

THE CHARGER

April, 2001

387 Meeting

Vol.22 #8

Tonights Topic:

USS Cairo



Infernal Machines

Painting by Bill McGrath

Sinking of the Union Ironclad Gunboat U.S.S. Cairo
by Torpedoes in the Yazoo River, December 12, 1862

James B. Eads built the USS Cairo (pronounced K-row) under a government contract for seven ironclads to patrol the Mississippi River. His winning bid was \$89,600 each.

He had just sixty four days to deliver. Eads paid his 700 workmen \$2.00 for a 10 hour day. The specifications called for 75 tons of iron plating on each ship.

Each ironclad was to have two engines with a cylinder bore of 22 inches and a six foot stroke. The five boilers for each ship to be thirty-six inches in diameter and twenty-four feet long.

Then the ironclad was turned over to the Navy to mount the cannons and train a crew.

Tonights Speaker:

Bill McGrath

Tonight our speaker is nationally known Civil War artist and Cleveland Civil War Roundtable Vice President Bill McGrath.

Bill is graduate of Chanel High School in Bedford and the School of Architecture, Kent State University.

Bill is the only member of our roundtable who makes his living from the Civil War. He spends his summers going to the large re-enactments to sell his wares like a Civil War sutler. However, *reliable sources* report that Bill slips out to watch the mock battles when he should be working.

Date: Wednesday,
April 11, 2001

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: sirloin or grilled marlin

**CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE
2000/2001 SCHEDULE**

September 13, 2000



**The Novelist
as Historian**

Shelby Foote

October 11, 2000



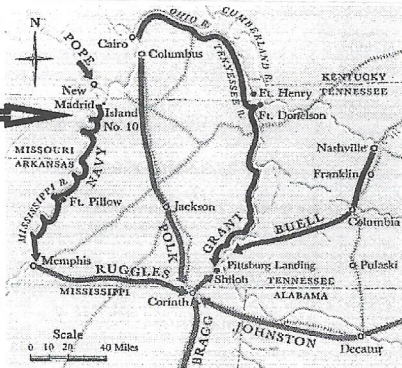
**African-American
Troops in the
Civil War**

Noah Andre Trudeau

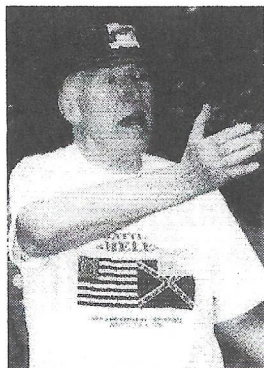
November 8, 2000

**Island No.
10**

**Brian
Kowell**



December 6, 2000



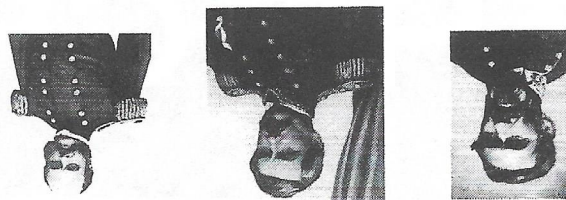
The Battle of Shiloh

Ed Bearss

January 10, 2001

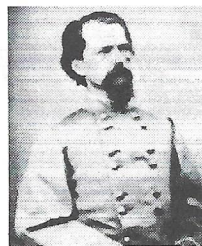
**The Great Debate:
*The absolutely worst general of the War***

Moderator: Dick Crews



(Some good candidates from a long list of prospects)

February 14, 2001



Gen. John B. Gordon

Warrior & Survivor

Bob Boyda

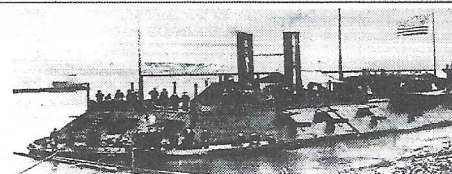
March 14, 2001



**The Life
of the Common Soldier**

**The 51st Ohio Volunteer
Infantry, Co. B**

April 11, 2001



**"Infernal Machines"
and the sinking of the USS Cairo**

Bill McGrath

May 9, 2001



**An Evening
with General
William T. Sherman**

E. Chris Evans

**Membership in the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable: Call (800) 800-8310 or visit our web site.
In AOL or Yahoo: internet > Search**



The Deadliest Enemy

By Dale Thomas

Two days after the disastrous Union defeat at Bull Run., Richard Yates, Governor of Illinois, sent a dispatch on July 23, 1861 to Simon Cameron, Secretary of War. He asked Cameron to authorize sixteen additional regiments from Lincoln's home state. "Illinois demands the right to do her full share in the work of preserving our glorious Union from the assaults of high handed rebellion, and I insist that you respond favorably to the tender I have made."

Sometime in the autumn of 1861, three young men from Wayne County, Benjamin, John, and Marshall Crews, rode the 125 miles north to Camp Butler on the outskirts of Springfield, the state capital. (A distant relative would someday be president of the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable.) Volunteering for three years service in the 5th Illinois Cavalry Regiment, they were mustered into D Company, which contained a vast majority of men from their home county. Other Crews kinsmen from Wayne County joined infantry regiments.

Dale Thomas is a retired history teacher and a Cleveland CWRT member since 1996.

The Crews family came from a region in southern Illinois known from pioneer times as "Egypt" because, like the Nile River, the high waters in spring from the Mississippi, Ohio, and Wabash flooded low lying farm lands. Since most of the region's population had roots in Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia, there was more empathy for the Confederacy than in the counties north of Vandalia. In the election of 1860, Egypt had voted three to one against Lincoln and the "Black" Republicans. The *Cairo Gazette* announced in December of 1860 that "the sympathies of our people are mainly with the South." Most of the young men from Egypt who fought in the Civil War wore Federal Blue, but some fled south of the Ohio River to join the Confederacy. Company G of the 15th Tennessee Volunteer Infantry was called the "Southern Illinois Company." However, the opposite also occurred -- some of the troopers in D Company were from the border states of Kentucky and Missouri.

In February of 1862, after a brief period of training at Camp Butler and a considerable amount of sickness resulting from the crowded conditions, the 5th Illinois Cavalry took to the road under its commander, Colonel Hall Wilson. The Regiment had been ordered to occupy the Benton Barracks in St. Louis, Missouri. The following month, the troopers were again on the move, first to Pilot Knob, and then Doniphan, Missouri where they saw their first action in a skirmish with the enemy. Pocahontas, Arkansas was the next destination in the middle of April. Companies D, F, and L were sent south to Smithville on June 17, and then the entire regiment was ordered further south to Jacksonport, Arkansas.

"Desolation, horrid to contemplate, marks every section of the country through which the Army has passed"

In the mean time, after a decisive victory at Pea Ridge, Arkansas on March 7 and 8, Brig. General Samuel R. Curtis, commander of the Federal Army of the Southwest, had been marching on Little Rock. Fore shadowing Sherman in Georgia, Curtis' forces cut a path of destruction through the heart of Arkansas. An Illinois soldier later wrote: "Desolation, horrid to contemplate, marks every section of the country through which the army has passed, and an air of sickening desolation is everywhere visible." However, Curtis for logistical reasons decided to abandon the attack on Little Rock. He moved north and then east into Jacksonport where he picked up reinforcements that included the 5th Illinois Cavalry.

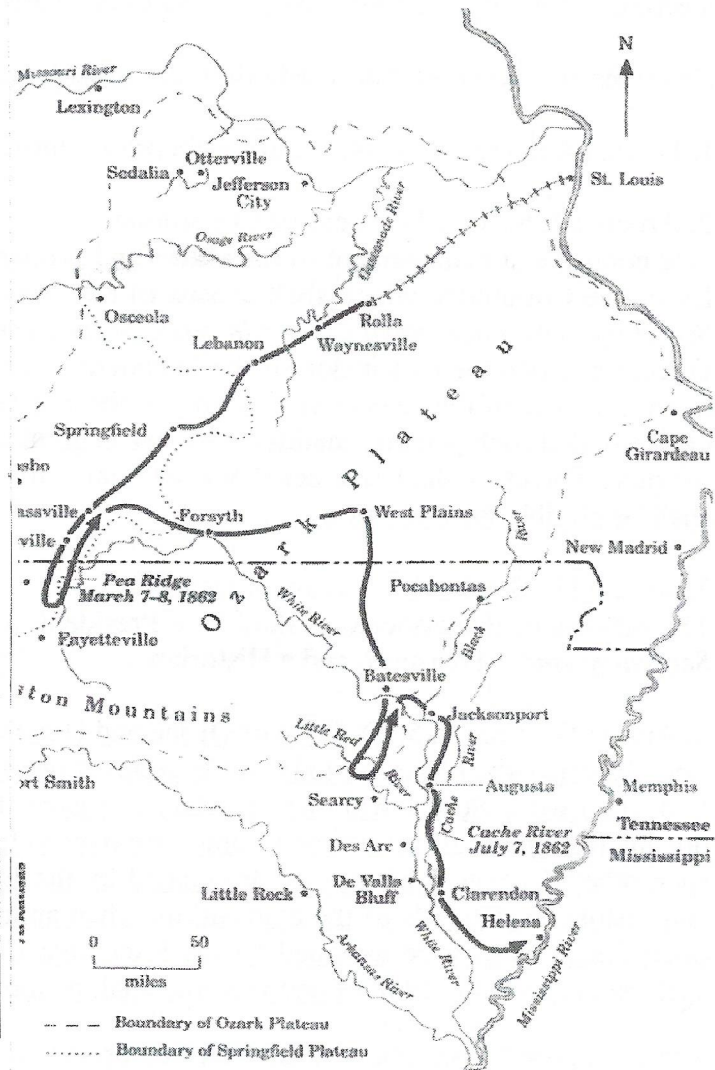
On June 26, in need of supplies, Curtis moved his army south toward Helena, Arkansas on the Mississippi River where the Federal Navy was suppose to have delivered the needed provisions. Fearing another march on Little Rock, Brig. General Albert Rust sent two regiments of Texas cavalry into battle against a vanguard of Federals as they struggled through a swamp and straddled the Cache River. The Confederates, "yelling like savages and swearing like demons," surprised the Federals causing them to retreat. But with reinforcements soon on the scene, the Federals repulsed the attackers.

Writing a week later to General Henry F. Halleck, Curtis said the Battle of Cache River ended with "a complete rout of the rebel army in Arkansas. They ran in all directions." His army lost 6 killed and 57 wounded, but the Confederates losses were much greater -- a mass grave held over a hundred corpses. In addition to the human cost, nearly 70 horses were killed in a battle that took place three days after Independence Day.

After a week of marching under a hot sun, "with only filthy, slimy water from the swamps to drink," the Army of the Southwest finally arrived in Helena. Resupplied, the army spent the next three months in limbo fighting off subtropical diseases. Occasionally units were sent out to forage. On one such mission in October, the enemy ambushed troopers of the 5th Illinois Cavalry. The losses were light, one killed and six wounded, but Lieutenant William N. Elliot and 18 men were taken prisoner.



5th Illinois Cavalry



Thus ended the first year of the 5th Illinois Cavalry, but in the months to come, there would be more fighting and dying in Mississippi, Tennessee, Louisiana, and Texas. By the end of the war, 447 men from the Regiment, nearly half of its authorized strength, perished, but only 28 troopers had died of combat wounds. The most deadly enemy had not been the Confederate armies. The real killers in the war on both sides were dysentery, typhoid, malaria, and pneumonia.

Dale Thomas

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

to the Constitution of the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable

Proposed by the President, in compliance with the decision of the Executive Committee in its meeting of February 7, 2001, and pursuant to the Roundtable Constitution, Art. V.

Deletions are shown in *italics*; additions are underlined.

1. Delete all references to an *Assistant Secretary*, throughout the Constitution.

2. Article III, Section 1-Executive Committee

..the control and management of the affairs and property of the association shall be vested in an Executive Committee which shall consist of the President, Vice President, Secretary, *Assistant Secretary (when delegated by and in place of the Secretary)*, a Treasurer, a Historian, and four Directors. Upon the conclusion of the President's last term such person shall serve as an additional member of the Executive Committee for two years next following as a Director ex officio, provided such person remains a member in good standing during said two years. *Two* All of the other Directors shall be elected at each annual meeting to serve for *two years* one year, and shall be eligible for reelection.

3. Article IV, Section 1- Election of Officers:

The officers of the association shall be a President, a Vice President, a Secretary, *an Assistant Secretary, and* a Treasurer, and a Historian...

4. Article IV, Section 5(A) Term of Office and Duties of the Historian:

The Historian shall have custody of the archival records and historical materials of the association; shall work closely with the Secretary to ensure the retention of all necessary or significant documents; and shall from time to time turn over to the Western Reserve Historical Society (or such other depository as may be designated by the Executive Committee) the archival records and historical materials of the association, when appropriate. The Historian shall perform such other duties as may be assigned by the Executive Committee or the President. The Historian shall be elected for a term of one year and shall be indefinitely eligible for reelection.

These proposed amendments shall be voted upon at the regular May meeting of the Roundtable. Pursuant to the Roundtable Constitution, Art. V, an affirmative vote of two-thirds of those members present shall be necessary for the adoption of the proposed amendments.

Respectfully submitted,

WILLIAM VODREY
President, CCWRT

Behind the Lines

My life as a Yankee in Franklin, Tennessee Part I

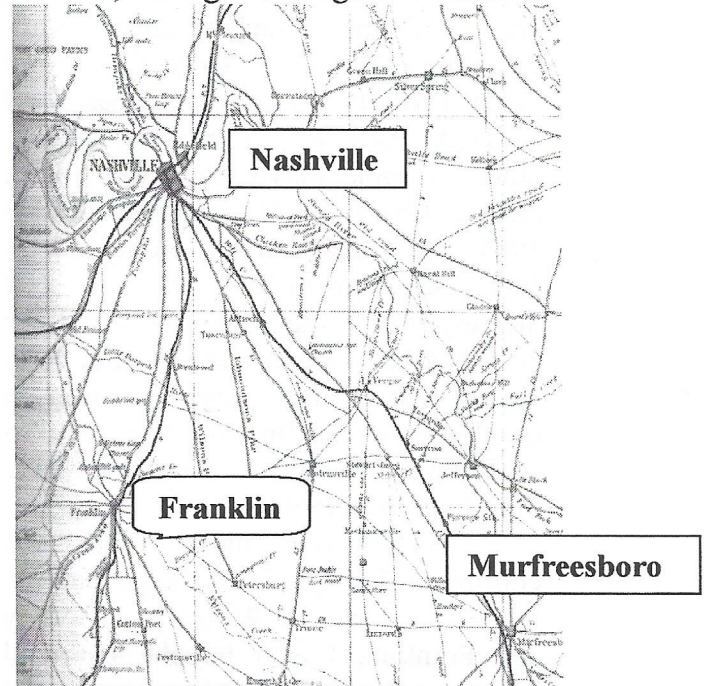
By Mel Maurer*

Franklin, Tennessee is located in Williamson County – an area rich in history first occupied by Indians with a highly developed culture who lived on farms and in towns. Later, other Indians, Creeks, Chickasaws and Cherokees, made Williamson's lush hills, valleys and streams their hunting grounds. The original white settlers moved into the area in the late 1700s from Ft. Nashboro in what is now Nashville about 20 miles north of Franklin. General John Bell Hood brought his Army of Tennessee into the county from the south in 1864 taking on the Federal Army of John Schofield in the Battle of Franklin in what would be called, "The Bloodiest Five Hours of the Civil War." Although not likely to be noted in any history books, my wife Elaine and I arrived in Williamson County in late December 1991.

Native Clevelanders, we had been living in Ft. Wayne, Indiana for 6 years having moved there with the relocation of my division. Now my division was being merged with another division which was headquartered in Brentwood, Tennessee, 16 miles south of Nashville in Williamson County, just north of Franklin. While we regretted moving even further from our adult children and their families in Cleveland, we looked forward to life in a new part of the country – especially me with a long time interest in the Civil War.

"Not that being a Yankee there was all that unusual"

This area became Williamson (after revolutionary ¹general Hugh Williamson) County in 1799. The same act created the town of Franklin (yes, Benjamin Franklin). Revolutionary soldiers, using land grants received



during the war as compensation, became its first settlers. During the "War Between the States," as I learned to call it in the south, Tennessee was the second most fought over state during the war, and as I would learn, the "Bread Basket" Williamson area with its farms was its most fought over county. I intended to make the most of this unique opportunity and I did. In this series of articles, I'll try to share with you, in a series of articles, my experiences as a student of the war and as a Yankee in the south – the history, the people, the places and some insights.

Not that being a Yankee there was that unusual – Franklin and Brentwood, Williamson County's largest

*Mel Maurer is retired and a Cleveland CWRT member since 1998.

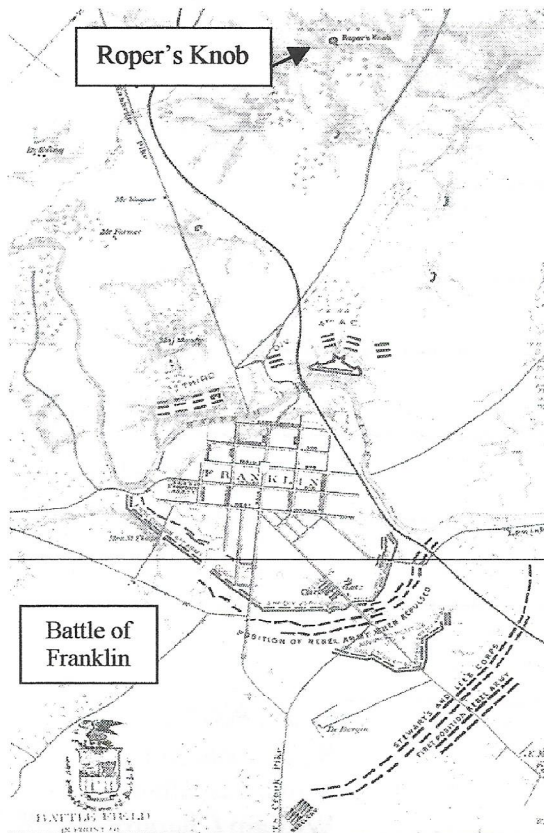
towns, today are bedroom communities for the greater Nashville area and many of those working at the Saturn plant in nearby Spring Hill. Its approximately 100,000 people are from all over the country. These towns are also home for many of the country music stars including, the Judds, Vince Gill, Amy Grant, Dolly Parton, George Jones, Tom T. Hall, Billy Ray Cyrus, and many others – some movie stars too. Pam Lewis, Garth Brooks' manager until 1995, owns the Harrison House where John Bell Hood held his last staff meeting before the battle on November 30, 1864 and where CSA General John Carter died of the wounds received in the Battle of Franklin – the 6th general to die. Pam and her husband are very active in historic preservation.

Once our move date was confirmed, I prepared for house hunting by getting maps of Williamson County and Franklin. I also bought and read "Five Tragic Hours The Battle of Franklin" by McDonough and Connelly which includes historical maps. (This would be the first of many books I would read on Hood's last campaign.) With all of these maps I was able to attach historical significance, if any, to the various areas we looked in for housing. While I wasn't exactly looking for a house on the old battlefield (there is no field left to this battlefield – it's now filled with various businesses and many homes) I thought it would be neat to get something close to where some action took place. This approach also enabled me to learn quite a bit about the area in a short time.

After initially not finding an existing home- the growth rate in the County had just taken off after a lull of a few years –

"the builder wanted more out of my carpet bag than I was willing to give him,"

-We decided to build a place in a relatively new development. My wife liked the area and I was thrilled to learn it was very close to where the Federal (as the Union is called in the south) artillery was set up during that bloody battle just northeast of downtown Franklin. "I like the neighborhood too. Honey," I said to my wife. However after the builder wanted more money out of my carpet bag than I was willing to give him (a transplanted Michigander), we gave up those plans and began to search again after the first of the year. We had success within two weeks – buying a two year old home in a nice development on one of the hills just about 3 miles northeast of Franklin. Three miles down the hill and north was my office and the area's biggest shopping mall. I was pleased to learn that the development's grounds were once known as "Rebels' Rest." An area used by Hood's forces after the battle before heading up to the hills overlooking Nashville. The development included a historic home, almost in our backyard, dating back to 1840. This home, like every other home, church and business was used as a hospital after the battle. I took it as a bonus that I could stand on my front steps and look up at Roper's Knob, the highest hill in the area. The top of which served as a communications center for the Federals during their occupation of the area. I was told it still had the remains of an earthen fort at the top although everything on the hill was overgrown and completely undeveloped. One of my many goals was to find a way up to the top to see what was left of a fort that once held 60-80 men.



I would eventually get to the top of that hill and to many other places not readily available to tourists. I would also learn much from new friends whose families date back to those antebellum days of moonlight and magnolias and slavery. In Part II, I'll cover some initial contacts I made and where they led me at a time when the Franklin area was just in the early stages of recognizing its unique history and beginning to take steps to preserve it and market it. It will feature some of Franklin's historic mansions and homes, many of which are not open to the public.

Franklin

**Once distant battles
Suddenly near.
A town bombarded:
Battlefield sounds,
Smoke, smells
And sorrow.
Main Street,
Crowded: soldiers,
Horses, wagons
And fear.
Homes, stores,
Churches open –
Townpeople care:
For the Red Blue;
For the Red Gray.
Historic conflict,
Historic love.
November 30, 1864
Franklin, Tennessee**

Mel Mauer

THE CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

Membership Roster

Name: _____

Spouse's Name: _____

Street Address _____

City: _____ Zip Code _____

Work telephone: _____ (area code) _____

Home telephone: _____ (area code) _____

E-mail address: _____

Profession: _____

Information missing from
these members:

W. W. Alport
Robert Battisti
Kevin Callahan
William Champ
Gregory Deegan
Michael Dory
Sean Dory
William Doyle
John Drinko
Dr. George Grauel
Peter Holman
Anthony Kellon
William Kenneweg
Lynn Lazzaro Clifford Marlow
Patrick McAulay
David McCrone
Michael O'Connor
David Overtaon
Robert Porter
James Powers
Dr. Phillip Price
Tom Putnam
John Ramicone
James Ramsy
Bruce Rose
Dr. Donald M. Shafer
Tony Smith
Robert Starr
James Zaferopolos

Bring to April meeting

or

send to: Lou Braman

13800 Shaker Blvd.

Cleveland, OH 44120

BREAKS IN THE STORM

By Matt Slattery

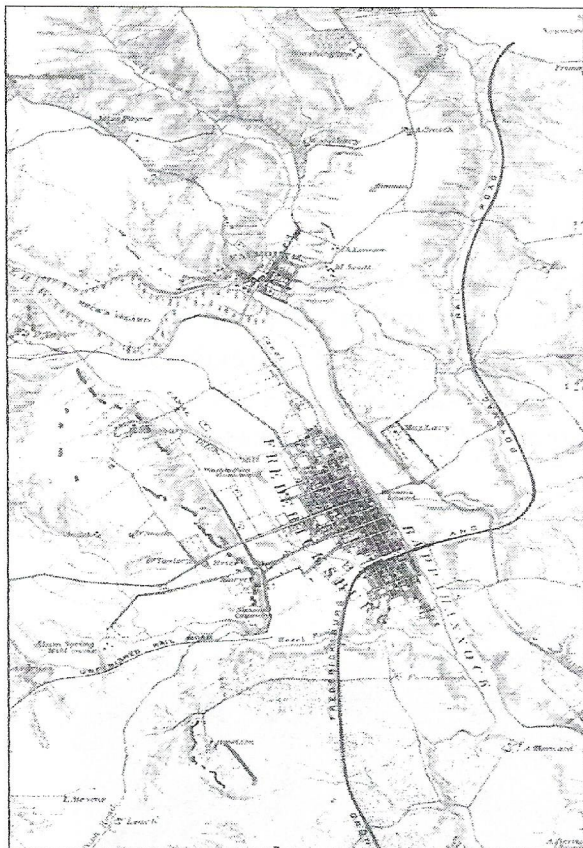
In the history of war much has been written of the drama, the excitement and glory of battle. Little ink has been spread to tell of the vast effort mental and physical of the preparation for battle. We will not burden you with it here, except to relate that three times during the Civil War these enormous efforts were made and there was no battle. Look at the good side of it, from the soldiers' standpoint; there were no casualties.



An evacuated Rebel post near Centreville, Virginia. The Union Army found this "Quaker Gun"—a derisive log, painted black. This *gag* photograph shows a Union soldier setting off the "Quaker Gun" using a stick for the wire.

Following the rout of the untrained Union troops at the first battle of Bull Run, Gen. Joe Johnston's troops advanced a few miles toward Washington and built massive earthen fortifications with embrasures for large cannon. General McClellan was brought east to properly prepare an army to drive them out. The ranks grew, the training went on -- and on. Lincoln and the northern press demanded action, but the Little Napoleon was fearful of throwing his worshipful regiments against so fearful a target. It could last no longer. In September 1861, the blue boys, 112,000 strong, marched out of the capital and grimly climbed the Confederate entrenchments. There was only silence. Joe Johnson had pulled his troops out days before. The fearsome artillery had been abandoned. They were black-painted logs dubbed Quaker cannon.

Matt Slattery is retired and a Cleveland CWRT member since 1984.

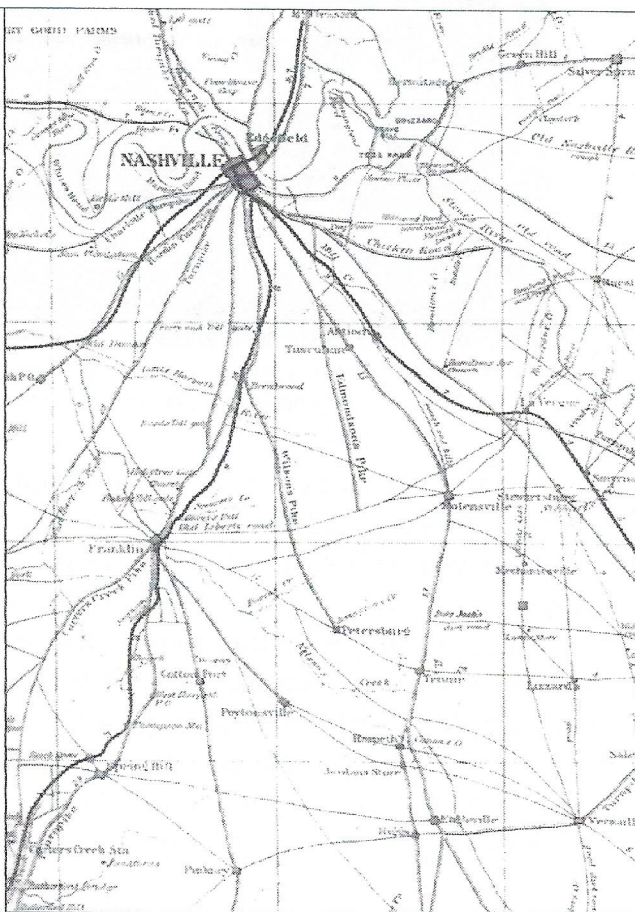


The tragic **Battle of Fredericksburg** was not seen by the north as an unrecoverable defeat. Half the Union army had not even been engaged. The rebels had not driven them back but remained stubbornly across the Rappahannock. Washington was demanding action and Burnside, acutely aware of McClellan's fate, pondered and planned military action.

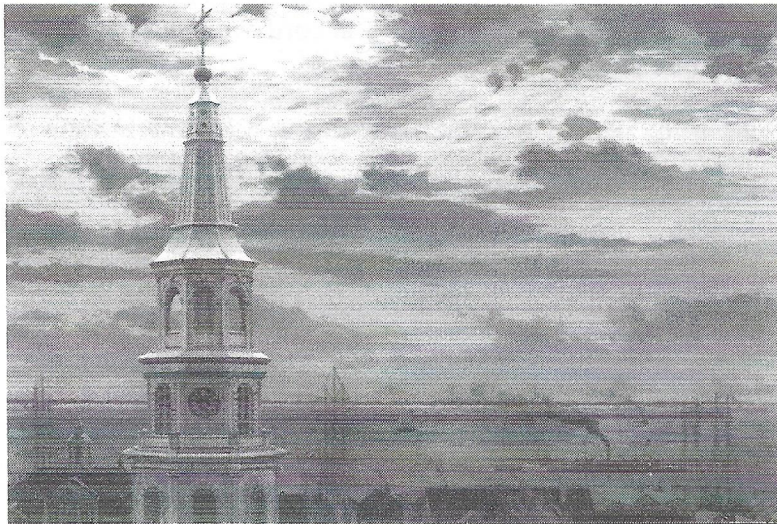
That he came up with was a drive up the river to the southwest to draw Lee away from his direct route to Richmond and so neutralize the odds. So on January 20, 1863, the ponderous Army of the Potomac got under way. Simultaneously, an icy and heavy winter rain broke. Roads disappeared, wagon beds sunk to their level in the mud, horses and mules died by the hundreds, men could not march. And it did not let up for three days. It was no longer a question of how to get forward, but how to get back. They succeeded at the latter and thankfully reentered their camp on Stafford Heights.

General Sherman had taken the cream of the Union army off for his march to Savannah and General John Bell Hood, with an army of some 45,000, was left rampaging in the west. General George Thomas smartly assumed that Hood would head for Nashville. He kept 30,000 with him to fortify that city and dispatched General John Schofield with 28,000 to dog Hood. Schofield set up a good defense on the Duck River and Columbia, but Hood scouted the position, crossed upstream and camped at Spring Hill, ten miles north on the road to Nashville. Schofield was trapped. But in the oddest tactical mystery of the war, the hard-hitting Hood allowed the Union troops to march past him from mid-afternoon to midnight. Shots were fired but no forceful effort was made to block the highway. The next day, Schofield set up his defense at Franklin, where the southerners paid a deadly penalty for their ineptness.

Matt Slattery



Fall Field Trip Charleston, S.C.



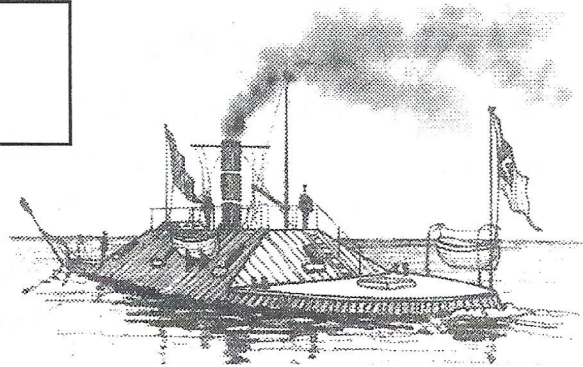
“CHARLESTON AT SUNRISE, 1863”

C.S.S. CHICORA Leaving for Duty Near Fort Sumter

by *Bill McGrath*

REMARQUES

A remarque is an original pencil drawing done by the artist on the lower portion of the print next to the title. Remarques are limited to the first 50 S/N prints of each regular and artists proof edition.

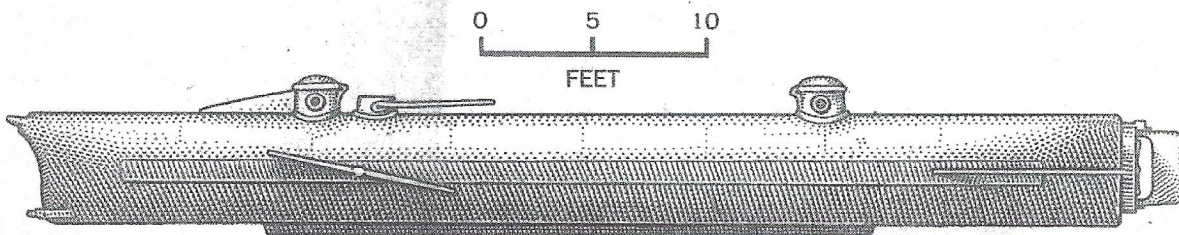


C.S.S. Chicora

Remarque for “CHARLESTON AT SUNRISE, 1863”

\$100.00 deposit, which will be used for expenses on the trip.
Checks made out to Cleveland CWRT.

Send to: Bill McGrath
3667 Traver Road
Shaker Heights, OH 44122



Up-to-date drawing of the CSS Hunley from current information.

Source: Wall Street Journal

Proposed Slate of Roundtable Officers, 2001-2002

The following candidates are hereby nominated for election to the offices shown, for the term of 2001-2002.

The candidates were nominated on March 14, 2001 by a Nominating Committee (Maureen Goodyear, Matt Slattery and Kirk Hinman) which was duly appointed by the President pursuant to the Roundtable Constitution, Art. IV, Sec. 1, cl. 2, and in accord with the recommendations of the Executive Committee in its meeting of February 7, 2001.

A majority vote of the members present at the regular May meeting of the Roundtable shall be necessary for the election of these nominees. Any member of the Roundtable may nominate a candidate from the floor at the May meeting before a vote is taken.

PRESIDENT: William R. McGrath

VICE PRESIDENT: Maynard Bauer

TREASURER: Mary Lou Braman

SECRETARY: Warren McClelland

HISTORIAN: Dale Thomas

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: Ty Somersfield
Glenna Kimble
Marilyn DeBaltzo
Mel Maurer
William Vodrey (former president, ex officio)
Bob Boyda (former president, ex officio)

Request for Assistance:

Dear Cleveland Civil War Roundtable Members:

The Lee Burneson Middle School PTA in Westlake could use your help. We are sponsoring a Civil War encampment reenactment on May 16, 2001 from 6-11 PM in conjunction with a Blue and Gray Civil War Ball on May 18, 2001. This will be our year to commemorate the most perilous time in our nation's history. This is a voluntary extracurricular activity that most students elect to take advantage of. In order to attend the ball they must participate in some way, either by dancing, acting, learning military drills, writing an essay or producing a special project.

We would like to have re-enactors to attend the encampment to mingle with 8th grade students and share anecdotes. We will also have stationary activity centers where students can learn games, hear about life in the battlefield or listen to musicians play. We would love to hear from any member interested in assisting in this worthwhile learning experience by sharing their talents. The more learning stations we can man the more students we can accommodate.

Please call Dani Altieri Marinucci at (440) 250-0666 or e-mail at marinucc@gateway.net



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

April is an important month for those interested in the Civil War. In April 1861, the war began when Confederate artillery opened fire on Ft. Sumter in Charleston harbor. Four years later, the war virtually ended with Lee's surrender to Grant at Appomattox, and Lincoln's assassination at Ford's Theatre a few days later. There's an awful lot of history packed into those four years - - enough, I'm sure, to keep our Roundtable and others busy for many years to come.



As I wrote last month, the Roundtable's doing very well financially this year. Treasurer Bill Doty has suggested donating between \$1000 and \$1500 to one or more worthy causes after the May meeting. This would be a generous donation, while still leaving the Roundtable with a healthy bank balance to begin our next season. The Executive Committee has endorsed the idea in principle, but made no decision as to the recipient(s) of our donation. Some possibilities we discussed include: the Civil War Preservation Trust; the Soldiers and Sailors Monument here in Cleveland; battlefield preservation at Trevilian Station (a personal interest of Ed Bearss, a long-time Roundtable honorary member and the National Park Service historian emeritus), Gettysburg, Antietam or some western battlefield; increasing the prize for our annual high school essay contest; or creating a Roundtable book prize. My own preference would be to spend the entire sum in one place for battlefield preservation, to maximize its impact, but there's something to be said for spreading our largesse around, too. I'll call for discussion and a vote on the proposal at our April meeting; please give it some thought.

I often go to the library with my two young boys, and we look for books together. We found two recently that should be on the shelf of any Roundtable member with kids. Sharon Hart Addy's "Right Here on This Spot" (Houghton Mifflin 1999) is about the history all around us, as a little boy considers everything that's happened on his grandfather's Indiana farm, from the glaciers to the Indians, settlers, the Civil War and up to the present day. It's beautifully illustrated and well worth a look. Louise Borden's "A. Lincoln and Me" (Scholastic Press 1999) is about a teenager who was born on February 12, just as Lincoln was, and who learns how much we all owe to the 16th President. It's a quiet, well-crafted book that is an excellent introduction to Lincoln for young readers.

I hope everyone enjoyed last month's appearance of a contingent from the 51st Ohio Volunteer Infantry, Co. B. This month we welcome one of our own, Vice President Bill McGrath, and I encourage you to come learn more about the sinking of the ironclad USS Cairo on the Yazoo River.

WILLIAM VODREY

President, Cleveland CWRT

Bill McGrath

“Infernal machines” and the sinking of the USS Cairo

Wednesday, April 11, 2001

