

THE CHARGER

October, 2002

399 Meeting

Vol. 24 #2

Tonight's Program:

The Battle of Wilson Creek

Wilson Creek is located 200 miles southwest of St. Louis near Springfield, Missouri. The battlefield is on the edge of the Ozark mountains near present day Brandson, Missouri.

Early in the war, August 10, 1861, the armies of Union under Nathaniel Lyon fought confederates from Missouri and Arkansas under the command of Maj. Gen. Sterling Price of the Missouri National Guard and Brig. Gen. Ben McCulloch.

The confederate victory left the State of Missouri in a state of confusion early in the War. Casualties: 2,330 total (US 1,235; CS 1,095) including Union commander Nathaniel Lyon.



The small Arkansas town of Arkadelphia supplied company H of the 3rd Arkansas Regiment. The regiment sustained 110 casualties in the battle of Wilson Creek. The regiment was so badly mauled the regiment was disbanded.

Tonight's speaker:

Richard Hatcher

"Ranger Rick"

Our speaker tonight is our old friend from Fort Moultrie, Charleston, South Carolina, Park Ranger Richard Hatcher.

Ranger Rick, as we affectionately call him, was our guide for the 2001 Cleveland CWRT field trip to Charleston, SC. Prior to Fort Moultrie, Rick was stationed naturally at Wilson Creek in Missouri.

Rick will be discussing his book:

Wilson Creek: The second battle of the Civil War and the Men who fought it.

**Date: Wednesday,
October 9, 2002**

**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: Chicken Breast or Swiss Steak

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: **Dale Thomas** - (440) 779-6454

Trustees

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

Website: **SEARCH** Cleveland Civil War Roundtable
email: rcrcws5369@aol.com

The Cleveland Civil War Roundtable is open to anyone with an interest in the American Civil War. The 130 members of the Roundtable, who's membership varies from 12 to 90 years old, share a belief that the American Civil War was the **defining** event in United States history.

The Roundtable normally meets on the second Wednesday of each month, September through May, at a private club of the Cleveland Playhouse, 8501 Carnegie, next to the Cleveland Clinic.

Yearly Dues: \$40.00 Dinner: \$20.00

Dues: Maureen Goodyear
5906 Hodgman Drive
Parma Hts, OH 44130
(440)888-3814
Check to: Cleveland CWRT

To All Civil War Enthusiasts:

The year 2001 was very special for the Richmond Civil War Roundtable. It was the 50th Anniversary of this great organization in the capital of the Confederacy. To help celebrate we reprinted the limited edition (originally only 175) *Echoes of 1861-1961* by J. Ambler Johnston. With new introductions, index, appendixes this 2001 edition is now available for sale to the general public.

In his book Mr. Johnston describes early battlefield preservation work, offers recollections of Douglas Southall Freeman, and gives valuable information about the beginning of the roundtable. His anecdotes about homes and families during the war years enliven the narrative, and give it a timeless importance.

This attractive book will make a nice addition in all civil war libraries. While supplies last this book can be yours for \$25.00 (including shipping and handling). To purchase send check or money order to:

RCWRT

C/O R. Danny Witt *For more information or questions please visit us on the web at www.rcwrt.org*
5500 Ashton Park Way
Richmond, VA, 23059

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE **OCTOBER, 2002**

Great Start for New Year!

The cast if the Sherman trial gave us a great start for our new program year. It would tough to start listing the individual stars in this production. Obviously E. Chris Evans carried out his role to perfection but all the roles were well done. William Vodrey deserves particular commendation for directing this project. Ninety-two attended our 398th meeting.

We will be acting on two resolutions at the October meeting. The first is to establish a policy for he organization to utilize funds left over at the end of the year for preservation of significant civil war sites. The Executive Committee is to propose at the end of each fiscal year a donation to meet this goal to the membership. \$1500 will be retained each year to start the new year. In line with this concept, a second resolution would have the members approve the Executive Committee's proposal to use excess funds currently available to the extent of \$500 for the Johnson Island Prison site in memory of Matt Slatery.

We will be selling raffle tickets for civil war books next month. This is an excellent source for funds that will be available for year-end donations to civil war sites. Jean Solyan will be handling the tickets. Be generous. We need books for this program and for our quiz. If you have books you are willing to donate bring them to the meetings and give them to Eddie Myers who has agreed to handle book donations.

Richard Hatcher (Ranger Rick) will be informing us about the Battle of Wilson Creek. I wonder what Dan's question will be this month. Probably name the State where the battle took place. Ranger Rick did a fine job for us as a guide last year in Charlestown and I am sure we will enjoy our October meeting.

Maynard

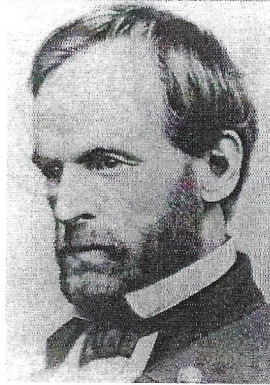
THE RICHMOND, VIRGINIA ROUNDTABLE IS 50 YEARS OLD.

**CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE
2002/2003 SCHEDULE**

September 11, 2002

**Sherman on Trial
A Military Court of Inquiry**

**E. Chris Evans
as Gen. William T. Sherman**



October 9, 2002

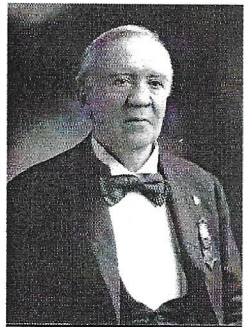
**Union General Nathaniel Lyon
killed at the ..
Battle of Wilson Creek**

**“Ranger Rick”
Richard Hatcher**



November 13, 2002

400th meeting, Cleveland Civil War Roundtable

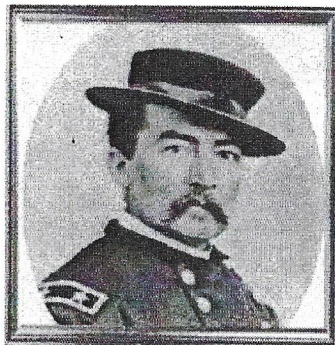


**James Madison Cutts
“Hero of the Republic”**

Civil War Triple Medal of Honor Winner
Sex scandal court-martial

Bing Spitler

December 11, 2002

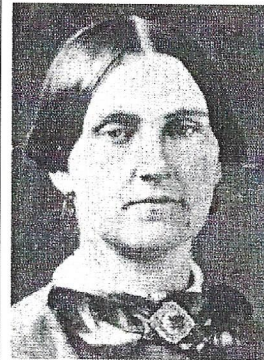


Philip Sheridan

**Little Phil:
A Critical Appraisal
of Civil War Generalship**

Eric Wittenberg

January 8, 2003



The Great Debate

*Cleveland Roundtable members
will debate: Was Mary Surratt*

1. Guilty?
2. Should she, a civilian, have been tried by a military tribunal?
3. Should she have been hanged?

Moderator: Dick Crews

February 12, 2003

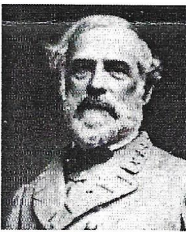


Major John Pelham

Pelham was famous for his “flying artillery”. Robert E. Lee called him, “gallant and courageous,” at the Battle of Fredericksburg. He was killed five months later.

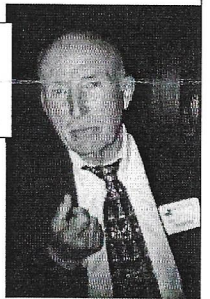
Peggy Vogtsberger

March 12, 2003

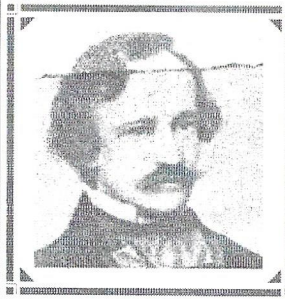


*Ed Bearss
“Mister Civil War”
discusses*

**Robert E. Lee
At
Chancellorsville**



April 9, 2003

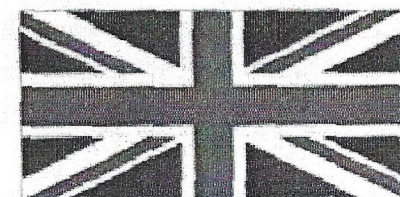


**General Pettigrew’s
Journal**

The story of North Carolina General Johnston Pettigrew. He led the confederate left in Pickett’s Charge and died in the retreat from Gettysburg.

Dan Bauer

May 14, 2003 “Guest Night”



During the Civil War, Canada was a British Colony

**Canada
and the
American
Civil War**

Mark Vinet

Membership information: Call 800-800-8310

email: rcrcws5369@aol.com

Web site: use [search](#) Cleveland Civil War Roundtable

VICKSBURG: DID IT MATTER?

By Sid Sidlo

Hattaway and Jones' well-regarded *How the North Won*, suitable to its subtitle, *A Military History of the Civil War*, is a splendid survey of both the Union and the Confederate military organizations and strategies during the war.

One of the most interesting passages in the book offers the authors' unorthodox views of the Confederate defeats at Gettysburg and Vicksburg. They assert that Confederate victories at either place would have been both politically and militarily meaningless. Since the closely-reasoned analysis is relegated to a lengthy footnote to the chapter encompassing those topics, many readers may overlook it. Here as food for thought is Hattaway and Jones' appraisal of the significance of the Vicksburg campaign, in their own words as much as possible.

The accepted significance of the fall of Vicksburg, accompanied by the surrender of Port Hudson a few days later, is that the North secured control of the entire Mississippi River, opening it to Union navigation and closing it to Confederate transit. But except for the capture of the defending armies, neither the South lost nor the Union gained very much strategically or logistically from the Union capture of Vicksburg.

First, the loss of transit between East and West hurt Confederate supply not at all; the two parts of the Confederacy had for over a year been separated logistically. The losses of Memphis and New Orleans in 1862 had made communication with the trans-Mississippi little more than a theory. In fact, Union control of New Orleans provided a base for extension of control northward up the Mississippi Valley, enabling Union forces virtually to eliminate the movement of cattle, horses, sugar, wool and molasses east across the river and the movement of arms and equipment westward. In effect the two sections of the Confederacy had ceased to rely on each other. Lee saw all of this clearly.

Second, no Confederate troops had made any strategic movement from west to east of the river since Van Dorn had joined Beauregard soon after Shiloh fifteen months earlier. Without trunk-line railways in their portion of the trans-Mississippi, the Confederates had to depend upon the intermittently navigable White and Arkansas rivers of Arkansas. In mid-1862, with Union control of the Mississippi as far south as Vicksburg, the federal Navy controlled the mouths of the rivers, and the Confederates had lost even this limited capability.



To the Confederacy the loss of the Mississippi was purely a loss of prestige and a psychological defeat; their country was cut in half. But the Union had not gained much by the Confederate loss, because that loss was nearly zero. In a sense it had acquired a real albatross: more territory to be guarded. The river was now perfectly secure for the passage of convoyed military supplies, but normal traffic was subject to harassment by raiders and individual snipers who would fire on steamboats. It required some 15,000 Federals to protect nonmilitary commerce on the long frontier between Memphis and Baton Rouge, if only because of the traditional importance of Mississippi River commerce and the prestige of having opened the river.

Even then, commerce on the river did not revive to a volume even approaching its prewar level. In 1864 only about one-third the 1860 tonnage sailed from New Orleans, largely due to the reduction of downriver trade from points north of Memphis. There were many reasons for this phenomenon. When the Mississippi route was unavailable, northwestern producers grew into the habit of shipping eastward via waterways and the growing railway system. The close proximity of war to essential river towns such as Cincinnati and St. Louis lessened their worth as freight centers. And in spite of Union patrols, shipments southward still traveled under a guerrilla threat. The North's commercial gains from the opening of the river were not nearly as important as it had been hoped, nor as important as the traditional significance of the river would have indicated.

Further, Union control of the river did not completely block Confederate transfer of supplies, which, however small, continued about as it had before the surrender. Guerrilla bands harassed the Union positions, and while southern regulars might approach the river at their peril, the Confederacy provided military escort and protection for trading operations at selected crossing points.

By far the heaviest deprivation sustained by the South in the surrenders of Vicksburg and Port Hudson were the heavy losses of manpower and equipment nearly 30,000 men (one of the three major armies of the Confederacy), 172 cannon, 60,000 muskets, and a significant amount of ammunition. Besides this, the principal effect was psychological. In losing the river, the South lost heavily in terms of morale. The North gained much, for the cry of "On to Vicksburg" in the Midwestern states had been as common as the cry "On to Richmond" in the east.

What do you think?

Sid Sidlo

*4109 Charles G. Drive
Raleigh, NC 27606*

VICKSBURG: *The turning point in the American Civil War.*

By Dick Crews

In Sid Silo's article on the fall of Vicksburg on July 4, 1863, Sid stated that the fall of Vicksburg, Mississippi was not as important to the outcome of the Civil War as many historians believe.

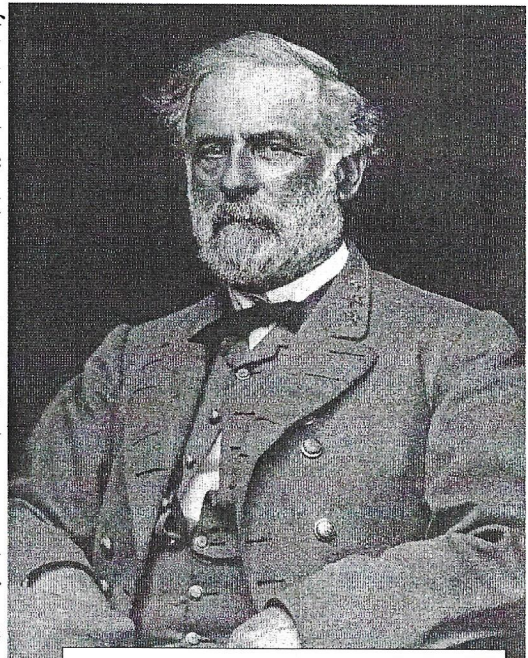
Taking on eminent historians such as James McPherson on this point, (Sid isn't scared of big names) Sid points out correctly that losing support from the western part of the Confederacy was no big loss. The western confederate states never did contribute much to the war effort. Sid goes on to say, total Union control of the Mississippi River was also not a major blow to the southern cause. He points out that before the fall of Vicksburg the Union held both ends of Mississippi River so the river wasn't a big asset to the Confederacy anyway.

Sid's facts and analysis are flawless as usual but he was so deep in the trees he missed the forest. The first question to ask is **how** the Confederacy lost the war. The popular myth is that Robert E. Lee surrendered the southern army at Appomattox Court House, Virginia in April 1865 and the American Civil War came to an end. This myth unfortunately has been taught to our school children.

Robert E. Lee's surrendered army of 38,000 was largely made up of War Department clerks, prison guards, and Richmond garrison troops. This army was not comparable to the Army of Northern Virginia of 80,000 men that attacked Gettysburg 20 months earlier.

When Robert E. Lee surrendered in April of 1865 the Confederacy had over 200,000 armed men in the field. Many of these men were in units that had defeated every Union Army sent to attack them.

Why then did they surrender? Why did they go home? Clearly the men who fought for the *southern way of life* had decided the price was too high and went home. In 1865, Confederate troops were deserting by the tens of thousands because they felt the war was hopeless.



Robert E. Lee

When did this hopeless feeling start? Certainly not before July 4, 1863. Previous to that date, Stonewall Jackson had a circus in routing Union troops in the Shenandoah Valley. More important in May 1863, Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia defeated Joseph Hooker's Union Army of the Potomac in the battle of Chancellorsville. Southerners were thrilled to hear about a southern army defeating a Union army twice its size.

Until July 4, 1863 most southerners were expecting victory.

Why was Vicksburg so much more important than Gettysburg? Indeed, both battles took place at the same time. Initially, southerners were not well informed about what happened at Gettysburg. They thought it was another *Sharpsburg* (Antietam) type battle with high casualties and no clear winner. The idea that Gettysburg was a southern disaster did not surface until months later.

However, Vicksburg was a very clear defeat. A southern citadel had fallen. Over 30,000 confederate troops and large number of cannons and rifles were in Union hands. Vicksburg is always mentioned as a symbol to the north but it was also a symbol in the south. After all it was the hometown of Confederate President Jefferson Davis. Most citizens north or south probably never heard of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania but almost everyone knew the Mississippi River and its importance to the country.

Historians point to Vicksburg as the battle that produced the eventual winning general, Ulysses S. Grant. However, southerners did not quit because of Grant but a feeling they could not win.

The southern feeling of hopelessness, which ended the American Civil War, started on July 4, 1863 in Vicksburg, Mississippi.

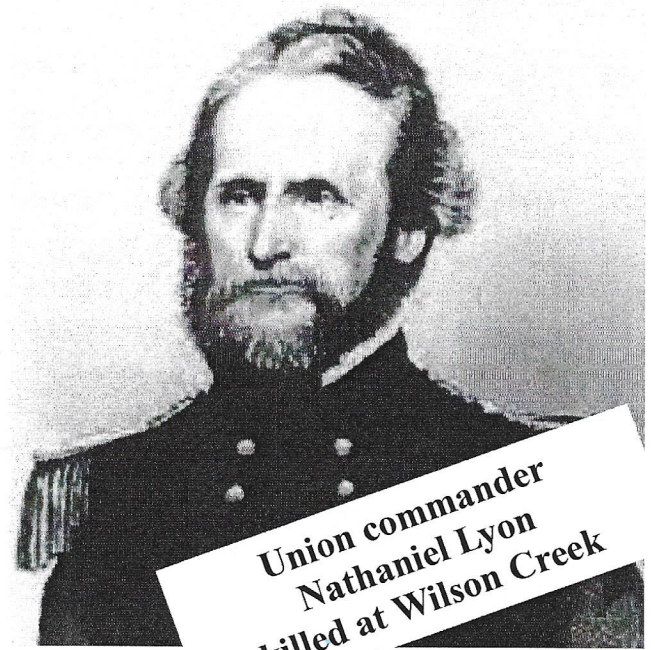
Dick Crews



Ulysses S. Grant

THE SECOND BATTLE
OF THE WAR:
WILSON CREEK

WEDNESDAY,
OCTOBER 9, 2002



Union commander
Nathaniel Lyon
killed at Wilson Creek