

THE CHARGER

May 2013

496th Meeting

Vol. 34, #9

Tonight's Program:

Lincoln

"Now he belongs to the ages," Secretary of War Edwin Stanton famously declared moments after our sixteenth president had drawn his last breath. Posterity has abundantly fulfilled Stanton's prediction. Two centuries after his birth, Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865) has achieved an unrivaled preeminence in American history, culture, and myth. The sudden shock of his death gave rise to superlatives that took root and have been perennial in American letters ever since. Lincoln has been variously considered our greatest president, our greatest orator, the Great Emancipator; the foremost exemplar of the vitality of the American frontier and the promise of American democracy; the central actor in the Civil War, our greatest national drama; our most tragic statesman, whose martyrdom has become inextricably linked to his own incandescent vision of our national redemption.

From Lincoln in American Memory
<http://lincoln.loa.org>



Left: Lincoln in 1854. Right: Lincoln said this was one of his favorite photographs.

Tonight's Speaker:

Harold Holzer

Harold Holzer is Vice President for External Affairs, Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and one of the country's leading authorities on the political culture of the Civil War era and Abraham Lincoln. A prolific writer and lecturer, and frequent guest on television, Mr. Holzer served as co-chair of the United States Lincoln Bicentennial Commission. Mr. Holzer has authored, co-authored, or edited over 25 books and has written more than 350 articles for both popular magazines and scholarly journals, including *Life Magazine*, *American Heritage*, *Civil War Times*, *American History Illustrated*, *North & South*, *Blue & Gray*, *The Chicago Tribune*, and *The New York Times*, and recently served as a consultant on the Steven Spielberg movie, *Lincoln*.

Date: **Wednesday,
May 15, 2013 NOTE NEW DATE**

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 with your reservation, or
call Dan Zeiser at (440) 449-9311 by 9 pm the
Sunday before the meeting.**

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

**CLEVELAND
CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE
FOUNDED 1957**

President: **Michael Wells** m.wells@csuohio.edu
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Cleveland Civil War Roundtable Past Presidents

2012 **Paul Burkholder**
 2011 **Lisa Kempfer**
 2010 **Dennis Keating**
 2009 **Jon Thompson**
 2008 **Terry Koozer**
 2007 **John Fazio**
 2006 **Dave Carrino**
 2005 **Mel Maurer**
 2004 **Warren McClelland**
 2003 **Maynard Bauer**
 2002 **Bill McGrath**
 2001 **William Vodrey**
 2000 **Bob Boyda**
 1999 **Dick Crews**
 1998 **John Moore**
 1997 **Dan Zeiser**
 1996 **John Sutula**
 1995 **Norton London**
 1994 **Robert Battisti**
 1993 **Kevin Callahan**
 1992 **Bob Baucher**
 1991 **Joe Tirpak**
 1990 **Ken Callahan Jr.**
 1989 **Neil Glaser**
 1988 **Martin Graham**
 1987 **George Vourlojianis**
 1986 **Tim Beatty**
 1985 **Brian Kowell**

1984 **Neil Evans**
 1983 **William Victory**
 1982 **John Harkness**
 1981 **Thomas Geschke**
 1980 **Charles Spiegle**
 1979 **William Bates**
 1978 **Richard McCrae**
 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

Dear Friends:

When I joined the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable, I hoped that I was entering a Civil War group that would enhance my knowledge of and interest in America's great struggle. What I did not count on was meeting a diverse, interesting, and NICE/PLEASANT/APPEALING group of individuals. Our monthly fellowship, our annual field trips, our book sales, our occasional individual Civil War jaunts have all allowed me to meet you and appreciate your friendship. Thank you for this year of service. I look forward to our continued journey in Civil War scholarship.

Yours truly,

Michael Wells



CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

2012-2013 SCHEDULE

September 12, 2012

South Mountain

**John
Michael
Priest**



January 9, 2013

Dick Crews Annual Debate: President Lincoln's Biggest Mistake

Moderator: William F. B. Vodrey

February 13, 2013



***Edwin M. Stanton
Buckeye Warlord***

William F. B. Vodrey

October 10, 2012



Morgan's Raid

Lester Horwitz

March 13, 2013

The Assassination

Michael Kaufman



November 14, 2012



Fort Pillow

**Dr. John V.
Cimprich**

May 15, 2013

Lincoln

Harold Holzer



December 12, 2012

The Irish and the Civil War

Dr. W. Dennis Keating



June 12, 2013

Cleveland Civil War Roundtable Players Present: Grant and Lee at the White House

U.S. Grant Boyhood Home Rededicated

By William F.B. Vodrey

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On April 6, Mel Maurer, Chris Fortunato, and I went to Georgetown, Ohio to attend the ceremonial rededication of U.S. Grant's boyhood home. Georgetown is just east of Cincinnati, about four and a half hours' drive from Cleveland.

We arrived to find a large tent set up in the backyard of the home; a dozen Civil War-era replica flags snapped in the breeze. Burt Logan, the Ohio Historical Society's executive director, and Mike DeWine, Attorney General of Ohio, made some dedicatory remarks, as did several local bigwigs, and then it was time to tour the house. It is two stories tall and, after a multimillion-dollar restoration project, looks great both inside and out. The house was built in 1824 for U.S. Grant's father, Jesse Grant, when the future general was just two years old. "Sam" Grant lived there from 1824-39, when he left for West Point; the family moved away the next year. The house changed hands several times over the years and was eventually in danger of being razed when it was bought by John and Judy Ruthven, local benefactors, who eventually donated it to the Ohio Historical Society. It is now run by the U.S. Grant Homestead Association and was named a National Historic Landmark in 1985. We saw, from an OHS sign, that we were parked on the nearby site of the long-gone Grant tannery, and had the pleasure of meeting former CWRT President Jon Thompson's brother, Jerry, and his wife, Louella.

The only piece of furniture in the house original to the Grant family, we learned, is a black horsehide couch in the parlor. There is a seated but moving and talking simulacrum of a young U.S. Grant (a bit creepy, I thought) in one room, who will describe memories from his childhood depending on whether you touch a brass compass, book, apple, or wallet on a table before him. After leaving the house (you can see it all, including a small gift shop, in half an hour), we took some time to walk around downtown, and saw the Grant statue on the courthouse square. The statue was dedicated last August.

One of the reasons we went to Georgetown was to see Ed Bearss, noted historian, author, and longtime honorary member and good friend of the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable. We had the chance to speak with him briefly at the Grant home. Bearss took the stage that afternoon at the Gaslight Theatre, a somewhat run-down auditorium (truth be told, the whole town looks a bit run-down) not far from the courthouse, after a rousing Civil War sing-along. A local historian, in introducing Bearss, noted that he found 280 Google entries for his own public appearances, but 880,400 for Bearss, and that Bearss had even more now than last year. "I think he's starting to pull away," he joked. This was Bearss's fifth visit to Georgetown, and he spoke about President Lincoln's close cooperation with Generals Grant and Sherman during the Appomattox campaign in the last days of the war. He discussed how, after Lee's surrender, the President invited the General and Mrs. Grant to join the Lincolns for an evening's entertainment at Ford's Theatre. Mrs. Grant could not stand Mrs. Lincoln, though, and speedily decided it would be better to visit family in New Jersey, so the general had to give his regrets to Mr. Lincoln. Bearss wryly said, "U.S. Grant may have commanded a million and a half men, but he wasn't the boss of his household."

Mel, Chris, and I also visited the Grant Schoolhouse, a subscription school which the young Ulysses attended from 1827-38. It was rebuilt in 1926 and is now an OHS property. It included reproduction watercolors by then-West Point cadet Grant, including "Horse and Wagon," "Indians Bartering," and "River Scene/Cityscape." They were not bad, but Monet and Bierstadt obviously had nothing to

worry about. The schoolhouse includes several small displays about Grant's boyhood, and a plank bench thought to date back to his school days.

Grant was born in Point Pleasant, about thirty miles to the west, but by the time we arrived there after Bearss's speech late that afternoon, the house of his birth – even smaller than his boyhood home – was unfortunately closed for the day. We took a look around outside anyway. There is a small park nearby overlooking the Ohio River, and a modern bridge with miniature cannons and a brass plaque depicting a rather glum Grant in a beat-up old hat ("He looks like he's going to rob a liquor store," Mel said, and he was right).

It was a long day on the road for the three of us, but a good one. Anyone interested in Ulysses S. Grant, talented general and troubled President, should go see Ohio's three Grant historic sites sometime.

Photographs:

Grant himself:

http://www.mrlincolnandfriends.org/upload/Grant_Ulysses_GLC00559-02_med.jpg

<http://graveyardsdb.com/grant/General%20Grant.jpg>

http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/d/d7/Ulysses_Grant_1870-1880.jpg/220px-Ulysses_Grant_1870-1880.jpg

Boyhood home:

http://cincinnati.com/blogs/ourhistory/files/2013/04/CINCpt_03-31-2013_Enquirer_1_B00720130330IMG_grant_home_after_res_1_1_K43NCSCQ_L202363716IMG_grant_home_after_res_1_1_K43NCSCQ.jpg

<http://mw2.google.com/mw-panoramio/photos/medium/22109697.jpg>

<http://mw2.google.com/mw-panoramio/photos/medium/22109697.jpg>

Schoolhouse:

http://www.touring-ohio.com/profiles/art/grant_4030.jpg

http://www.touring-ohio.com/profiles/art/grant_4032.jpg

Birthplace:

<http://www.civilwaralbum.com/misc18/2011/grantbirthplace2.jpg>

http://farm4.static.flickr.com/3298/3656135580_5be9634fd3.jpg

<http://www.freewebs.com/clermonthistory/grantbirthL.gif>

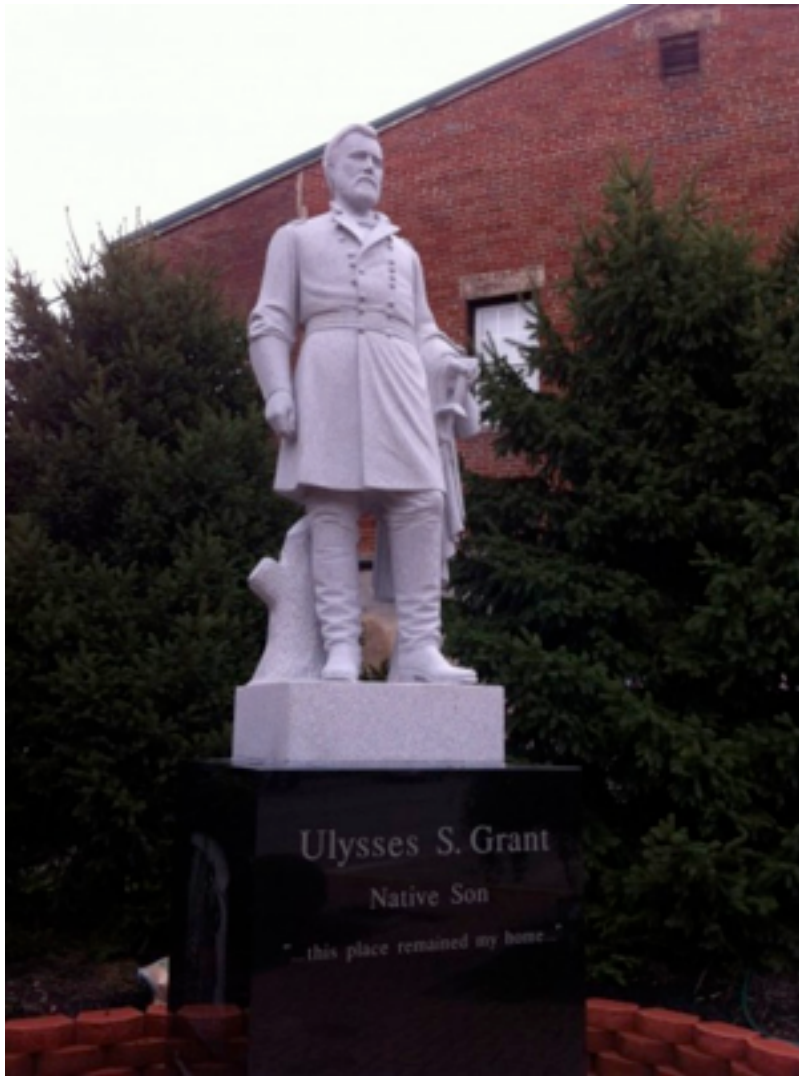
http://politicalsciencejuniorfellows.files.wordpress.com/2013/03/grant_sign_web.jpg



Far left: The first photograph taken of Grant, 1843.

Middle: The last photograph of Grant, July 1885.

Left: Grant in his last days surrounded by family.



Above: Native Son statue in Georgetown, Ohio.
Below: U. S. Grant birthplace, Point Pleasant, Ohio.



U. S. Grant, A Brief Biography

Taken from www.ohiohistorycentral.org

Ulysses Simpson Grant was an American military leader and the eighteenth President of the United States. He was born Hiram Ulysses Grant on April 27, 1822, in Point Pleasant, Ohio. In 1823, his family moved to Georgetown, Ohio. Grant lived there until he received an appointment to the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1839. The congressman who appointed Grant submitted his name as Ulysses Simpson Grant rather than Hiram Ulysses Grant. It was because of this mistake that Grant changed his name.

Grant graduated from West Point in 1843. He ranked twenty-first in a class of thirty-nine students. His first assignment was in the Southwest. Grant served under General Zachary Taylor in the Mexican War. He remained in the American West following the war. In 1852, after quarreling with a higher-ranking officer, Grant resigned his commission.

In the years before the American Civil War, Grant lived much of the time in St. Louis, Missouri, working as a real estate agent and as a farmer. He failed in both of these businesses. Grant also assisted his father in a tannery business.

After the Battle of Fort Sumter in April 1861, Grant volunteered for military duty. He first served as colonel of the Twenty-First Illinois Infantry, but soon was promoted to the rank of brigadier-general due to his previous military experience. In February 1862, Grant led a Union force that captured Forts Henry and Donelson on the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers. He earned the nickname "Unconditional Surrender Grant" for demanding the unconditional surrender of the Confederate soldiers inside of these fortifications. These were the first major victories of the war for the Union military. Grant continued to advance through western Tennessee in the spring of 1862. In April 1862, at the Battle of Shiloh, a Confederate army surprised Grant and his men. While the North won the battle, Grant's poor performance in the fight's first day led to pressure from politicians and civilians to remove Grant from his command. President Lincoln refused and, during the summer of 1862, gave Grant command of all Northern soldiers operating in western Tennessee and northern Mississippi.

Grant spent the remainder of 1862 and the first seven months of 1863 trying to seize Vicksburg, Mississippi, the last Confederate stronghold on the Mississippi River. In May 1863, Grant succeeded in defeating a Confederate army under John C. Pemberton. The Confederates retreated into Vicksburg, and Grant's force surrounded the city. After a lengthy siege, the Confederate forces surrendered on July 4, 1863. The Union military now had access to the entire Mississippi River and the Confederacy was split into two parts. Due to this victory, Grant was given command of all Union forces in the West. In October 1863, Grant's forces captured an important Tennessee railroad junction in the Battle of Chattanooga.

In March 1864, President Lincoln promoted Grant to lieutenant general and named him supreme commander of all Union forces. Grant focused his attention on General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, leaving the war in the West to his close friend General William T. Sherman. Grant quickly took the offensive. During the war's first several years, other Union commanders had tried to capture Richmond, Virginia, the Confederate capital. After being defeated by the Army of Northern Virginia, the Union soldiers would retreat to the relative safety of Washington, DC. Grant refused to retreat. He realized that the North had a much larger number of men available for duty. He believed that the most effective way to defeat the South was to attack repeatedly. The South did not have the men and supplies to reinforce the soldiers already in the field. To end the war, Grant repeatedly attacked during the summer of 1864. At battles such as the Wilderness, Spotsylvania, and Cold Harbor, Grant lost more men than the Confederates, but he replaced these soldiers with new ones. By early June 1864, Grant had surrounded Lee's Army of Northern Virginia at Petersburg, Virginia. A ten month siege ensued. The Northerners finally drove the Confederates from Petersburg in early April 1865. The Army of Northern Virginia surrendered on April 9, 1865.

Following the Civil War, Grant remained in the United States Army. On July 25, 1866, he was appointed General of the Army. He was the first person since George Washington to hold this rank. Grant also became involved in the conflicts between the United States Congress and President Andrew Johnson. Johnson sought a lenient policy towards Southern states that had seceded from the Union, while a majority in Congress wanted a harsher approach.

Congress succeeded in repudiating Johnson's plan for Reconstruction, but the president retaliated by firing Secretary of War Edwin Stanton. By doing so, Johnson did not follow the recently passed Tenure of Office Act. This act stated that the president could not fire any officeholder that had received Senate approval before being hired until the Senate approved a successor. Johnson violated this act by firing Stanton and replacing him with Ulysses S. Grant. Grant quickly resigned this office, preferring to remove himself from the dispute.

In 1868, the Democratic Party chose Horatio Seymour as its presidential candidate. Seymour, a former governor of New York, supported states' rights and opposed equal rights for African Americans with whites. The Republican Party selected Grant, a defender of equal opportunities for blacks with whites and a supporter of a strong federal government. Grant easily won the Electoral College vote, capturing twenty-six of the thirty-four states. In the popular vote, Grant received only fifty-three percent. The Republican Party, however, maintained a firm hold over the United States Congress. Grant's first term as president was troubled with corruption. Numerous political leaders, including Grant's vice president, were accused of providing political favors for monetary compensation. Grant remained above the corruption, but many Americans faulted him for his poor leadership and his inability to control his cabinet. In the South, violence was also increasing between whites and the African-American population. The nation seemed no closer to healing its wounds from the Civil War.

Grant sought reelection in 1872. He won easily, receiving fifty-six percent of the popular vote. Grant promised to end the violence in the South, but did little about it during his second term. A growing number of Republicans began to oppose equality for blacks and encouraged Grant to withdraw Union troops from the South. An economic depression in 1873 further alienated the American people from Grant. More than eighteen thousand businesses closed over the next five years, leaving thousands of workers unemployed. Due to Grant's declining popularity, the Republican Party nominated Rutherford B. Hayes as president, although Grant had desired to seek a third term. Grant also sought the party's candidacy in 1880, but the Republicans selected James Garfield instead.

Grant spent his last years in New York, writing his memoirs. When he was elected president, Grant had resigned his commission in the military. In 1885, the United States Congress reappointed Grant as General of the Army. His salary helped him pay rising bills. He died on July 23, 1885, from throat cancer.

NEXT MONTH - JUNE 12 SPECIAL MEETING

**CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE PLAYERS
PRESENT:**

GRANT AND LEE AT THE WHITE HOUSE

Ulysses S. Grant

Late in the administration of Andrew Johnson, Gen. Ulysses S. Grant quarreled with the President and aligned himself with the Radical Republicans. He was, as the symbol of Union victory during the Civil War, their logical candidate for President in 1868.

When he was elected, the American people hoped for an end to turmoil. Grant provided neither vigor nor reform. Looking to Congress for direction, he seemed bewildered. One visitor to the White House noted "a puzzled pathos, as of a man with a problem before him of which he does not understand the terms."

Born in 1822, Grant was the son of an Ohio tanner. He went to West Point rather against his will and graduated in the middle of his class. In the Mexican War he fought under Gen. Zachary Taylor.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, Grant was working in his father's leather store in Galena, Illinois. He was appointed by the Governor to command an unruly volunteer regiment. Grant whipped it into shape and by September 1861 he had risen to the rank of brigadier general of volunteers.

He sought to win control of the Mississippi Valley. In February 1862 he took Fort Henry and attacked Fort Donelson. When the Confederate commander asked for terms, Grant replied, "No terms except an unconditional and immediate surrender can be accepted." The Confederates surrendered, and President Lincoln promoted Grant to major general of volunteers.

At Shiloh in April, Grant fought one of the bloodiest battles in the West and came out less well. President Lincoln fended off demands for his removal by saying, "I can't spare this man--he fights."

For his next major objective, Grant maneuvered and fought skillfully to win Vicksburg, the key city on the Mississippi, and thus cut the Confederacy in two. Then he broke the Confederate hold on Chattanooga.

Lincoln appointed him General-in-Chief in March 1864. Grant directed Sherman to drive through the South while he himself, with the Army of the Potomac, pinned down Gen. Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia.

Finally, on April 9, 1865, at Appomattox Court House, Lee surrendered. Grant wrote out magnanimous terms of surrender that would prevent treason trials.

As President, Grant presided over the Government much as he had run the Army. Indeed he brought part of his Army staff to the White House.

Although a man of scrupulous honesty, Grant as President accepted handsome presents from admirers. Worse, he allowed himself to be seen with two speculators, Jay Gould and James Fisk. When Grant realized their scheme to corner the market in gold, he authorized the Secretary of the Treasury to sell enough gold to wreck their plans, but the speculation had already wrought havoc with business.

During his campaign for re-election in 1872, Grant was attacked by Liberal Republican reformers. He called them "narrow-headed men," their eyes so close together that "they can look out of the same gimlet hole without winking." The General's friends in the Republican Party came to be known proudly as "the Old Guard." Grant allowed Radical Reconstruction to run its course in the South, bolstering it at times with military force.

After retiring from the Presidency, Grant became a partner in a financial firm, which went bankrupt. About that time he learned that he had cancer of the throat. He started writing his recollections to pay off his debts and provide for his family, racing against death to produce a memoir that ultimately earned nearly \$450,000. Soon after completing the last page, in 1885, he died.

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