

The Charger



The Cleveland Civil War Roundtable

April 2021

vol. 44 # 6

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE APRIL 2021

APRIL SPEAKERS

Our next meeting on April 14 will feature three presenters – all representing our Cuyahoga County Soldiers and Sailors Monument. Ted Prasse, President of the Soldiers and Sailors Monument Commission, Vice Chair C. Ellen Connally and Executive Director Tim Daley will share the history, significance and relevance of this Victorian Landmark that stands in the heart of Cleveland's Public Square. The presentation will feature virtual tours of the monument which will highlight and enlighten even frequent visitors to the monument with their background and significance. To get started, checkout the article and the pre-presentation quiz on our website to test your familiarity of what is in our monument. The meeting will be held by Zoom starting at 7 pm on Wednesday, April 14. Look for an email Zoom invite a few days before the meeting.

Remember the Executive Committee voted to ask members to share invitations with friends and colleagues for the rest of this program year. It's the same as bringing a guest!

PETERSBURG FIELD TRIP

The Petersburg Field Trip is less than a month away! The Petersburg Field Trip is scheduled for April 30 to May 1. For travel purposes, plan on April 29 to May 2. We have a very comprehensive two days devoted to the longest campaign in US history. We are fortunate to have one of the most experienced historians in the area as our guide. In addition, we will be leveraging the Pamplin Park historic site and museum for our lunches on Friday and Saturday as well as dinner on Saturday evening followed by a night at the Museum of the Civil War Soldier.

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I checked out the Pamplin Park facilities in 2019 and they are state of the art in every way. We still have openings and if you have \$150 and time available, contact me at stevepcwrt@yahoo.com for information on how to sign up and make hotel reservations. There is a complete itinerary of the trip on our website.

If you are going and need a ride or would be willing to give another member a ride, please contact me at stevepcwrt@yahoo.com as soon as possible. On past trips, we have been able to arrange for attendees to share travel costs this way and also meet a new friend. Also, inviting a non-member as a guest may be a great way to recruit a new member.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE UPDATE

Your Executive Committee has been working all year on several initiatives to strengthen our organization. At our March 24, 2021 meeting which included Directors and Officers, we voted to adopt three resolutions by unanimous vote regarding publications and internet posts. We established an Editorial Policy Board which will develop and implement CWRT Editorial Policy for the Charger, the website, and social media posts including our Facebook and Twitter accounts. The Editorial Board will be Ellen Connally serving as Chair, Lily Korte as officer representative, along with Dan Zeiser, Mike Wells, and Dave Carrino. The initial guidelines presented by the committee were slightly amended and adopted. They will be posted on our website in the near future, but if you would like a copy now, feel free to contact me at stevepcwrt@yahoo.com

Over the next few months, we hope to establish more permanent standing committees to help institutionalize organizational memory. These efforts have been blunted by the pandemic, but I hope to see by next fall standing committees for membership, programs, and communications.

See you on April 14! [and avoid ice bergs in the meantime]

Steve Pettyjohn

President



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Book Review

By Dennis Keating

Ty Seidule *Robert E. Lee and Me: A Southerner's Reckoning with the Myth of the Lost Cause* (2020)

Ty Seidule is a retired U.S. Military Academy history professor. His purpose in writing this confessional book is to renounce his reverence for Robert E. Lee as his hero dating from boyhood and to recount his efforts to combat the Myth of the Lost Cause.

Seidule was born on July 3 and he related to Pickett's charge at Gettysburg on July 3, 1863. Seidule grew up in Alexandria, Virginia and has a chapter about its honoring the Confederacy. He notes that it was almost immediately captured by Union forces led by Elmer Ellsworth, Lincoln's friend who was killed by the owner of an inn flying a Confederate flag. He was unaware of this event and he states:

"Every part of my childhood worshipped the four years of Confederate rule, even though Alexandria actually spent all but a few hours under U.S. control...When I go back to Alexandria today, many parts of the city that glorify the Confederate cause have changed, but many remain the same, even after an exhaustive study...We find it hard to confront our past because it's so ugly, but the alternative to ignoring our racist history is creating a racist future."

Seidule also explains a history of lynchings in Southern places where he was posted in the army but was unaware of this ugly history.

Seidule explains the creation and evolution of the Lost Cause Myth, from Jubal Early to Margaret Mitchell and *Gone With the Wind*. He explains how ten U.S. Army bases came to be named for Confederate generals, most notably Braxton Bragg, Henry Benning, and John Bell Hood. He favored and advocated changing the names of these posts:

"I wish the Army would begin a process to change the names of the forts and excise the racism of the Lost Cause myth. Honoring those who fought against their country to perpetuate slavery...does not represent the values of the army in the twenty-first century."

Happily, with the defeat of Donald Trump, that process is underway. However, Seidule lost his attempt to ban the names of Confederate graduates of West Point to be included in a list of graduates in a memorial hall. Seidule says about monuments to the Confederacy:

"Of the thousands of monuments around the country to the Confederacy, the one in Arlington National Cemetery angers me the most. Every year, the commander in chief sends a wreath, ensuring the Confederate monument receives all the prestige of the U.S. government."

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The most important part of the book is Seidule's ending of his adulation of Robert E. Lee. He is a graduate of Washington and Lee University. He explains its history and his reverence as a student for Lee. Especially noteworthy is his description of its Lee Chapel:

"When I looked at the sanctuary of Lee Chapel, I saw the altar, the Holy Table. Except that on top of the table lay Robert E. Lee's statue. My school worshipped Robert E. Lee, Literally. At Lee Chapel, we had a church dedicated to the southern saint."

Seidule also explains how Lee remains honored at West Point, where he once was its Superintendent:

"Eventually, the army and West Point will make changes. At the United Military Academy, it's an easy call. Robert E. Lee resigned his commission, fought against his country, killed U.S. Army soldiers, and violated Article III of the U.S. Constitution. Lee committed treason."

The most dramatic and concluding part of the book is a retired Seidule speaking in September, 2017, in Lee Chapel at Washington and Lee University:

"I told the audience the reason [Lee] fought against the United States was not complicated. Lee believed in racial control through slavery. He fought to create a slave republic because he believed in slavery...The reaction of the overwhelmingly white audience to my speech criticizing Lee? For calling Lee a traitor for slavery in the Shrine of the South? For telling my school to do more, now? A standing ovation. "

Since then, Lee's statue on Memorial Row in Richmond, the former Confederate capital, has come down from its pedestal.

Whether you agree with Seidule's now much changed view of Robert E. Lee or not, this is a book for the times in which White Supremacists abound and the Confederate battle flag was carried into the U.S. Capitol during the January 6 insurrection.

References

Edward H. Bonekemper III. *The Myth of the Lost Cause: Why the South Fought the Civil War and Why the North Won* (2015)

Mitch Landrieu (Mayor of New Orleans). *In the Shadow of Statues: A White Southerner Confronts History* (2018)

WashPost: Virginia Supreme Court clears the way for Charlottesville to take down statue of Robert E. Lee https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/virginia-politics/charlottesville-confederate-statues/2021/04/01/b40b5a54-92ee-11eb-9668-89be11273c09_story.html

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The Levi Scofield Mansion

by Dennis Keating

Cleveland architect/sculptor Levi Scofield is best known for the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument on Public Square. Among other structures, including homes, is the Scofield family Victorian mansion, built in 1898 in the Woodhill neighborhood on a bluff overlooking the Fairmount Reservoir. Scofield died in 1917 and the family remained in the home until 1925. It then became a convent for the Sisters of the Most Holy Trinity. When the religious order moved to Euclid in 1953, the mansion and a second building became a nursing care facility until it closed in 1990. The buildings then were vacant and became badly blighted.

In 2011, Rosalin Lyons bought the property at a foreclosure auction for \$1,400 with the aim of creating a rehab center. She did not realize that the property included the mansion. Her plan did not materialize and she found herself owing \$55,000 in unpaid property taxes and fines in the Cleveland Housing Court because of the deteriorated condition of the buildings.

The Cleveland Restoration Society (CRS) took an interest in trying to save the mansion from threatened demolition. It formed a task force to organize plans to save the structure. In 2016, Lyons donated the property to the Cuyahoga County Land Bank, allowing for the waiver of the unpaid taxes. Title was transferred to Neighborhood Progress (now the Cleveland Neighborhood Progress [CNP]) while a plan for the redevelopment of the mansion was formulated.

With the donated work (valued at about \$250,000) from three companies stabilizing the structure, CNP has a plan for building 50 senior housing units and making a rehabilitated mansion into a community center. \$15 million in funding is required to proceed with this plan. It is hoped that if the Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority can obtain federal funding to modernize its nearby Woodhill public housing project, this would reinforce the fund raising prospects to save the Scofield mansion.

Reference: Karin Connelly Rice. "New Hope for historic Scofield Mansion restoration." Freshwater Cleveland (February 7, 2017): <https://www.freshwatercleveland.com/devnews/Scofield020717.aspx>

The Cleveland Restoration Society still wants to save the Levi Schofield mansion:
"The Abandoned Victorian Mansion of a Famous Cleveland Architect" Architectural Afterlife.

The Cleveland Restoration Society still wants to save the Levi Schofield mansion:

<https://architecturalafterlife.com/2019/02/abandoned-cleveland-mansion/>

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Pvt. Dominique Simon

A Confederate Soldier Buried in Chestnut Grove Cemetery in Olmsted Falls, Ohio

Olmsted Historical Society

Dale Thomas, archivist

2009, 2021

Dan Hill introduced himself after my talk at the local library in 2007. He was the caretaker of Chestnut Grove Cemetery. Dan told me about the unmarked grave in Turkey Foot, the oldest section of the cemetery. He wondered if the grave had a connection with an old tale about a Confederate soldier. After the Civil War, this soldier with his wife got off the train and decided to settle in Olmsted Falls. Dan said at certain times of the year, someone put flowers on the grave.

My research convinced me the old tale was true. I contacted Bill Stark, 103rd OVI historian, who had catalogued the unmarked graves of the regiment's veterans and obtained headstones from the Veteran's Administration. However, the VA had started a new headstone policy making approval more difficult for non-relatives. We did get the stone, but approval took longer than expect.

In June 2013, local newspapers published the date of the stone's dedication. Among those who attended the ceremony were descendants of Domique and Dora Simon. I did not know that they lived in the area when writing to the VA.

Dominique Simon came from Luxemburg and spoke French in a region where most were German. Sometime before the Civil War, Simon emigrated because of economic and political unrest in Luxemburg. He settled in New Orleans where French was widely spoken. The city was divided over loyalty to the Union, but Louisiana seceded on January 26, 1861.

Simon enlisted in Co. D of the 13th Louisiana Infantry on September 17, 1861 at Camp Moore. Records describe him as having a dark complexion with dark hair and blue eyes. A blacksmith, he stood about five and a half feet tall. The regiment fought in a number of battles including Shiloh, Perryville, Murfreesboro, Chickamauga, and Chattanooga.

At the battle of Ezra Church, GA on July 28, 1864, Simon suffered a shell wound to the head. He recuperated in a Confederate hospital until taken prisoner at Pulaski, TN on Christmas day, 1864. He spent time in a Louisville, KY prison before sent to Camp Chase, OH on February 17, 1865. After taking an oath of allegiance to the U. S. Constitution, he was released in May, 1865.

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Simon did not return to New Orleans, and he married before settling in Olmsted Falls. His wife, Dora, came from Mecklenburg, Germany. All their eight children were born in Ohio: Elizabeth (1868), Sophia (1869), Minnie (1871), Mary (1872), William (1874), Nellie (1876), Edward (1878), and Fennard (1879). Simon made a living as a blacksmith and a farmer. Evidently, he was accepted by his neighbors, many of whom were veterans of the Union Army. He lived in Olmsted Falls until his death on October 22, 1897.

According to local legend, a Confederate soldier lays buried in Olmsted Falls' Chestnut Grove Cemetery. What evidence exists to determine whether this story is truth or myth? In the Olmsted Historical Society's archives, there is a copy of a special census taken by the federal government in 1890. "Dominick Simon" appeared on the list of Civil War veterans. Living in Olmsted Township, he had been a private in Co. B, 10th Georgia Regiment and suffered a disability from a shell wound to the head. Simon's name was crossed off since he was not a Union veteran.

Another piece of evidence also came from the same archives. In the 1930s, someone wrote the caretaker of the cemetery, Mr. Bonsey, asking him what veteran was buried in the unmarked graves in lot 249 or lot 117. Bonsey wrote "Dominic Simon" at the bottom of the inquiry. In his records, Lot 249 is blank, but he put a question mark with a "C.W." veteran notation. Lot 117 has only question marks. Death records show that "Dominic Simon" died on October 22, 1897 and buried in Lot 117.

The Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System listed "Dominique Simon" as a private in Company D of the 13th Louisiana Infantry. He does not appear in any regiments from Georgia. Coming from Luxembourg (or near the border in Germany), Simon was French speaking since his given name was spelled Dominique. He would have logically immigrated to New Orleans where French was widely spoken. There were few French immigrants in Georgia especially in Atlanta where the 10th Infantry had been organized.

What conclusions can be made? The evidence shows Dominique Simon was buried in the cemetery. The author believes the Simon in the military records and the Simon in the census and death records is the same person. Both spoke French and were blacksmiths. Why the contradictory information in the 1890 census? Maybe he misunderstood the question. The shell wound to the head 25 years earlier might have affected his long term memory. (He was wounded in Georgia.) Simon could have been confused with the number of his regiment since it had consolidated with another Louisiana regiment from December 1862 to April 1864.

Footnotes

1. National Archives. The 13th Louisiana Regiment Voluntary Infantry website lists the same information: <http://www.acadiansingray.com/13th%20Regt.%20Inf.htm#Company%20D>.
2. Ibid.
3. Federal Census for Olmsted, 1870, 1880.
4. Dan Hill, caretaker of Chestnut Grove Cemetery.
5. Federal Special Census of Surviving Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, and Widows, Olmsted, 1890.
6. Chestnut Grove Cemetery Survey, Olmsted Historical Society

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Footnotes cont.

7. The Cuyahoga County Archives. Simon's age at death was 72 years, nine months, and two days. Oman Lawrence, a Metho-dist minister, performed the services. Simon's birth place was Luxembourg. Asthma may have contributed to his death. Nick Simon was his father.

8. Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System. National Park System, U. S. Department of the Interior. <http://www.itd.nps.gov/cwss/>.

9. Federal Census for Olmsted Falls, 1920. Ferdinand Simon's father, Dominique Simon, spoke French.

10. Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System.

The author is a graduate of Kent State University and Case Western Reserve University. He is also a past historian of the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable.

His published books include *Images of America, North Olmsted; Then and Now, Olmsted; Lincoln's Old Friends of Menard County, Illinois, Civil War Soldiers of Greater Cleveland; Cleveland in World War I; Ohio Presidents, a Whig and Seven Republicans*.



Descendants of Domonique Simon at the dedication ceremony

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Internationally Speaking
by John Fazio and Mel Maurer

Last December, we received the following invitation via e-mail from Flt Lt D. Robinson in the UK.

“Good morning,

Apologies for the direct approach. I got your contact details from the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable website. (We believe from the Speakers Bureau Section.)

I am a Training Officer at the Defence School of Logistics in the UK. (An attachment directed us to its website where we learned that “The Defence College of Logistics, Policing and Administration - DCPLA- is based at Worthy Down Campus near Winchester in Hampshire. Formed in 2002 it is the Centre of Excellence providing training to personnel from the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force.”)

I am putting together a day staff ride on the American Civil War. Personnel from the school will be presenting to each other on various topics surrounding the Civil War and the lessons that we can learn for today’s warfare. It is a period of military history that is not often studied and understood within the UK, which is precisely why I have selected it.

I’m still at the very early stages of planning, but we would be honoured if you would talk at our event via skype/zoom etc. Date is TBC, but is this something you would consider doing for us? A 30-45 minute presentation on the Civil War (perhaps focusing on the logistics – failures and successes) and your view on how we can learn from this in today’s society / military would be wonderful. I’m sure there would be plenty of questions at the end.”

We immediately accepted. John suggested his popular talk – “The Black Flag and Its Relevance to the Events of April 14, 1865.” Mel suggested his talk on “John Bell Hood and The Battle of Franklin.” Both of these talks use a number of slides and are especially good for Zoom presentations (the audience is spared looking at our faces.)

Flt Lt Robinson indicated the talks should include lessons on leadership, strategies and logistics, and that he thought that both talks would meet his needs. And then we awaited further orders as the Covid virus continued to affect any definite scheduling of most anything. Originally planned for early in the year, the class was pushed back almost two months and then set for March 17th.

As that date grew near, a series of emails passed back and forth between Mel, John and our RAF contacts, Flt. Lt. Robinson, Sgt. Duffin and Cpl. Holmes - all great to work with. A copy of the agenda for the day had John scheduled for 0800 EDT and Mel for 0945 EDT – four hours later in British standard time. We were then able to test what we would do with a practice session a week before the talks. This also enabled us to meet “face to face” with the young people we had been

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working so well with. We would be speaking to a class of eight along with several others in attendance.

We then met after this with our laptops to go over the procedures again with sign on and using Zoom to gain more confidence. Our talks were ready, our slides were ready and we were ready.

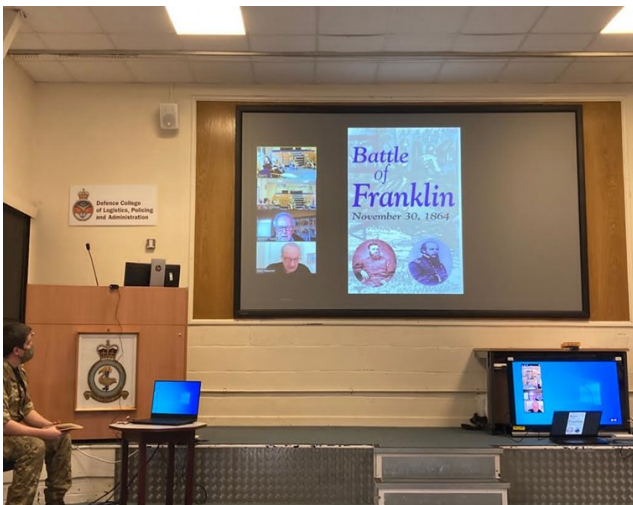
All preparations paid off on March 17th. Everything went very well. John gave his talk along with his very graphic Black Flag terror slides together with many pictures of those involved in such actions. A Q&A session followed with good questions and John had good answers.

Following a break, Mel presented the events of November 29 and 30 at Spring Hill and Franklin in what became the “Bloodiest Five Hours of the Civil War.” His slides showed places, the maps and the people involved. The following Q&A showed how well the class had paid attention – with very good questions and some discussion.

After thanks were expressed back and forth, Mel asked if he could end the session with a poem he wrote on “The Battle of Franklin.” (Time did not permit John to read his book: “Decapitating the Union.”)

We both felt very good about our British experience – especially working with such bright young people.

P.S. Several days after the class, Flt Lt Robinson e-mailed us a poem he had modified for the Battle of Franklin -very well done. And Sgt. Duffin then sent us a Haiku on the Battle. As we write this, arrangements are being made for a Zoom visit by these gentlemen to one of our monthly meetings, which will include recitations of their works.



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Conversations With Lincoln by Gordon Leidner

Book review by Paul Siedel

As one enters Fords Theater in Washington D. C. There is a spiral stairway on which one can view some of the many thousands of books written about Abraham Lincoln. Here is yet another one, a rather unique book that I've read recently which is a little off the beaten path of Lincoln literature. "Conversations With Lincoln" by Gordon Leider is a collection of anecdotes about Lincoln either written by or passed down by people who knew him. Leidner is a board member of the Abraham Lincoln Institute and has published several books on the Civil War and Lincoln. Even if one has read their share of Lincoln biographies it is still a unique approach and well worth reading.

The book is divided into several chapters two of which are "Back in Illinois" and "Observing the President" in which the author presents short stories about him as recorded by such personages as Fredrick Douglass, Sojourner Truth, Nathaniel Hawthorne, John Hay and Stephen Douglas. Stories told about his magnanimity when presented with situations in which friends, mothers or relations of condemned soldiers approached him and asked for clemency abound in the book. Many of the stories are relating to his skills as a speaker and his vast array social skills. Certainly in dealing with people such as Salmon Chase and Edwin Stanton he needed every bit of the social skills he developed during his sojourn as a circuit rider and railroad lawyer.

The author explains how easy it was in those days to see the president. Sometimes one had to wait for hours or even days but if one had the patience Lincoln could eventually be seen by anybody that wanted to see him. His two private secretaries John Nicolay and John Hay tried many times to limit the flow of office seekers, petitioners, and people who just wanted to say "I talked to he president". Today of course this is unheard of but ordinary people did at that time get a chance to actually meet the president.

In a chapter entitled "The Boy Shall Be Pardoned" the story is told by ex lieutenant governor of Ohio Thomas Ford of a girl making her way to the White House and waiting for the President to be able to speak to her. She had given up all hope of seeing him when upon entering the vestibule Lt. Governor Ford saw her crying and asked her what was wrong. She told him her brother was scheduled to be shot for desertion and she wanted the President to do something to save him. Ford and the girl went in to see Lincoln and upon hearing the extenuating circumstances regarding the case he told her "The boy shall be pardoned." Although we know that he was not always this magnanimous it does illustrate Lincoln's regard for the common person.

The one great fault with the book is the lack of stories (and there were many of them) in which Lincoln chose to uphold the law to the letter if he didn't think any clemency was warranted. Many times he chose to go along with Secretary Stanton who was known for a much more hard nosed approach to infractions of rules. Lincoln figured and rightly so that if Stanton were undermined to many times he, Lincoln would be looking for a new secretary.

All in all the "Conversations With Lincoln" presents some little known anecdotes and brings to light the views other famous people of the time had of him. It is 181 pages of easy reading and held my interest. It may be found in local libraries and of course purchased on Amazon or The American Book Exchange or one's local book store.

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Meeting April 14th

Program: History and Significance of Cuyahoga County Soldiers and Sailors Monument.

Speakers: Ted Prasse, President of the Soldiers and Sailors Monument Commission, Vice Chair C. Ellen Connally and Executive Director Tim Daley will share the history, significance and relevance of this Victorian Landmark that stands in the heart of Cleveland's Public Square.

The program will be conducted via Zoom so be on the look out for a Zoom invitation a day or two before the meeting

The session will start at 7 p.m.

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