

The *CHARGER*



Cleveland Civil War Roundtable

Jan. 2021

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: JANUARY 2021

As most CWRT members know, it is customary at the May meeting for the outgoing President to be recognized for her/his contributions to our group. Serving as President is the culmination of four years of service starting as Secretary, proceeding to Treasurer and then on to Vice-President where your task is to plan next year's programs and field trip, and finally as President where you have to make sure that your plan is implemented as well as addressing all of the administrative duties and customer service requests associated with leadership of the organization.

Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, we did not conduct a meeting in May. Because of this it was not possible to recognize 2019-2020 President Ellen Connally for the wonderful job she did as President. On our website (www.clevelandcivilwarroundtable.com) are posted some pictures highlighting her year including the field trip to the "Land of Lincoln" with visits to the Lincoln Museum, the Lincoln House and other sites along with the side trip to New Salem where Lincoln spent his formative years. Other highlights include the innovative and exciting "Night at the Museum" where the Western Reserve Museum opened their collection of Civil War artifacts for us. The Lincoln theme continued with the February presentation by Judge Frank J. Williams, an internationally renowned Lincoln historian. This presentation was attended by over 100 members and guests which may have set a record for our group.



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And of course, who can forget last year's Dick Crews debate "The Most Important Ohioan during the Civil War" won by Steve Wilson but also including an incredible rendition of John Brown's Body by Mark Porter. In retrospect, it was an innovative, interesting and exciting year cut short by the Pandemic.

Another CWRT custom is for the outgoing President to receive a ceremonial saber as a gift and token of appreciation from the membership. One of President Connally's first communications with her new Vice-President [me], was that she under no circumstances wanted a sword. Fortunately, during the Field Trip, Rich Hronek noticed her spending a lot of time examining the statue of Grant at the Lincoln Museum gift shop. We were able to get her out of the shop, circle back and pick up the statue. Later, it was pointed out by more traditional members that we really needed to follow tradition and get some kind of sword. This was addressed by getting a miniature saber letter opener made by a company that serves the Armed Forces with sabers and miniatures. The result is in the picture accompanying this article.



I had hoped to present these to Ellen at a regular meeting. Again, the Pandemic made this impossible. Instead, we had a very informal presentation this month at the Holiday Inn Independence [our new home when the Pandemic lifts] parking lot where we met to ostensibly exchange some speaker related material. In a follow up phone call, I was delighted to learn that Ellen was excited about both gifts, and appreciated receiving them. Ellen continues to support the Executive Committee serving as Past President and providing advice and valuable assistance. I hope all of you will join me in thanking her for her leadership last year, and her continued support of the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable.

A Death in Our Family

It is with great sadness that we report the death of Herb Jacobs. Herb was 95 and died in hospice of unspecified causes. He was a long-standing member of the Roundtable, although in recent years he had not attended meetings due to his deteriorating health. Herb was good-natured, generous, and insightful, and he put people at ease with his wonderful sense of humor. He was well-liked and greatly respected by all who knew him. Herb is survived by his wife, Fran, and his children. Among his many accomplishments was his service to our country in World War II. Herb saw action in Italy, where he took part in the battles of San Pietro and Cisterna, and in the Battle of the Bulge. In recognition of his service, he is to be buried in Arlington National Cemetery. Herb was the subject of an article in the *Plain Dealer*, which covered Herb's military career and contains many photos of him as a young man (<https://www.cleveland.com/news/g661-2019/01/be901804cf7887/world-war-ii-combat-prompts-a.html>). Our condolences to Herb's family.



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Capturing Enemy Cannons by Brian D. Kowell

Capturing an enemy's flag was considered an act of bravery during the Civil War. If you happened to be a Union soldier, you would be rewarded with a Congressional Medal of Honor, even if it was picked up from the ground abandoned by the enemy. Second to capturing a flag was capturing the enemy's cannon. It was considered a stain if an artilleryman let his guns be captured.



So, where were the most cannons captured during the Civil War? Well, that depends on whether you count those captured in one battle, a campaign, or when an army or fort surrendered. General George Thomas is usually recognized for capturing the most cannon in a single battle. On December 15-16, 1864, at Nashville, Thomas' army smashed Hood's army in the two-day battle and in the process captured 53 pieces of Confederate artillery.

During Sheridan's 1864 Valley campaign, the Union army captured 48 of General Early's artillery pieces in the three major engagements at Winchester, Fisher's Hill, and Cedar Creek. At Cedar Creek, 24 of those guns were really re-captured guns that Early's forces had captured that morning in a surprise attack, only to be retaken when Sheridan counter-attacked. Probably the most cannons captured at one time was when General Pemberton surrendered his forces to General Grant at Vicksburg, Mississippi. Grant's army tallied 172 cannons captured. Of those, 25 were the big guns in a battery along the riverfront and bluffs overlooking the Mississippi River.

If any member of the Roundtable has additional information about the most artillery pieces captured during the war, I would welcome them to share it with us.

(Extra credit if you can identify the bearded officer who is leaning on the rear of the cannon and you also know what is significant about him. The answer appears at the end of *The Charger*.)

History Brief: Grant's Troops Cross the Mississippi and Movement toward Jackson

Picking up where we left off at the end of November's History Brief, during April of 1863 Union General U. S. Grant's troops had marched south along the Louisiana side of the Mississippi River to rendezvous with Union Admiral Porter's fleet and cross to the eastern shore in the vicinity of Grand Gulf. Specifically, McClelland's corps of about 10,000 troops would board the transports after Porter's river ironclads destroyed the Confederate batteries atop the cliffs defending the town. Mr. Ed Bearss, former Chief Historian of the National Park Service and renowned expert on the Vicksburg Campaign, characterized it as follows in his book *Fields of Honor*, "By April 28, Grant's troops and Porter's fleet are ready to undertake what, for that time and place, is a formidable amphibious operation."

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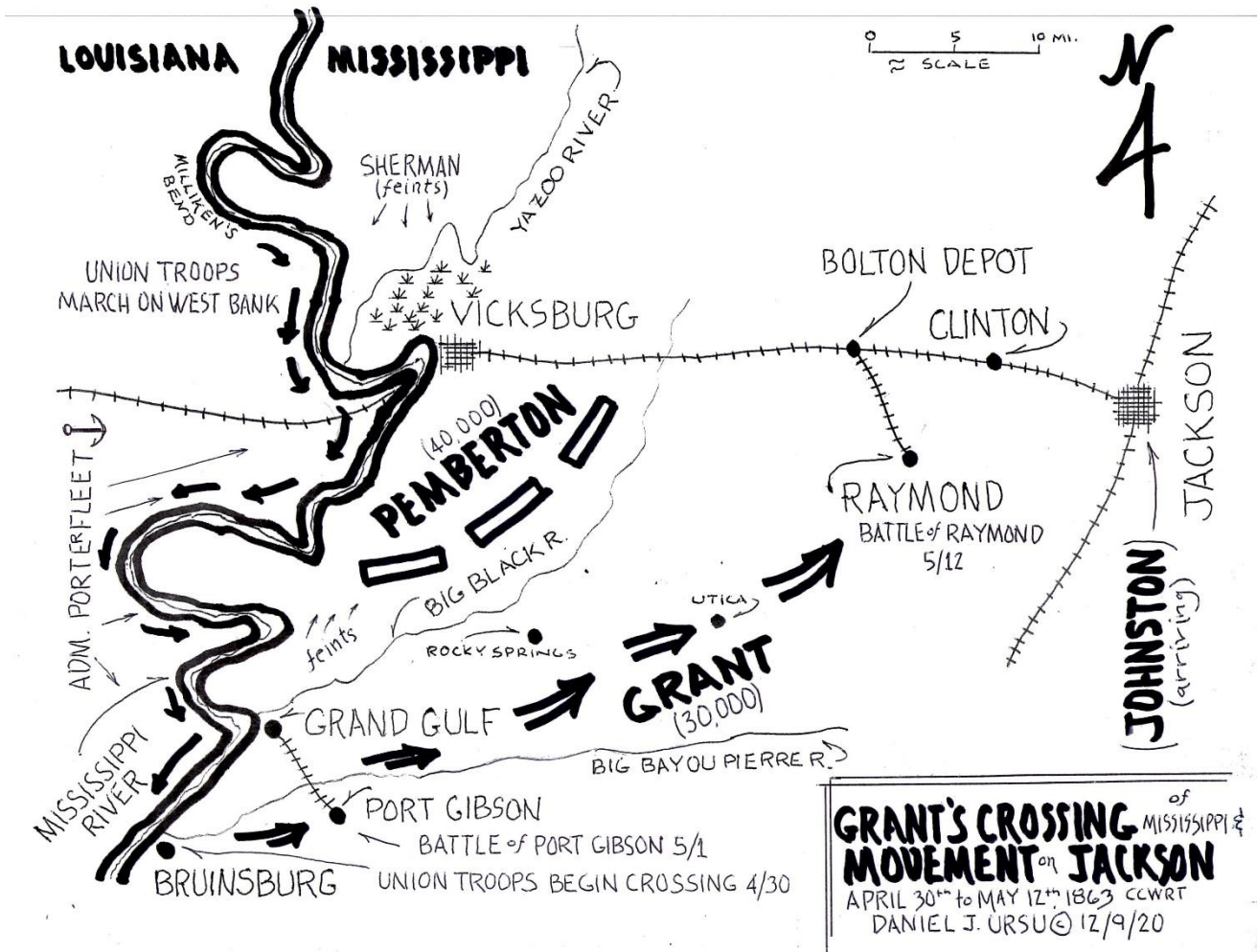
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In the event, Porter's gunboats attacked the batteries on the morning of April 29th but were unsuccessful in knocking out a sufficient number of the Rebel guns and indeed suffered damage from Confederate return fire. Porter's losses numbered about 20 killed and 60 wounded after fighting through the morning and into the early afternoon.



As a result, it was decided to attempt to cross further downstream and that evening under cover of darkness, Porter's entire fleet safely bypassed Grand Gulf and met McClernand's troops a few miles further south on the west bank of the Mississippi. Fortuitously, Grant who had only unreliable maps of what he might encounter south of Grand Gulf was assisted by discussion with a former slave who under questioning was determined to be a reliable source of information with motivation to help. To wit, Grant was advised that a good road ran east of the town of the ungarrisoned Bruinsburg to Port Gibson which, despite its name, was an inland town about five miles east of Grand Gulf. From there, they would be able to assault the Confederate positions at Grand Gulf from behind.

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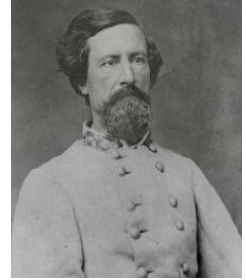
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To raise the best possible confusion in the mind of Confederate General Pemberton commanding Confederate troops at Vicksburg, Grant asked one of his corps commanders and friend General Sherman to create a diversion to the north of the bastion. Sherman recorded in his *Memoirs*: “I received a letter from General Grant, written at Carthage, saying that he proposed to cross over and attack Grand Gulf, about the end of April, and he thought I could put in my time usefully by making a ‘feint’ on Haines’s Bluff, but he did not like to order me to do it, because it might be reported at the North that I had again been ‘repulsed, etc.’ Thus we had to fight a senseless clamor at the North, as well as a determined foe and the obstacles of Nature. Of course, I answered him that I would make the ‘feint’, regardless of public clamor at a distance, and I did make it most effectually using all the old boats I could get about Milliken’s Bend and the mouth of the Yazoo, but taking only ten small regiments, selected out of Blair’s division, to make a show of force.”



John C. Pemberton

At the crack of dawn on April 30th, McClernand’s whole corps plus a couple of extra brigades boarded the transports and moved downstream to Bruinsburg where they disembarked to the elation of General Grant who logged the following in his *Memoirs*: “When this was effected I felt a degree of relief scarcely ever equaled since. Vicksburg was not yet taken it is true, nor were its defenders demoralized by any of our previous moves. I was now in the enemy’s country, with a vast river and the stronghold of Vicksburg between me and my base of supplies. But I was on dry ground on the same side of the river with the enemy. All the campaigns, labours, hardships and exposure from the month of December prior to this time that had been made and endured, were for the accomplishment of this one object.” Indeed, Grant was now in the full throes of all he had sought during past numerous failed attempts including direct assaults, canal digging and chaotic maneuvers down the Mississippi Central Railroad as he endeavored to overcome fortress Vicksburg. At last, Grant’s troops were threatening Vicksburg from its south on dry land on the east bank of the mighty river.

Good road at Bruinsburg or not, this part of Mississippi was still difficult terrain. Grant stated in his *Memoirs*, “The country in this part of Mississippi stands on edge, the roads running along the ridges except where they occasionally pass from one ridge to another. Where there are no clearings and the sides of the hills are covered with a very heavy growth of timber and with undergrowth and the ravines are filled with vines and canebrake almost impenetrable.”

In Port Gibson there were about 6,000 Confederate troops under the command of Brigadier General J.S. Bowen who had requested reinforcements. Pemberton declined. Accordingly, Bowen was vastly outnumbered by Grant’s troops who rapidly marched to meet their outposts by May 1. Nevertheless, Bowen resisted with enough resolve that Grant himself went forward to organize the assault. But by the evening, Bowen retreated and Grant allowed his men to rest two miles outside of town. He wrote to his superior General Halleck in Washington, D.C. that his soldiers were “well disciplined and hardy men who know no defeat and are not willing to learn what it is.” The following morning, they advanced northeastwards threatening to cut off Grand Gulf. The garrison there realized the threat and pulled out scurrying toward Vicksburg. This left Grand Gulf and its river landing facilities to Porter’s fleet who promptly occupied it. Henceforth, Grant’s corps under McClernand immediately continued northeastwards.

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Meanwhile, Grant established headquarters in Grand Gulf and began to secure it as a base. General Halleck in Washington had been expecting Union General Banks, who was now campaigning with a sizable force further southwest in the region of the Red River and its tributaries, to link up with Grant and together assault Vicksburg from due south. However, Grant understanding the geography knew under these circumstances that Banks was essentially out of the Vicksburg Theater and would be long delayed. Grant, exuberant from his recent successes would not be delayed and wrote in hindsight, “I therefore determined to move independently of Banks, cut loose from my base, destroy the rebel force in rear of Vicksburg and invest or capture the city.”



Ulysses S. Grant

Grant knew that Halleck would not agree with this unconventional strategy, but also knew by the time letters could travel back and forth to Washington he would be well in motion. Grant’s only other potential Union human obstacle would be his friend General Sherman who was now on the way from Milliken’s Bend and who indeed omnisciently wrote Grant: “Stop all troops till your army is partially supplied with wagons, and then act as quickly as possible, for this road will be jammed as sure as life if you attempt to support 50,000 men by one single road.” Grant retorted: “I do not calculate upon the possibility of supplying the army with full rations from Grand Gulf. I know it will be impossible without constructing additional roads. What I do expect, however, is to get up what rations of hard bread, coffee and salt we can and make the country furnish the balance.” As history shows, by the time of Sherman’s march to the sea from Atlanta to Savannah, he would in fact become an ardent convert of Grant’s “live off the land” approach.

On the Confederate side, General Joseph Johnston who had been put in command of the Western Theater by President Davis in November of 1862 confronted a difficult situation. He had two main armies, the one in Vicksburg under Pemberton and the other in Tennessee. They were too far apart to offer mutual support. Additionally, bedlam and chaos had been sewn by Union General Grierson’s cavalry raid in central Mississippi. His horsemen disrupted logistics, supplies, railroads and communications and put what troops could have been sent efficiently to help Pemberton out of position while responding to the rampage.



Joseph E. Johnston



William T. Sherman

Grant would soon have closer to 40,000 troops to work with. But for the time being he was outnumbered by Pemberton 32,000 to 20,000. On May 3rd Grant was in need of Sherman to move rapidly to Grand Gulf with his corps and cross the Mississippi via Porter’s fleet to strengthen Grant’s offensive. He wrote Sherman, “It is unnecessary for me to remind you of the overwhelming importance of celerity in your movements...there must be no delay on account of either energy or formality.”

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While waiting for Sherman, Grant sent substantial reconnaissance parties to cross the Big Black River to fool Pemberton into thinking that he would move soon directly on Vicksburg. Being outnumbered for the moment, Grant's novel idea was to pin Pemberton to Vicksburg and instead take a more circuitous route to the center of the state and the Capital of Jackson where resistance would be slight; and sever the rail connection between Johnston's other army in Tennessee and Vicksburg. Sayeth Mr. Bearss in *Fields of Honor* : "Grant however, decides on a daring move – a hook to the northeast, where he can threaten the state capital at Jackson and defeat and disperse the Confederate forces assembling there...When Sherman arrives at Grand Gulf, Grant orders the army to move out. He now has his army of maneuver: McClernand and his four divisions, Sherman with two divisions, and McPherson with two divisions...The confederates are dug in on bluffs looking south; they expect an attack against Vicksburg, coming north from Grant's Hankinson Ferry bridgehead on the Big Black."

Between the 6th and the 12th of May, Grant put his troops in motion northeast on the road to Jackson via Utica and Raymond. On May 9th, his spearhead was a few miles east of Utica. The well organized advance was met with little opposition while Pemberton held his soldiers closer to Vicksburg in expectation of a direct assault from Grant. The whole Union army progressed rapidly but in a controlled way while each corps rested in turn within close proximity of each other to maintain contact if help were needed. At one point Grant pushed two of the three corps northward to keep the Confederate command guessing; would he be rounding toward Vicksburg for an assault or proceeding to cut the railroad between Vicksburg?

On May 12th, McPherson's lead division, pushing for Raymond came under fire from a confederate brigade with about 10 pieces of artillery. The Union's lead brigade was under the command of former politician Major General John Logan. He proved adept on the battlefield turning out his men in a neat line of battle and attacking with full vigor. Soon the rebels were in flight with about 400 casualties and approximately the same number taken prisoner to Logan's 70 killed and 340 wounded.

Learning this, Grant made another decision. Again from his *Memoirs*: "I decided at once to turn the whole column toward Jackson and capture that place without delay. Pemberton was now on my left, with, as I supposed, about 18,000 men; in fact, as I learned afterwards, with nearly 50,000. A force was also collecting on my right at Jackson, the point where all the railroads communicating with Vicksburg connect. All the enemy's supplies on men and stores would come by that point. As I hoped in the end to besiege Vicksburg I must first destroy all possibility of aid. I therefore determined to move swiftly towards Jackson, destroy or drive any force in that direction and then turn upon Pemberton. But by moving against Jackson, I uncovered my own communication. So I finally decided to have none – to cut loose altogether from my base and move my whole force eastward. I then had no fears for my communications, and if I moved quickly enough could turn upon Pemberton before he could attack me in the rear."

Next month we will learn whether Confederate Generals Pemberton and Johnston can decipher Grant's intentions from his maneuvers and pull their divided forces together to parry the thrust!

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel J. Ursu

CCWRT Historian

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Civil War Pleasures by Brian D. Kowell

I am greatly enjoying our Civil War Roundtable Zoom meetings. I know it isn't perfect and a poor substitute for live meetings, but still a way to interact with like-minded enthusiasts and friends.

Besides our meetings, one of my guilty pleasures is recording and watching *The Civil War* on C-SPAN 3, American History. The program airs on Saturday's at 6:00 p.m. (EST) and sometimes on Sundays at 10:00 a.m. (EST). It is basically a Zoom meeting hosted by Peter Carmichael, Ph.D., a faculty member at Gettysburg College, the Director of the Civil War Institute, and the author of books such as *The War for the Common Soldier: How Men Thought, Fought, and Survived in Civil War Armies*. His co-host is "The Tattooed Historian" John Heckman. (Yes, he really has tattoos.)



Peter Carmichael

Carmichael invites other historians, authors, and National Park guides to discuss different topics of Civil War history. Two of my recent favorites have been D. Scott Hartwig, retired Gettysburg Park Historian, talking about his second book yet to be published, on the Antietam Campaign. Another was Dr. Jennifer Murray from Oklahoma State University who spoke on General George Gordon Meade – the topic of a full-length biography that will be published by North Carolina State Press.



John Heckman

Dr. Carmichael is an engaging personality with his wild hair and toothsome grin. He broadcasts from his office, in which, in the background, are tall bookshelves. Next to them and precariously stacked behind him is a tower of books that seems to defy gravity. His questions and comments are spot-on, and when references are made by the speaker or himself, he is wont to jump up off screen to suddenly return displaying a book from his shelf that covers what is being discussed.

I have also found the website of the American Battlefield Trust to be entertaining and informative. Not only is the American Battlefield Trust responsible for preserving significant amounts of historic land, but it has a wonderful series of battlefield maps and virtual battlefield tours led by their able historian, Gary Adelman. These tours allow you to tramp the battlefield without leaving your easy chair.

With more time at home, I am enjoying these little pleasures. Hope you do, too.

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**"We should grow too fond of it":
Book Review of *Living Hell: The Dark Side of the Civil War* by Michael C.C. Adams
Book review by David A. Carrino**

When Robert E. Lee was watching scores of Union troops being mowed down while they attacked the stone wall at Fredericksburg, he remarked to those around him, "It is well that war is so terrible; we should grow too fond of it." This quote accurately describes the theme of the book *Living Hell: The Dark Side of the Civil War* by Michael C.C. Adams. Adams' objective in his book is to bring into focus the appalling horrors of the Civil War, not just in an abstract way, but in vivid and graphic reality. He achieves this goal not simply by describing those horrors in his own words, but through numerous descriptions by those who lived those horrors. In the chapter that focuses on Civil War combat, Adams succinctly summarizes the method he used to convey the grim realities of the Civil War in the passage, "It is hard for us to conceive of the massive losses inflicted by modern arms. But we can do better than simply try to imagine the slaughter; we can relive it in the words of the combatants." The quotes, taken from diaries, journals, letters, and other sources, are intentionally left as written and not corrected with respect to spelling, grammar, or other linguistic errors so as to preserve the original sentiments expressed in those quotes.



Michael C.C. Adams

In eight intense chapters, each devoted to a different topic, Adams delves into various grim aspects of the Civil War, including separation from home and family, mistreatment of civilians by enemy forces, the mental trauma for soldiers who lived through the war, and the gruesome experiences of Civil War combat. The chapter that deals with leaving home to fight in the war relates, through quotes by those who went through this, the changing attitude toward fighting for the respective causes of the North and the South. Anyone who has read about the Civil War is familiar with the descriptions of departing soldiers, who were, or at least acted as though they were, enthusiastic to go off to war and were cheered by crowds of people who were, or at least acted as though they were, excited to see their husbands, fathers, and sons march off to war. Those same men who left home to fight for the causes of each side came to feel differently once they learned the harsh realities of the endeavor that they had agreed to serve in. This progression in attitudes is apparent by juxtaposing two quotes from the book. Regarding the reasons for joining the war, Joseph Crowell of New Jersey asserted, "To many it was a change from the ordinary humdrum of life. Others looked upon it as a picnic. And then in every boy's heart there is an inherent spirit of adventure." But the war was not even a year old when Elisha Stockwell of Wisconsin, after surviving the battle of Shiloh, had his thoughts turn "back to my home, and I thought what a foolish boy I was to run away to get into such a mess I was in." Later that year William Chunn of Georgia expressed well why the visions of future glory became tarnished for many of those who marched off to fight in the Civil War. In Chunn's view, "I see no glory in numbering those on the battlefield slain. It is nothing but horror from beginning to end."

As discussed in another chapter, that "change from the ordinary humdrum of life" soon became something far less than the dreamed fulfillment for "an inherent spirit of adventure." Life for men in the armies consisted of poor hygiene and sanitation, food that too often had become spoiled or maggot-infested by the time the soldiers could eat it, lack of clean drinking water, and constant coexistence with insects such as lice and fleas, which took up residence on the bodies of the soldiers. There were also prolonged marches under difficult conditions, such as extreme heat ("Is it any wonder that men fell down in their tracks and that horses and mules reeled and fell under the saddle" – Tom Taylor, 47th Ohio) or deep mud ("It is solemnly true that we lost mules in the middle of the road, sinking out of sight in the mud-holes" – General Alpheus S. Williams). One tragic and unsurprising result of such unhealthy living

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conditions was rampant disease including dysentery, typhus, typhoid fever, tetanus, yellow fever, and malaria. The massive numbers claimed by disease are sadly related by Grace Brown Elmore of South Carolina, who wrote upon hearing of the death of her cousin, "He who so longed for a heroes death on the battlefield, died of wasting fever."

The most gruesome chapters in the book are the two which deal with Civil War combat and with the aftermath of battles. When Abraham Lincoln characterized battlefield dead as those who "gave the last full measure of devotion," his abstract and high-sounding words in no way captured the grisly specifics of how that last full measure was given. In contrast, the numerous quotes in the book by those who saw the actual events convey those grisly specifics in explicit detail. For example, the fatal shot that killed Confederate Charles Johnson at Kennesaw Mountain was recorded in this way. "A bullet took him, low down, about his waist and in his left side, and ranged up diagonally through the entire length of his body, tearing through his kidneys, bowels, stomach, lungs, and coming out at his shoulder." Another Confederate, Nick Weekes of Alabama, described the carnage caused by artillery shells ripping through his unit at Chancellorsville. Among the men torn apart, Weekes remembered seeing, "Another, disemboweled, crawled along on all fours, his entrails trailing behind, and another held up his tongue with his hand, a piece of shell having carried away his lower jaw." The chapter which discusses the aftermath of battles includes grim descriptions of the transport and treatment of the wounded. As severe as this was for those who endured it, other wounded men suffered an even harsher alternative, that is, to lie for a long time on the battlefield. The sounds of agony coming from the wounded produced a chilling effect on their comrades. Samuel Hurst of Ohio wrote about the aftermath of the battle of Gettysburg, "It was the most distressful wail ever listened to. Thousands of sufferers upon the field, and hundreds lying between the two skirmish lines, who could not be cared for, through the night were groaning and wailing or crying out in their depth of suffering and pain." As if the sound of the wounded were not agonizing enough, the sight of the battlefield dead caused unspeakable anguish among those who survived the fighting, such as A.M. Stewart, a chaplain from Pennsylvania, who described the ghastly appearance that a corpse had become in the hot weather after the battle of Spotsylvania. In Stewart's words, "The hair and skin had fallen from the head, and the flesh from the bones—all alive with disgusting maggots." Further adding to the horrible sight of corpses were the many animals who devoured the flesh of those who had just given "the last full measure of devotion." Confederate Thomas Key reflected on the injustice of that awful fate when he wrote, "It is dreadful to contemplate being killed on the field of battle without a kind hand to hide one's remains from the eyes of the world or the gnawing of animals and buzzards." These and the other numerous first-person quotes in these two chapters make appallingly clear just how horrible the outcome is when metal projectiles strike human bodies, and it is grim and heartbreaking to think that the horrific things described in those quotes actually happened to real people.

Another chapter delves into the mental and psychological effects of the war. This is succinctly summarized by John Dooley of Virginia who noted, "I must confess that the terrors of the battlefield grew not less as we advanced in the war," and he cited as the reason for this that each battle provided soldiers another opportunity to "see so many new forms of death, see so many frightful and novel kinds of mutilation...that their dread of incurring like fearful peril unnerves them for each succeeding conflict." Wilbur Fisk stated his feelings about subjecting himself to more combat with the almost humorous comment, "My patriotism was well nigh used up."

There is also a chapter that focuses on the impact of the war on those who remained at home. This chapter deals with the economic hardships and emotional stress for those left behind by the men who marched away to fight in the war. The hardships and stress included shortages of food and other material necessities, constant worry over the fate of loved ones who were in the military, and grief over the loss of a husband, father, or son when the ultimate fate occurred. A quote that perfectly summarizes this trauma was spoken by someone identified only as "a desperate Southern woman," who declared ruefully, "What do I care for patriotism? My husband is my country. What is country to me if he is killed?" Another Southern

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woman wrote a letter to her husband, Edward Cooper, who was a soldier in the Army of Northern Virginia, and informed him about the tenuous situation of his family with the forlorn words, "I would not have you do anything wrong for the world, but before God, Edward, unless you come home, we must die." (Imagine being a soldier engaged in a life-and-death endeavor far away from home and receiving from your spouse that dire warning about your family. Imagine being a soldier's wife who is in such a desperate situation that she feels the need to write that dire warning to her husband.) This chapter also contains discussion of the tragic plight of dislocated blacks, who were displaced from slavery but not properly cared for by the armies that displaced them. Especially tragic was an observation recorded by G.N. Coan that displaced black "children have suffered a great deal from cold and hunger."

A different chapter discusses the related topic of atrocities committed against civilians. While Sherman's March to the Sea and Sheridan's campaign through the Shenandoah Valley are seen as very effective military operations that were intended to strip away needed supplies from the Confederacy and also to stamp out from the Southern people the will to continue fighting, these operations inflicted irreparable devastation on helpless civilians. John Hight of Indiana recorded the sight of civilians as soldiers in Sherman's army were preparing to set fire to their homes. Hight wrote, "Some of the women were crying, some wringing their hands in agony, some praying to the Almighty." Equally cruel was mistreatment of Southern civilians by Confederates, one incident of which was recorded by Robert Patrick of Louisiana, who wrote, "They talk about the ravages of the enemy on their marches through the country, but I do not think that the Yankees are any worse than our own army." Also addressed in this chapter is the not infrequent abuse of civilian women by soldiers, such as a quote by Benjamin Moge of Indiana, who said about some drunken Union soldiers, "On this occasion their delirium took the form of making love to the women." This chapter also discusses atrocities committed against enemy combatants. That both sides were guilty of this is indicated by quotes from soldiers on each side, one from John Brobst of Wisconsin, who wrote to his future wife that "twenty-three of the rebs surrendered but the boys asked them if they remembered Fort Pillow and killed them all," and one from someone who is identified only as a Texas officer, who recalled, "I never saw so many dead negroes in my life. We took no prisoners, except the white officers, fourteen in number; these were lined up and shot after the negroes were finished."

The last of the eight chapters deals with the postwar period and the short-term and long-term effects of the Civil War, particularly as seen through the eyes of those who lived through the war. The book's author states quite nicely how the war had a long-lasting impact on America, and he does so in a passage that should be made known to anyone who doubts the importance of studying history. As Adams wrote, "History never becomes simply a thing of the past. The consequences of wars, their impact on all areas of human life, remain with us long after the textbooks close the chapter on this or that armed conflict." One prominent topic in this chapter is the shoddy and often cruel treatment of freed blacks. This was succinctly if abstractly noted in a pro-abolitionist New England newspaper, which wrote, "The war is not ended as many fondly imagine." Even more horrid was a U.S. government report by Sanford Hunt, who claimed that his findings from a study of autopsied Union dead showed that blacks have smaller brains than whites, which led to obvious and despicable conclusions regarding the relative intelligence levels of the two races.

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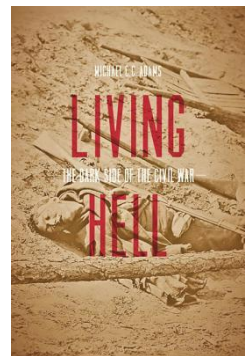
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Also discussed in this chapter is the effect of the war on children who lost their father in the war, the return of women to second-class status after the men came back, and the terrible physical and psychological problems that many Civil War veterans endured. One interesting consequence of the war that Adams mentioned elsewhere in the book is an intriguing if provocative proposal made by historian Russell F. Weigley in a different publication. As Adams wrote in citing Weigley, "Sherman's and Sheridan's method of waging hard war on civilians entered permanently into American strategic and tactical thinking: 'making war against non-combatants emerged from the American Civil War as a strategy that American leaders generally regarded as acceptable. Once that acceptance existed, the door was opened enough that a further opening into more ruthless attacks on civilians came at least within the boundaries of contemplation.'"

The book also contains an epilogue, which follows the eighth chapter and reflects on the mood in America after the war. This mood included an absence of enthusiasm for war, which is no surprise in light of the carnage that the country had just lived through and the aftereffects which the country was still living with. This lack of enthusiasm is conveyed very well in an earlier chapter by John B. Jones, who worked as a clerk in the Confederate government during the war and wrote in his diary after the bloodshed had raged past the point of tolerance, "How often have I and thousands in our youth expressed the wish to have lived during the first Revolution, or rather to have partaken of the excitements of war! Now we see and feel the horrors of war, and we are unanimous in the wish, if we survive to behold again the balmy sunshine of peace, that neither we nor our posterity may ever more be spectators of or participants in another war." Another quote that Adams used expresses succinctly the true outcome of the Civil War by stating that "among the masses of Americans there were no victors, only the vanquished."

Living Hell: The Dark Side of the Civil War by Michael C.C. Adams is not a new book, just a book that I read only recently. However, with a copyright of 2014, it is also not an old book, so it may be that it has not been read by many members of the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable, which is why I felt it worthwhile to bring this book to the attention of our members. With its many first-person accounts of a number of aspects of the Civil War, from the anguish of leaving home to the unhealthy living conditions in the army, from the traumas of civilian life during an all-out war to enduring the brutal treatment of enemy invaders, from witnessing the horrors of combat to experiencing the frightful aftermath of combat, the book is an excellent way to relive these things through the words of those who actually experienced them firsthand. This was Adams' goal, and he achieved it very well.



Answer to the extra credit question: The bearded officer is John C. Tidball. His significance is that he reputedly is the person who started the tradition of having "Taps" played at military funerals:
<https://www.va.gov/opa/publications/celebrate/taps.pdf>
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_C._Tidball

The CHARGER

Cleveland Civil War Roundtable



Jan. 2021

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CCWRT Meeting: January 13, 2021
Program: Dick Crews Debate – Hollywood goes to War (The Civil One)

One of the highlights of the year for our group is the Dick Crews Debate in January. In keeping with this year's program theme of "the war and memory," our debaters will present their arguments for which Hollywood product (movie or TV series) has had the greatest impact on the public's view of the war. Judge William Vodrey is performing his traditional role as organizer and moderator of the debate. He has recruited a great panel of debaters for this year. Here they are:

- Pat Bray – The Birth of a Nation (1915)
- Dick Crews – Ken Burns' The Civil War documentary (1990)
- Hans Kuenzi – Gone With The Wind (1939)
- Jimmy Menkhaus – Lincoln (2012)
- Eric Lindblade – Gettysburg (1993)
- (Eric is a new member and a licensed battlefield guide at Gettysburg.)

The program will be conducted via Zoom so be on the look-out for a Zoom invitation a day or two before January 13, 2021. The session will start at 7:00 p.m.

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