

# THE CHARGER

December 2013

501st Meeting

Vol. 35, #4

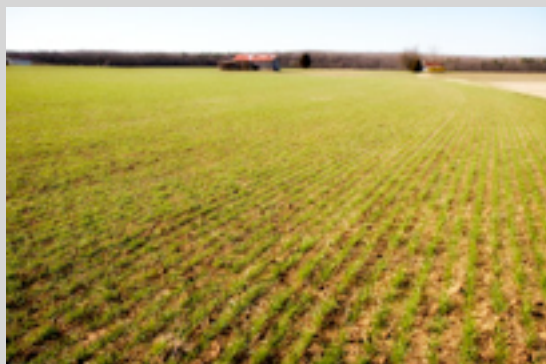
*Tonight's Program:*

**“It was a terribly grand scene...”  
The Slaughter Pen and Prospect  
Hill at Fredericksburg**

Most people who are even vaguely familiar with the Battle of Fredericksburg know, and focus on, the futile battle for Marye's Heights. Most are unaware that the real battle of Fredericksburg took place five miles south of the city at Prospect Hill and the Slaughter Pen Farm.

In the open fields leading from the Rappahannock River to high ground held by Lieutenant General Thomas Jackson's Confederate Second Corps lay the best opportunity for a Federal victory at Fredericksburg. In a Herculean effort, 8,000 Union soldiers were able to breach a Confederate line manned by more than 38,000.

We will examine just how close Burnside's army came to victory, why Federal efforts here came up short in the end, and how the decisions made on and off the field affected the Army of the Potomac in the long term.



The Slaughter Pen Farm looking towards Prospect Hill.

*Tonight's Speaker:*

**Kristopher White**

Kristopher White is a historian for the Penn-Trafford Recreation Board and a continuing education instructor for the Community College of Allegheny County near Pittsburgh, PA. He is the co-founder and editor of *Emerging Civil War*, a blog dedicated to helping the next generation of Civil War authors. Mr. White is a graduate of Norwich University with an MA in Military History, as well as a graduate of California University of Pennsylvania with a BA in History. For five years he served as a staff military historian at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, where he still volunteers his services. For a short time he was a member of the Association of Licensed Battlefield Guides at Gettysburg. Over the past seven years, he has spoken to more than 40 roundtables and historical societies. He is the author and co-author of numerous articles that have appeared in *America's Civil War*, *Blue and Gray*, *Civil War Times*, and *Armchair General*. White co-authored *The Last Days of Stonewall Jackson*, *Simply Murder: The Battle of Fredericksburg* and *A Season of Slaughter: The Battle of Spotsylvania Court House* with longtime friend Chris Mackowski. The two have written numerous articles together and are currently working on a book-length study of the Second Battle of Fredericksburg and Salem Church entitled *Chancellorsville's Forgotten Front: The Battles of Second Fredericksburg and Salem Church*.

**Date:** Wednesday, December 11, 2013

**Place:** Judson Manor  
1890 E. 107th Street  
Cleveland, Ohio

**Time:** Drinks 6 pm  
Dinner 6:45 pm

**Reservations:** Please send an email to [ccwrt1956@yahoo.com](mailto:ccwrt1956@yahoo.com) with your reservation, or call Dan Zeiser at (440) 449-9311 by 9 pm the Sunday before the meeting.

**Meal:** Entree, vegetable, salad, and dessert.

**CLEVELAND  
CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE  
FOUNDED 1957**

*President:* **Jim Heflich** (216) 381-8833  
*Vice President:* **Patrick Bray** (216) 407-7878  
*Treasurer:* **Chris Fortunato** learnedhand@live.com  
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Paul Burkholder                      Mike Wells  
 C. Ellen Connally                  Howard Besser

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## Cleveland Civil War Roundtable Past Presidents

2013 **Mike Wells**  
 2012 **Paul Burkholder**  
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 2010 **Dennis Keating**  
 2009 **Jon Thompson**  
 2008 **Terry Koozer**  
 2007 **John Fazio**  
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 2003 **Maynard Bauer**  
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 1998 **John Moore**  
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 1993 **Kevin Callahan**  
 1992 **Bob Baucher**  
 1991 **Joe Tirpak**  
 1990 **Ken Callahan Jr.**  
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 1986 **Tim Beatty**  
 1985 **Brian Kowell**

1984 **Neil Evans**  
 1983 **William Victory**  
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 1980 **Charles Spiegle**  
 1979 **William Bates**  
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 1977 **James Chapman**  
 1976 **Milton Holmes**  
 1975 **Thomas Gretter**  
 1974 **Nolan Heidelbaugh**  
 1973 **Arthur Jordan**  
 1972 **Bernard Drews**  
 1971 **Kenneth Callahan**  
 1970 **Frank Schuhle**  
 1969 **Donald Heckaman**  
 1968 **Frank Moran**  
 1967 **William Schlesinger**  
 1966 **Donald Hamill**  
 1965 **Lester Swift**  
 1964 **Guy DiCarlo Jr.**  
 1963 **Paul Guenther**  
 1962 **Edward Downer**  
 1961 **Charles Clarke**  
 1960 **Howard Preston**  
 1959 **John Cullen Jr.**  
 1958 **George Farr Jr.**  
 1957 **Kenneth Grant**

## President's Message

I hope everyone enjoyed the festivities last month at our November Roundtable - we had an overflow crowd of 92 members and guests. Thanks to all for rolling with the punches as we squeezed everyone in. Thanks to the many past Presidents who attended (hoping to see them at future meetings!). And special thanks to Bill & Joyce McGrath (FL) and Dick & Barbra Crews (NC) for traveling so far to take part in our 500th meeting. Now, on to the next 500 meetings!

I just finished reading an excellent book - Civil War Dynasty - The Ewing Family of Ohio by Kenneth J. Heineman (NYU Press 2013). I found it at my local library last month and the title rang a bell - Dennis Keating had emailed the Roundtable with a recommendation for it earlier in the year. Starting with the career of Thomas Ewing, Sr. (1789-1871), who served as a Senator from Ohio as well our first Secretary of the Interior, and continuing with the political and military careers of three of his sons, Thomas Jr., Hugh, and Charles, as well as his son-in-law, William Tecumseh Sherman, (all from Lancaster, Ohio), the book courses through the full panoply of 19th century American history. The three sons who served as generals in the Union Army fought in many theaters of the Civil War, including the mountains of western Virginia, Bleeding Kansas, Antietam, Vicksburg, Missionary Ridge, and Sherman's March to the Sea.

Talk about "Six Degrees of Separation" - the Ewings seemingly knew and closely interacted with nearly every famous American of the century, from Andrew Jackson, Henry Clay, and Daniel Webster to Andrew Johnson, Rutherford B. Hayes, and James G. Blaine, who ran for President in 1884. I mention this book to suggest that anyone with a great book to recommend is welcome to take a few minutes at any of our meetings to present a book review. New book or old, we are all omnivorous readers of Civil War history and appreciate tips on new books that are well worth reading. Just email me a bit in advance to put you on the schedule.

A tip of the kepi to Dennis for his Ewing recommendation.

Respectfully,  
 Jim Heflich  
[laureldoc@gmail.com](mailto:laureldoc@gmail.com)

# CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

## 2013-2014 SCHEDULE

September 11, 2013



*A Species of Legal Fiction:  
The Wheeling  
Conventions and the  
Creation of West Virginia*

**Dr. David T.  
Javersak**

January 8, 2014

***The Dick Crews Annual Debate  
What Was the Most Important Battle  
of the Civil War?***

**Moderator: William F. B. Vodrey**

February 12, 2014

***The U.S. Navy  
and the  
Naval Battles of  
Charleston 1863***

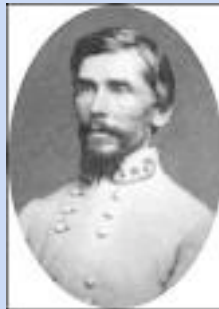
**Syd Overall**



October 9, 2013

***Slaves to Contradictions:  
Patrick Cleburne's  
Emancipation  
Proposal***

**Wilson R. Huhn**



March 12, 2014

***The Battle of  
Kennesaw  
Mountain***

**Dan Vermilya**



November 13, 2013

***Zouaves:  
America's Forgotten  
Soldiers***  
**Patrick Schroeder**



April 9, 2014

***Materials and  
Processes in the  
Manufacture of Civil  
War Small Arms***

**John Harkness**



December 11, 2013

***"It was a terribly grand  
scene..."  
The Slaughter Pen and  
Prospect Hill  
at Fredericksburg***

**Kristopher White**



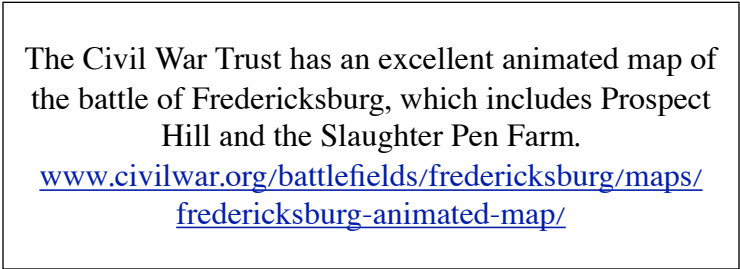
May 14, 2014

***Soldiers and the Homefront:  
A Northern Community  
Confronts the Civil War***

**Nicole Etcheson**







The Civil War Trust has an excellent animated map of the battle of Fredericksburg, which includes Prospect Hill and the Slaughter Pen Farm.

[www.civilwar.org/battlefields/fredericksburg/maps/fredericksburg-animated-map/](http://www.civilwar.org/battlefields/fredericksburg/maps/fredericksburg-animated-map/)



# The Slaughter Pen

by Francis O'Reilly

The battle for the Slaughter Pen was the battle for Fredericksburg. Union and Confederate armies clashed on the field south of Fredericksburg, creating one of the most sobering milestones in Civil War history. Maj. Gen. Ambrose E. Burnside's Union army seized Fredericksburg on December 11, 1862 and attacked Gen. Robert E. Lee's Confederates two days later below the city. Burnside made his main effort against "Stonewall" Jackson on Prospect Hill. Two divisions, under Maj. Gen. George G. Meade and Brig. Gen. John Gibbon, led the attack.

Union artillery pummeled the Confederates for several hours from a muddy field soon to be known as the Slaughter Pen. Meade's and Gibbon's troops started their attack at noon. Stonewall Jackson's artillery surprised the Northerners, smothering the field with bursting shells. Union and Confederate guns dueled for an hour, while Northern soldiers endured the unnerving shellfire. George E. Maynard rescued a wounded friend from between the lines and won the Medal of Honor – one of five earned in the Slaughter Pen.

Meade and Gibbon attacked again at 1:00 p.m. Meade's men penetrated a gap in the Confederate line, while Gibbon attacked across an open field. Confederates stopped Gibbon's men twice. The general personally led a third attack, which drove the Southern infantry from the embankment of the R., F., & P. Railroad. Confederates shot down numerous Union color-bearers. Three men, Philip Petty, Martin Schubert, and Joseph Keene, earned the Medal of Honor by carrying the flags. The battle devolved into a savage hand-to-hand combat before the Confederates retreated.

Jackson's men quickly rallied and repulsed Meade's and Gibbon's assault by 2:30 p.m. Gibbon fell wounded, making him the highest ranking U.S. officer injured in the battle. The Confederates pursued the Northerners into the field. Union artillery cut them down in droves. Col. Edmund N. Atkinson was wounded and captured in the Slaughter Pen, making him the only Confederate brigade commander captured during the battle. Col. Charles H. T. Collis won the Medal of Honor for saving the artillery from Atkinson's men.

Once Meade and Gibbon had failed, there was nothing the Union army could do to win the battle of Fredericksburg. The beauty and pageantry of both armies had been torn and bloodied in the fields of the Slaughter Pen. Up to 5,000 casualties – North and South – mixed in the open field. Gen. Robert E. Lee was moved by the destruction in the Slaughter Pen and uttered his famous observation: "It is well that war is so terrible, or we would grow too fond of it."

The above is taken from <http://visitfredva.com/2013/07/28/the-battle-for-the-slaughter-pen-by-francis-oreilly-author-and-historian/>

There are also quite a few photographs of the Slaughter Pen Farm. I have included a few of them in the next couple pages. You can find them at: [http://www.bguthriephotos.com/graphlib.nsf/keys/2011\\_VA\\_Fred\\_SP](http://www.bguthriephotos.com/graphlib.nsf/keys/2011_VA_Fred_SP).







**NEXT MONTH**

**THE DICK CREWS ANNUAL DEBATE**  
**WHAT WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT BATTLE OF THE CIVIL WAR?**

**STEVE PETTYJOHN - VICKSBURG**

**JEAN RHODES - ATLANTA**

**DOUG ELY - ANTIETAM**

**PAT BRAY - CHATTANOOGA**

**JOHN FAZIO - SPOTSYLVANIA**

**MODERATOR: WILLIAM F. B. VODREY**