

THE CHARGER

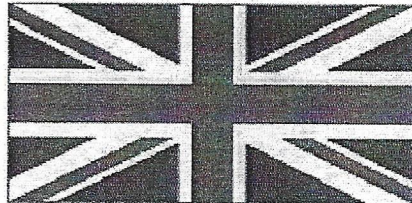
May, 2003

406 Meeting

Vol. 24 #9

Tonight's Program:

CANADA IN THE CIVIL WAR



Civil War enthusiasts will be surprised to learn that 13,000 Canadian soldiers died in the American Civil War.

In accordance with British foreign policy regarding the war, Canada was officially neutral. This however did not prevent **over 50,000 Canadians** from serving in both armies; approximately 50,000 in 250 union regiments and 1,500 in 50 confederate regiments, 4 Canadians were brigadier-generals and 29 were awarded the congressional medal of honor.

Throughout the war Canadian public opinion was divided for various reasons including religion, language, cultural and economic background. The civil war was the culmination of the reciprocal, sometimes parallel, but often intertwining influence of both the US and Canada on each others' historical, territorial, political and social development. Following the war two new nations emerged.

Mark Vinet's presentation begins on the eve of the civil war in the fall of 1859 with John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry.

Canadian participation in this event, the abolitionist movement, the slave trade and the underground railway are explored and in turn set the scene for a look at Canada on the eve of the great American struggle.

Tonight's Speaker:

Mark Vinet

Mark Vinet was born in 1964 near Montreal in the province of Quebec, Canada. He attended John Abbott College



and received a College Degree in History and Political Studies. He obtained his law degree at McGill and was admitted to the Quebec Bar. He now is an attorney specializing in the entertainment industry.

His special interest in the Civil War led to his founding of the Quebec American Civil War Association.

**Date: Wednesday,
May 14, 2003**

**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: Swiss Steak
or Chicken**

CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

FOUNDED 1957

President: **Maynard Bauer** - (440) 835-3081
Vice President: **Warren McClelland** - (216) 751-8564
Secretary: **Mel Maurer** - (440) 808-1249
Treasurer: **Maureen Goodyear** - (440) 888-3814
Historian & web master: **Dale Thomas** - (440) 779-6454

Trustees

Marilyn DeBaltzo	Jean Solyan
Ty Sommershield	William F.B. Vodrey
Kirk Hinman	Bill McGrath

Website: www.clevelandcivilwarroundtable.com
email: a-bell@msn.com

CHARGER editor—Dick Crews (800) 800-8310

We received a letter from Gettysburg College telling us they were asking people to help them celebrate **Ed Bearss'** 80th birthday in June by sending them special birthday cards to present to him in June - it's a secret.

The address is: Tina Grim 300 North Washington St. Campus Box 435 Gettysburg, PA 17325-1486.

The following members have been nominated as Cleveland CWRT officers and trustees for 2003/2004:

President — **Warren McClelland**
Vice President — **Mel Maurer**
Secretary — **Evelyn Hayes**
Treasurer — **Dave Carrino**
Historian — **Dale Thomas**

Trustees

Maynard Bauer	George George
Bill McGrath	Terry Koozer
Jean Solyan	Kathleen Platt

May 14, 2003 "Guest Night"



During the Civil War, Canada was a British Colony

**Canada
and the
American
Civil War**

Mark Vinet

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE MAY, 2003

William Vodrey presented to the Roundtable a framed copy of two army-recruiting posters - one for the North and one for the South, to be used to encourage participation in our monthly raffle. We have saved the raffle tickets for the past two months and from those plus those from the May meeting will form the pool from which a winner will be selected. As usual books will also be given to winning ticket holders. Please be generous with your ticket purchases. Incidentally we could use donations from your civil war library for future raffles. Bring them to the meeting and give them to Eddie Myers our book collector.

New officers will be elected at our next meeting. A good slate has been selected and the round table will be in good shape for 2003-04 year. We have 133 members this year which ties our previous record. I would predict that we will exceed number next year.

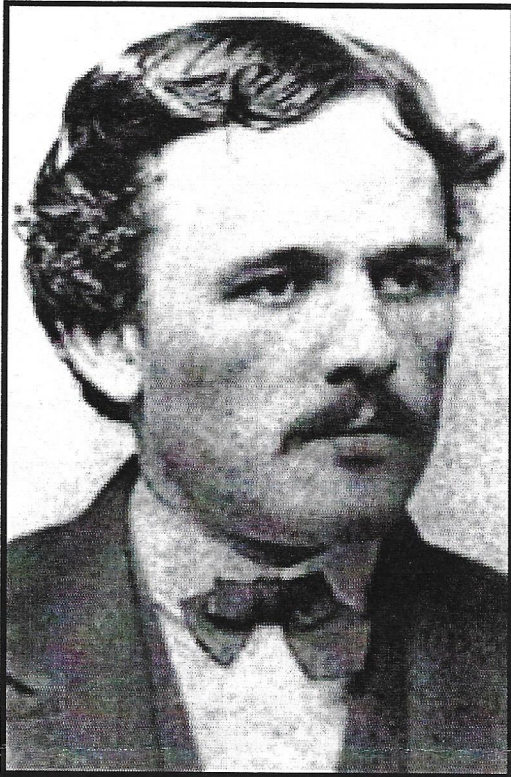
Serving as your president has been a great honor. The willingness of members to contribute their time and expertise has been an outstanding aspect of the experience. Whenever help was needed there was a willing volunteer to meet the need. It is hard to name all the persons have made significant contributions without missing someone so I am not going to try but all of the officers and trustees carried out their jobs in exemplary ways. I want to thank all of you who contributed so much this year. I hope that Warren McClelland has as great an experience as president as I have had.

Maynard

LOUIS J. WEICHMANN,

THE MYSTERY MAN OF THE LINCOLN CONSPIRACY

BY DAVID A. CARRINO



Louis Weichmann

Economist John Kenneth Galbreath once stated, “If all else fails, immortality can always be assured by spectacular error.” For Louis J. Weichmann, immortality came not by spectacular error, but through a shadowy involvement in one of the greatest American tragedies, the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. Although some small uncertainties exist regarding various details of the roles of this tragedy’s other participants, the roles played by many, if not most of these participants are quite firmly established. However, this is not so for Louis Weichmann, who figuratively and often literally lurks in the background throughout most of this affair as a seemingly omnipresent observer. In spite of Weichmann’s apparently intimate knowledge of the conspiracy and despite persistent suspicions of his direct involvement, charges were never brought against him. For these reasons, Weichmann can truly be labeled “the mystery man of the Lincoln conspiracy.”

Weichmann, the son of an immigrant German tailor, was born in Maryland in 1843. A Roman Catholic, he entered St. Charles College at the age of 16 and planned to become a priest. At the college, Weichmann met John Surratt, and eventually both decided to forego the priesthood and moved to Washington, D.C., where Weichmann worked as a schoolteacher. Shortly after the beginning of the Civil War,

Weichmann secured a position as a clerk at the War Department of the United States. In November, 1864, he moved into Mary Surratt’s boarding house and came to know John Wilkes Booth and other acquaintances of the Surratt family, including conspirators Lewis Paine, David Herold, and George Atzerodt.

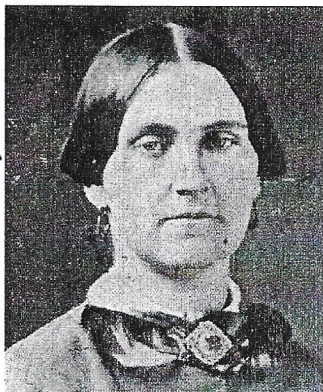
On the night of April 17, 1865, three days after the assassination of Lincoln, the authorities returned for a second visit to Mary Surratt’s boarding house in order to continue their investigation. To his misfortune, and in an example of how serendipity can be a valuable weapon in the arsenal of crime investigators, Lewis Paine, with a pickaxe in his hand, chose this inopportune moment to appear at the door of the boarding house. Because the bedraggled Paine’s excuse for his presence at the boarding house (that he had been hired by Mary Surratt to dig a gutter) sounded suspicious to the investigators, the authorities arrested Paine, Mary Surratt, Weichmann, and everyone else at the boarding house. With this indiscriminate seizure, Weichmann was swept into the maelstrom of the assassination trial.

Because of his association with the conspirators, Weichmann was an ideal candidate to serve as a witness for the prosecution. Whether Weichmann provided this service in return for favorable treatment by the prosecution (i.e., the government’s ignoring his involvement in the conspiracy) is part of the Weichmann mystery. According to some accounts, Weichmann was held in solitary confinement and was also threatened with prosecution unless he agreed to give testimony against the conspirators. Certainly, this kind of treatment can have a profound effect on one’s feelings of loyalty toward one’s friends and associates and on one’s willingness to bring potentially

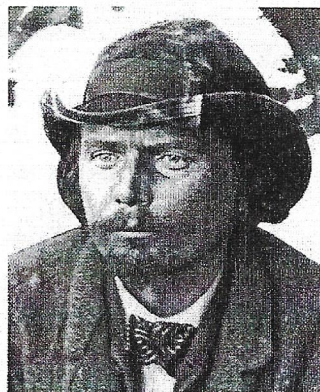
damning testimony against those friends and associates at the risk of their being executed. In the case of Louis Weichmann, the instinct for personal survival superseded any feelings of loyalty, and he chose to provide testimony against the conspirators and thereby spare himself from being grouped with them. In contrast to these accounts, Weichmann, under cross examination by the defense at the assassination trial, testified, "No threats were made in case I did not divulge what I knew, and no offers or inducements if I did." These conflicting pieces of information add fodder to the Weichmann mystery.

At the assassination trial, Weichmann gave important testimony against all of the most prominent of the conspirators. He testified that Mary Surratt had him convey messages to John Wilkes Booth to come to the boarding house to meet with her. He further testified that, three days prior to the assassination and also on the day of the assassination, Mary Surratt solicited him to drive her in a buggy to the Surrattsville tavern, the location where, according to another witness (tavern innkeeper John M. Lloyd), various supplies were being stored for use by the conspirators in their escape. Weichmann testified that, at the tavern, Mary Surratt spoke with Lloyd, but claimed that he could not hear their conversations. The firsthand knowledge which Weichmann had of these events implicated Mary Surratt in the assassination. Mary Surratt and her son, John, were connected directly to Booth by Weichmann testimony, which stated that Booth came often to the Surratt boarding house and met privately with Mary or John Surratt, after the parties furtively dismissed themselves. Weichmann also testified that John Surratt had traveled to Richmond in April, 1865, returned to the boarding house with a sizable sum of money, and left shortly thereafter for Montreal. This testimony not only provided evidence that John Surratt was a Confederate agent, but also cast suspicions of a possible involvement of the Confederate government in the assassination plot. Dr. Samuel Mudd was implicated by more Weichmann testimony, when Weichmann identified Mudd as the person who was with Booth when Weichmann and John Surratt were walking together in Washington and happened upon the duo. This important testimony, which went on to state that, on that occasion, Booth, Mudd, and John Surratt met privately, contradicted Mudd's testimony that he had not met with Booth in Washington. Testimony from Weichmann was also directed at Lewis Paine, David Herold, and George Atzerodt, who, according to Weichmann, visited the Surratt boarding house at various times prior to Lincoln's assassination and met with Booth and/or John Surratt.

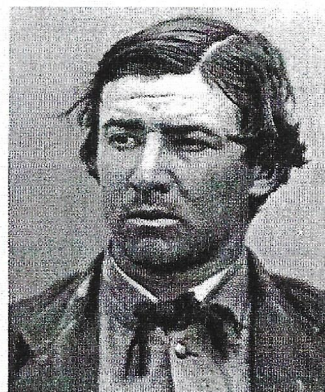
To counteract Weichmann's testimony, the defense worked assiduously to paint Weichmann as a Southern sympathizer, who was a knowing member of the conspiracy and was deflecting guilt at his associates in order to spare himself from punishment. To buttress this, the defense brought to light that Weichmann was thoroughly familiar with a cipher (or code), which



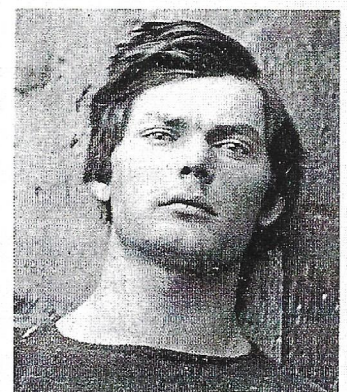
Mary Surratt



George Atzerodt



David Herold

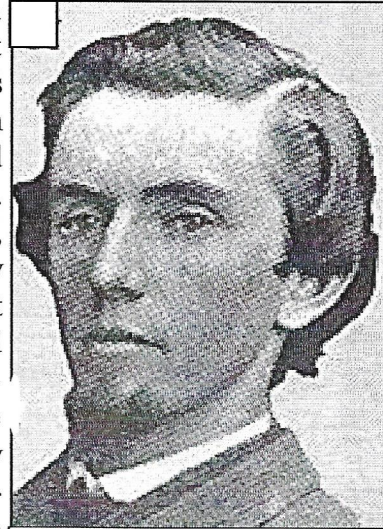


Lewis Powell

The four who were hung. Weichmann's testimony helped greatly in their convictions.

was used by Confederate agents and by Booth. Weichmann addressed this by stating that he had been taught this cipher by a man named Augustus Howell, a blockade runner and acquaintance of the Surratt family, who had lodged at the boarding house. In his testimony, Howell corroborated Weichmann's assertion. The defense made a determined attempt through one line of questioning to have Weichmann admit for the record that his sympathies lay with the South, but the court did not allow this line of questioning to be pursued. Hence, Weichmann's purported allegiance to the South remains part of the Weichmann mystery.

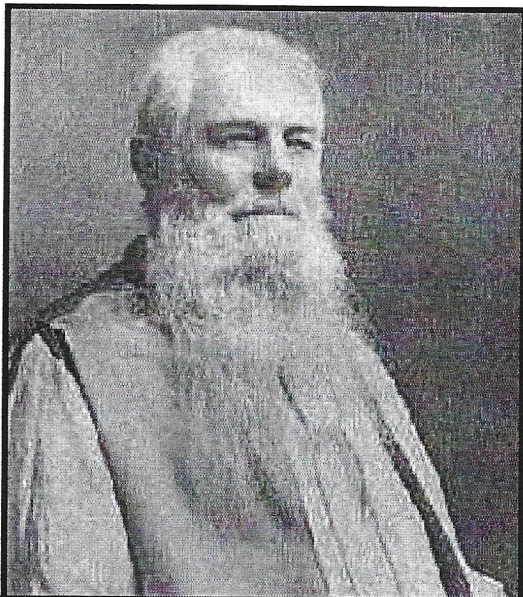
A no doubt less than dispassionate view of Weichmann was provided by John Surratt in 1870. On December 6 of that year, John Surratt delivered a lecture, one hour and fifteen minutes in duration, in Rockville, Maryland. For a cost of fifty cents, an adult could hear the son of the first woman executed by the United States government present his views on the assassination trial. Children could gain admittance for half that price. In his lecture, John Surratt asserted that Weichmann, whom Surratt called "my quondam friend," was a Southern sympathizer, and that Weichmann, while a clerk at the War Department, often allowed Surratt access to government records after hours. Surratt also insisted that, not only did Weichmann have full knowledge of the plot to kidnap Lincoln, but that his erstwhile friend repeatedly urged Surratt to allow him to become an active participant, a request Surratt said he denied because of Weichmann's inadequate shooting and horse riding abilities. Surratt summarized his opinion of Weichmann with the diatribe, "I do pronounce him a base-born



John Surratt

perjurer; a murderer of the meanest hue! Give me a man who can strike his victim dead, but save me from a man who, through perjury, will cause the death of an innocent person. Double murderer!!! Hell possesses no worse fiend than a character of that kind. Away with such a character. I leave him in the pit of infamy, which he has dug for himself, a prey to the lights of his guilty conscience." With the caveat of its likely lack of objectivity, John Surratt's acrimonious appraisal of Weichmann further clouds the mystery surrounding both Weichmann's involvement in the conspiracy and his motives for providing testimony.

After the assassination trial, Weichmann, through the intervention of Edwin Stanton and government prosecutor Joseph Holt, obtained a job as clerk of the Philadelphia Custom House. However, in November, 1866, Andrew Johnson decided to remove government employees who had obtained their positions through the influence of the Republican Party, and Weichmann lost his job. After the election of Ulysses S. Grant, Weichmann, again with the intervention of Stanton, was returned to his position with the Philadelphia Custom House, only to lose this job for good in 1886 when Grover Cleveland and the Democrats won the presidency. Weichmann then moved to Anderson, Indiana, where his younger brother, Frederick, resided. In Anderson, Louis Weichmann started the Anderson Business College, which, years later, was incorporated into the Indiana Business College network. In 1902, at the age of 59, Louis Weichmann carried to his grave all of the mysteries surrounding his precise role in the Lincoln conspiracy. For what it is worth (which is not much for those who share John Surratt's opinion of Louis Weichmann's character), on his deathbed, with one last chance to rescind his trial assertions without fear of retribution, Louis Weichmann maintained that his testimony at the trial was wholly true.



Frederick Weichmann

Interestingly, there is a small Cleveland connection to Louis Weichmann, and it involves his brother, Frederick. In contrast to the elder Weichmann and his former classmate, John Surratt, Frederick Weichmann did follow through with his plans to become a priest. He studied for the priesthood at St. Mary of the Lake in Cleveland, finished his studies at Mount St. Mary of the West in Cincinnati, and was ordained in Fort Wayne, Indiana in 1870, three months to the day prior to John Surratt's Rockville lecture. Frederick Weichmann had an unrenowned but distinguished career as a priest. He served in Peru and in several cities in Indiana, including at St. Mary Church in Anderson, where the parishioners included his brother, Louis, after his move from Philadelphia, as well as their two sisters, who also moved to Anderson and whose wedding ceremonies took place at Frederick's church. While at St. Mary, Frederick Weichmann oversaw construction of a rectory building, which was illuminated with natural gas through a recently invented process. He later served

in Gas City, Indiana as chaplain of the National Soldiers Home (now the Veterans Administration Northern Indiana Health Care System) and concurrently at Holy Family Parish. During his tenure in Gas City, Frederick Weichmann oversaw construction of two more buildings, a chapel for the National Soldiers Home and a rectory for Holy Family Parish, both of which were illuminated with natural gas and both of which are still in use.

Frederick Weichmann followed his brother in death in 1905, coincidentally at the same age of 59, and willed \$3000 to Holy Family Parish to pay all of the parish debts and to provide funds for construction of a new brick church building. Upon the death of Frederick Weichmann, the flags at the National Soldiers Home flew at half staff, and the Home's administrator, G.W. Steele, opined about the deceased chaplain, "He was an agreeable companion, cheerful of disposition, and a Christian gentleman." This fond assessment is in stark contrast to John Surratt's vitriolic characterization of Frederick Weichmann's brother. Friends of Frederick Weichmann contributed funds to memorialize him through construction of a stained glass window depicting Christ's Ascension, which was erected in Holy Family Church and is still present in the church building.

Although Frederick Weichmann touched many people in his life and made some significant contributions, his deeds, unlike those of his brother, lie in only the most remote pages of history. The irony of Frederick Weichmann is that he lived the unturbulent life, which his brother, Louis, had probably envisioned for himself when he was a student at St. Charles College and began to make the associations which would eventually thrust him into the klieg lights of American history. During his tenure at St. Charles College, Louis Weichmann no doubt anticipated an inconspicuous future, in which he would serve his parishioners diligently but with virtually no renown and then, after his death, leave a modest but warm legacy within this small circle, so that ultimately he would be consigned to the innumerable roster of individuals, whose names forever remain outside the bright light of recorded history. Louis Weichmann's life is an example of how turmoil, controversy, and recrimination are often the price of a more prominent place in history. Certainly, Louis Weichmann, the young divinity student, could not have known that the caprices of history would sweep him from a quiet life in obscurity into the glare of lasting notoriety as the mystery man of the Lincoln conspiracy.

David Carrino

CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE
ANNUAL FIELD TRIP



Ulysses Grant was demoted for being caught asleep by the Confederates.



P.G.T. Beauregard was blamed for the Confederate defeat.

SHILOH

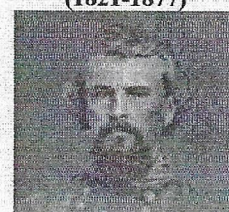
AND CORINTH, MISSISSIPPI

SEPTEMBER 24-28, 2003

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**Nathan Bedford Forrest
(1821-1877)**



Bedford Forrest first made his reputation at Shiloh.



The night before the surprise attack W. T. Sherman said, "there isn't a rebel within 30 miles."

WOODLAND CEMETERY SESQUICENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY

**Saturday, June 14, 2003
6901 Woodland Avenue**



Flag Day

Events begin at 11:00 a.m. including:

Address from Mayor Jane L. Campbell
Headstone Dedication by the Veterans Service Commission
for War of 1812 Veteran Jarvis Frary Hanks
Speech by Historian Mary H. Deal
Representation by Various Veterans Organizations including
Buffalo Soldiers, Cleveland Grays
Guided Walking Tours

Since its first grave in 1853, Woodland Cemetery has been the final resting place for more than 85,000 burials, including approximately 1,900 veterans---War of 1812 soldiers, both black and white Civil War Soldiers, one confederate soldier, and numerous veterans of post-Civil War. Other graves include two Ohio Governors, an Ohio Lt. Governor, Gypsy King & Queen, Cleveland's first African-American lawyer, Cleveland's first chief of police and many other notables.

For further information contact:
Michelle A. Day, 1336 East 349th Street, Eastlake, OH 44095-3033
email: michelleann@ameritech.net
or visit <http://www.rootsweb.com/~ohclecemlwoodland150.html>

Michelle Day is a CPA and a member of the Cleveland CWRT since 2002



**CANADA
IN THE AMERICAN
CIVIL WAR**

**WEDNESDAY
MAY 14, 2003**