William F. B. Vodrey

February 10, 2010

**The 26th Ohio
Volunteer Infantry:
The Ground Hog
Regiment**
Jeff Hill



March 10, 2010

**Steps Toward War: Two Dramatic
Rescues That Led To It.**
Nat Brandt

April 14, 2010

**Rutherford B. Hayes
and the
23rd Ohio Volunteer
Infantry**
Thomas J. Culbertson



May 12, 2010



**John Wilkes
Booth:
Escape and
Capture**
Mel Maurer

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

GETTYSBURG

WARREN SAVES LITTLE ROUND TOP

Gen. G. K. Warren, Meade's Chief of Engineers, after reviewing Sickles' line with Meade, rode to the crest of Little Round Top and found the hill, "the key to the Union position," unoccupied except by a signal station. Warren was informed by the signalmen that they believed Confederate troops lay concealed on the wooded ridge a mile to the west. Smith's New York battery, emplaced at Devil's Den, im-



Little Round Top from the northwest, from a Brady photograph.

mediately was ordered to fire a shot into these woods. The missile, crashing through the trees, caused a sudden stir of the Confederates "which by the gleam of the reflected sunlight on their bayonets, revealed their long lines outflanking the position." Warren realized Longstreet would strike first at Little Round Top and he observed, too, the difficulty of shifting Sickles' position from Devil's Den to the hill.

At this very moment, Sykes' Fifth Corps, marching from its reserve position, began streaming across Cemetery Ridge toward the front. Warren sought aid from this corps. In answer to his plea for troops, the brigades of Vincent and Weed sprinted to Little Round Top. Law's Alabama troops were starting to scale the south slope of the hill when Vincent's men rushed to the attack. Weed's brigade, following closely, drove over the crest and engaged Robertson's Texans on the west slope. The arrival of Hazlett's battery on the summit of the hill is thus described by an eyewitness: "The passage of the six guns through the roadless woods and amongst the rocks was marvelous. Under ordinary circumstances it would have been considered an impossible feat, but the eagerness of the men . . . brought them without delay to the very summit where they went immediately into battle." A desperate hand-to-hand struggle ensued. Weed and Hazlett were killed, and Vincent was mortally wounded—all young soldiers of great promise.

While Law and Robertson fought on Little Round Top, their comrades struggled in the fields below. The Confederate drive was taken up in turn by the brigades of Benning, Anderson, Kershaw, Semmes, Barksdale, Wofford, Wilcox, Perry, and Wright against the divisions of three Federal corps in the Wheatfield, the Peach Orchard, and along the Emmitsburg Road. Four hours of desperate fighting broke the Peach Orchard salient, an angle in the Union line which was struck from the south and the west. It left the Wheatfield strewn with dead and wounded,



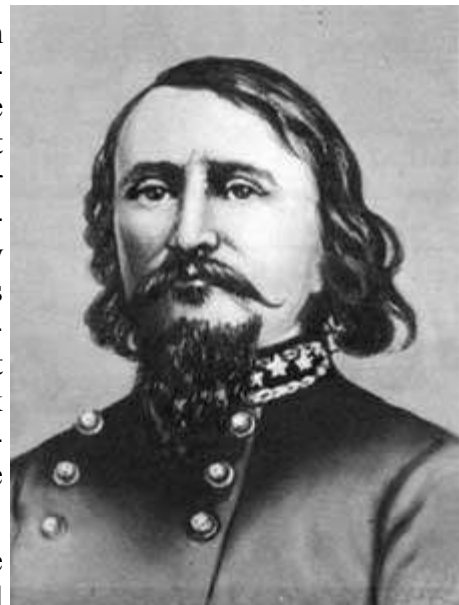
Dead Confederate sharpshooter in Devil's Den, from a Gardner photograph.

and the base of Little Round Top a shambles. Sickles' men had been driven back, and Longstreet was now in possession of the west slope of Big Round Top, of Devil's Den, and the Peach Orchard. Little Round Top, that commanding landmark which, in Confederate hands would have unhinged the Union line on Cemetery Ridge, still remained in Union possession.

CLIMAX AT GETTYSBURG

Billows of smoke lay ahead of the Union men at the stone wall, momentarily obscuring the enemy. But trained observers on Little Round Top, far to the south, could see in the rear of this curtain of smoke the waves of Confederates starting forward. Pickett finding his brigades drifting southeastward, ordered them to bear to the left, and the men turned toward the copse of trees. Kemper was now approaching on the south of the Codori buildings; Garnett and Armistead were on the north. Halted momentarily at the Emmitsburg Road to remove fence rails, Pickett's troops, with Pettigrew on the left, renewed the advance. Pickett had anticipated frontal fire of artillery and infantry from the strong Union positions at the stone walls on the ridge, but now an unforeseen attack developed. Union guns as far south as Little Round Top, along with batteries on Cemetery Hill, relieved from Confederate fire at the Seminary buildings, opened on the right and left flanks. As Pickett's men drove toward the Union works at The Angle, Stannard's Vermont troops, executing a right turn movement from their position south of the copse, fired into the flank of the charging Confederates. The advancing lines crumbled, re-formed, and again pressed ahead under terrific fire from the Union batteries.

But valor was not enough. As the attackers neared the stone wall they lost cohesion in the fury that engulfed them. All along the wall the Union infantry opened with vol-



Major General George E. Pickett

ley after volley into the depleted ranks of Garnett and Fry. Armistead closed in, and with Lane and Lowrance joining him, made a last concerted drive. At this close range, double canister and concentrated infantry fire cut wide gaps in the attacking front. Garnett was mortally wounded; Kemper was down, his lines falling away on the right and left. Armistead reached the low stone fence. In a final surge, he crossed the wall with 150 men and, with his cap on his sword, shouted "Follow me!" At the peak of the charge, he fell mortally wounded. From the ridge, Union troops rushed forward and Hall's Michigan regiments let loose a blast of musketry. The gray column was surrounded. The ride of the Confederacy had "swept to its crest, paused, and receded."

Two of the divisions in the charge were reduced to mere fragments. In front of the Union line, 20 fallen battle flags lay in a space of 100 yards square. Singly and in little clumps, the remnants of the gray columns that had made the magnificent charge of a few minutes earlier now sullenly retreated across the fields toward the Confederate lines. Lee, who had watched anxiously from Spangler's Woods, now rode out to meet his men. "All this has been my fault," he said to General Wilcox who had brought off his command after heavy losses. "It is I that have lost this fight, and you must help me out of it in the best way you can." And again that night, in a moment of contemplation, he remarked to a comrade, "Too bad! too bad! Oh! too bad!"

Taken from the National Park Service Historical Handbook Series No. 9, 1954, Revised 1962

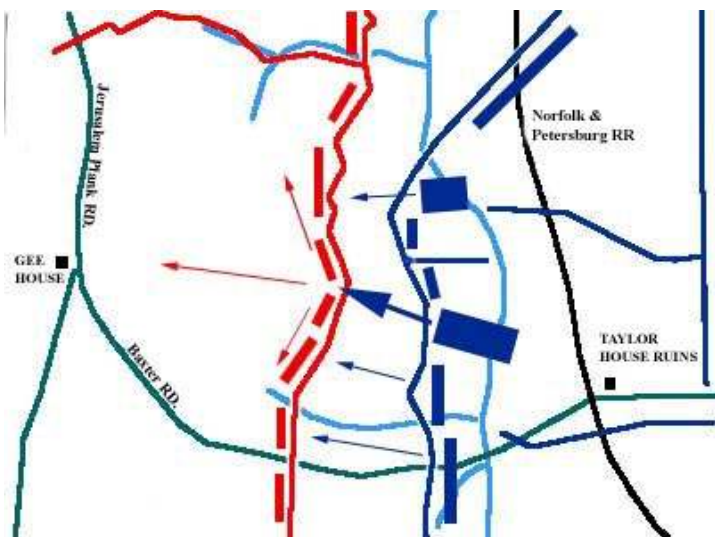
The Crater

After the initial attacks on Petersburg by Union forces ended on June 18, a portion of the IX Corps picket line, built under fire, was established only four hundred feet from Elliot's Salient, part of the main Confederate line. The Federals decided to construct and explode a mine underneath the salient in an attempt to surprise and overwhelm the Confederates and seize the heights above Petersburg and thereby shorten the siege.

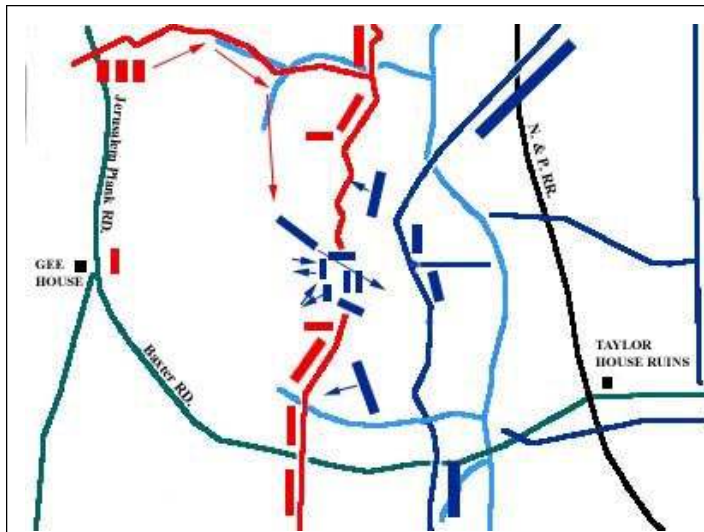
After several weeks of preparation the mine was exploded on July 30 at 4:45am. The Union sent unit after unit into the 200 foot-wide gap created in the Confederate line. The poorly-led Federal soldiers end up heading into the crater and not around it as planned.

8:30 a.m. Though the Federals outnumbered the Confederates, they were unable to advance from the crater or easily retreat from it as the Confederates made both routes killing fields.

The Fourth Division of the IX Corps, which was comprised of USCT regiments, were the last to enter the action. In this, their first engagement, they advanced farther than any other Federal unit. The main Confederate



The Crater at 5:00 a.m.



8:30 a.m.

counterattack led by General William Mahone (CSA) arrived shortly after this, drove back the USCTs and plugged the gap in the Confederate line.

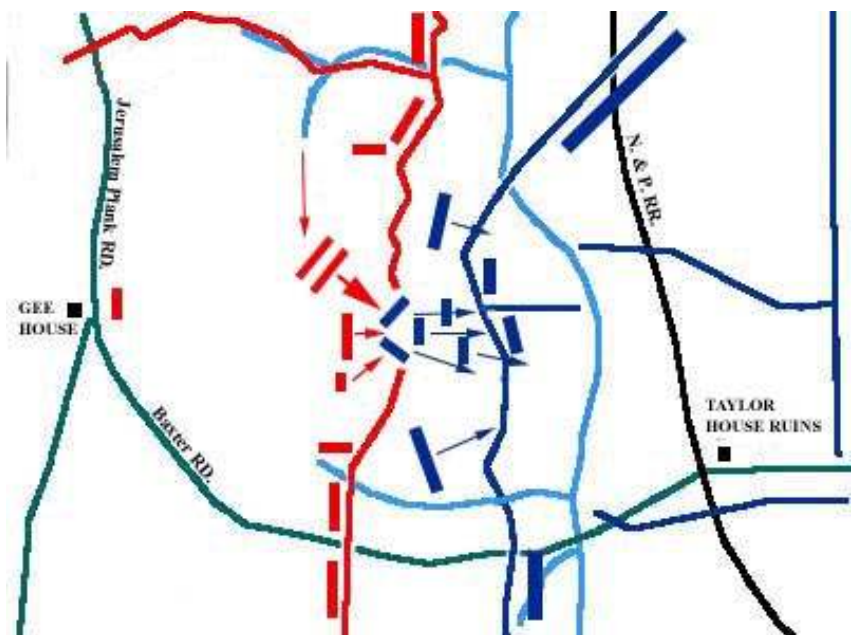
At 9:30 am, General Ambrose Burnside (USA), commander of the IX Corps, received orders to call off the attack and any more support to the Union soldiers in the crater. The soldiers in the hole did not learn of this until 12:30 that afternoon.

1:00 p.m. With the gap sealed the Confederates slowly advanced on the crater and, in one final rush, pushed into the hole itself. In what was the fiercest

hand-to-hand combat of the whole siege, the Union troops, who still outnumbered the Confederates, surrendered to these determined defenders. As prisoners are being taken to the rear, unarmed black soldiers who had been calling for "no quarter" before were now shot down by some of their captors

After nearly ten hours of fighting and a combined cost of nearly 6,000 lives nothing had changed tactically. In what may have been General U. S. Grant's (USA) best chance at ending the Siege of Petersburg instead became a symbol of military debacle.

As for the principal players Mahone was promoted to Major General, Burnside was relieved of command and Grant summed it up best for the Union saying the Battle of the Crater was "the saddest affair I have ever witnessed in the war."



1:00 pm.

Text and maps taken from the National Park Service website, www.nps.gov/pete/historyculture/the-crater.htm.

FEELING ARGUMENTATIVE?

We need debaters for the January 13, 2010 Dick Crews Annual Debate. Our topic will be, "*After Grant and Lee, William Tecumseh Sherman was the greatest general of the Civil War.*" If you would like to be considered as a prospective debater, please email moderator William Vodrey at wfbvodrey@aol.com as soon as possible, but no later than November 11. Preference will be given to those who have not previously debated for the Roundtable, and those who sign up early. You will, if possible, be permitted to choose which side of the proposition you argue. The winner, chosen by the membership, will receive fabulous prizes.

CIVIL WAR 150

Along with the Ohio Historical Society, the Center for Public History and Digital Humanities proudly announces the opening of its website, Civil War 150, www.ohiocivilwar150.org. This digital history collaboration commemorates the 150th anniversary of the Civil War. The Civil War touched almost every community in Ohio. The site is an excellent place for those interested in the war to come together, learn, and discuss the various aspects of the war. The site includes articles, discussion groups, and lesson plans for teachers.

The exhibit is built around web 2.0 principles and, as such, community participation is very important and its success will depend on getting the word out. Please share with colleagues, friends, and anyone who might be interested in the Civil War. There are many opportunities for students and teachers to get involved, including helping to develop and to fill in the timeline, putting events on the calendar, and making contributions or building exhibits. The site welcomes your thoughts, insights, and recommendations.

I have done some browsing on the site. It promises to be an exciting place. There is an excellent collection of Ohio regimental flags, including images of the flags. Please check it out. You will not be disappointed. The creators are looking for input and contributions, both money and content. Let us not disillusion them.

NEXT MONTH

THE COPPERHEADS: LINCOLN'S OPPONENTS IN THE NORTH

PROF. JENNIFER L. WEBER