

The Charger



The Cleveland Civil War Roundtable.

April 2022

vol. # 46 # 8

Executive Committee 2021/2022

President - Mark Porter

Vice President - Lily Korte

Past President - Steve Pettyjohn

Treasurer - Robert Pence

Secretary - Jimmy Markhaus

Dan Ursu—Historian

Ellen Connally—Director

Richard Hronek - Director

Hans Kuenzi - Director

Michael Wells - Director

Dan Zeiser—Director

Paul Burkholder - Webmaster

Website : clevelandcivilwarroundtable.com

E-mail: m.wells@csuohio.edu or w.keating@csuohio.edu, The Charger editors

Editors: Dennis Keating, Michael Wells, Newsletter Design: Catherine Wells

President's Message

Fellow Roundtable Members:

I hope everyone enjoyed the “Grant at City Point” performance by Professor Derek Maxfield and his lovely companion Jess at our March 9th meeting. Professor Maxfield’s presentation, especially the question and answer period following, provided a very enjoyable evening for all. Professor Maxfield was particularly impressed with the well-informed questions asked of him in his role as U.S. Grant.

Our next meeting will be held at the Independence Holiday Inn on April 13th, starting with a social half hour beginning at 6:00 PM. Our speaker will be Bob O’Connor, noted Civil War historian and author, whose talk will address the role played by Sarah Slater, a Confederate operative living in Washington, D.C., during the War, and whose involvement in the Lincoln assassination conspiracy remains a controversial topic. The meeting will be both in-person and by Zoom. For those attending in-person, the meal selection choices are: salmon, pasta primavera, or vegetarian. Please join us as it should be a very enjoyable evening!

If you haven’t yet made your reservations by sending an email to ccwrtreserve@gmail.com, please do so without delay, and specify your meal choice! I look forward to seeing you all at our April 13th meeting.

Best,

Mark Porter

The Charger



The Cleveland Civil War Roundtable

April. 2022

vol. 46 # 8

Field Trip – September 2021, Part 2
By Steve Pettyjohn

Day 2 – Lookout Mountain, Orchard Knob, and Missionary Ridge

Our second day began with an ascent of Lookout Mountain where we met National Park Service guide James Ogden at the Visitors Center for Point Park. At the Visitor Center Museum, we were able to view the dramatic and almost diorama-like painting *The Battle of Lookout Mountain* that features General Joseph Hooker on his white charger at the center of the painting and the action on the mountain in the background. We took a group photo at the entrance to the park, which was built by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as a replica of their insignia. Mr. Ogden led us through the park with its dramatic vistas, where he was able to visually and verbally give us an overview of the campaign and where several dramatic events occurred. The climb up the mountain in our cars certainly gave us an appreciation of the importance of the terrain during the campaign.

Mr. Ogden pointed out the key importance of Chattanooga and its importance as a rail center and communications point. We were able to see critical areas related to the overall campaign and events leading up to the battle of Chattanooga. The challenges and complexities of opening "The Cracker Line," which brought much-needed supplies to the stranded Army of the Cumberland, was described and brought to life by Ogden's vivid descriptions. We also encountered some old names from other battles, such as U.S. Brigadier General William F. "Baldy" Smith, who played a crucial role in opening the supply line and also played a somewhat more infamous role at Petersburg, as we had learned during that field trip in 2020. Joe Hooker of Chancellorsville infamy gained some redemption as he commanded the XI and XII Corps detachments sent from the Army of the Potomac, with both units performing well at Chattanooga. (The XI Corps, flanked at Chancellorsville and Gettysburg, got to return the favor to the Confederates at Missionary Ridge during the battle.)

Ogden described the fighting at Wauhatchie in the valley before Lookout Mountain, where both Longstreet and Hooker performed so poorly that both were almost fired by their respective commanders in late October. (If memory is correct, there is now a wonderful Walmart on part of that battlefield that made it easy for Ogden to point out the area to us.) Finally, we could see the importance of other terrain including Orchard Knob and Missionary Ridge, as Ogden described the tactical details of the successful fight for Lookout Mountain that Joe Hooker directed from his famous white charger.

After descending Lookout Mountain and again increasing our respect for the troops who fought "The Battle above the Clouds" (first named by Quartermaster General Montgomery C. Meigs who witnessed the battle), we had a great lunch at The Tap House, a Chattanooga restaurant, and then regrouped at Orchard Knob, which served as Grant's headquarters during the battle. The central location gave him an excellent position to view the battle. It is in a reservation surrounded by residential areas, but East 3rd Street offered a clear view to Missionary Ridge and the Ohio Reservation at its peak, which contains the Ohio Monument to our regiments that fought there. While not as famous as the Missionary Ridge of Gettysburg fame, the Chattanooga version is much higher and more formidable.

The Charger



The Cleveland Civil War Roundtable

April. 2022

vol. 46 # 8

Missionary Ridge is now prime real estate, and it is very built-up with some beautiful homes dotting the edge of the ridge. However, some key "reservations" have been preserved where we were able to park and examine details of the battle. We spent some time at the northern edge of the battle at "Shermans Reservation," where our Lancaster, Ohio native did not perform well at all. His detachment of the Army of the Tennessee crossed the Tennessee River late, got lost, and then ran into the buzz saw that was Patrick Cleburne's crack division from the Army of Tennessee at the fight around Tunnel Hill. Cleburne checked Sherman's advance, and with Hooker's southern flank attack bogging down at the other end of Missionary Ridge, Grant asked George Thomas to launch a diversionary frontal assault on Missionary Ridge.

It was at this point that something completely unexpected happened, something that was one of the most improbable and dramatic events not just in the history of the Civil War, but maybe in the entire history of the U.S. Army. The troops of four divisions from the Army of the Cumberland, which had been ignominiously defeated at Chickamauga, not only took the Confederate rifle pits at the base of Missionary Ridge, but kept going until they reached the top of the ridge and routed the entrenched Confederates who were positioned there. The Confederate rout did not stop until the fleeing rebels reached the safety of Georgia, with Cleburne's division playing the role of rear guard and saving the entire army.

While we were at the DeLong Reservation on Missionary Ridge, our guide contributed one of those insights that can only be obtained by being on the spot. We have all seen the paintings of the Union regiments going up Missionary Ridge in those V-shaped formations with the flags leading the way and the men spread out behind them. Ogden was able to explain and show us how the geography of Missionary Ridge contributed to that success. A quirk of geography is that Missionary Ridge is more a series of interlocked hills that have been squished together over time, leaving folds between the crests of the hills. Many of the Union regiments followed those folds up to the crests, which sheltered them from Confederate fire as they attempted to scramble to the top. In addition, Bragg and his engineers, in a massive failure of planning, placed the bulk of the Confederate line on the ridge at the geographic summit and not the military summit, from which they would have had much clearer lines of fire.

Our day in the field ended at the Bragg Reservation, where again being on the spot provided insights into the campaign. Ogden described the further attacks that contributed to the Confederate rout, including one by a Wisconsin regiment with a fellow named Arthur MacArthur. Ogden was also able to show us the terrain of the Confederate retreat and the Union pursuit and how difficult it was for Grant's pursuit to succeed and destroy the rest of Bragg's army.

Our trip ended with the Saturday night dinner at Jonathan's Grille. James Ogden was there as well and served as our dinner speaker. He did more to help us understand the overall campaign and aftermath of the battle along with patiently answering all of our questions. It was the end of another great field trip!

Author's note: For a wonderful overview of both campaigns, I highly recommend *Six Armies in Tennessee: The Chickamauga and Chattanooga Campaigns* by Steven E. Woodworth.

The Charger



The Cleveland Civil War Roundtable

April. 2022

vol. 46 # 8

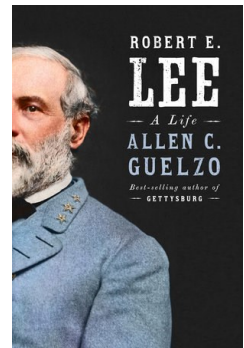
Robert E. Lee

A Life

by Allen C. Guelzo

Book Review by Paul Siedel

In deference to the recent controversy concerning Robert E. Lee and his memorials I decided to purchase a recent book by Allen Guelzo a Senior Research Scholar at the Council of Humanities at Princeton University. Although I have read several biographies of Lee in the past they tended to overlook many of the questions one may have especially those questions concerning his decision to side with the Confederacy in 1861. The author does a tremendous amount of research concerning Lee's boyhood, his appointment to West Point, his military career and his frustration with the U.S. Army, his stellar performance in the Mexican-American War, and finally his assault on John Brown at Harpers Ferry, Va. in 1859.



According to Dr. Guelzo Lee was frustrated with the Army and its supposed indifference to the plight of officers regarding promotion and the corresponding pay scale, but the Army was a secure career and that is what Lee desired most considering the financial insecurity that plagued his family after the departure of his father Light Horse Harry Lee. Although the author suggests Lee may not have realized this. Furthermore, contrary to what most people believe, Robert E. Lee had trouble fitting into the Custis family; in fact he never owned the Arlington estate across the Potomac River from Washington D.C. It was the property of his father-in-law, who was the grandson of Martha (Custis) Washington. However, after his death in 1857, Robert was selected to be the executor of his will. In that will his oldest son Custis became the owner of Arlington, and it was Custis along with his siblings who sued the Federal Government to get compensation for the estate after it had been seized by the Government and Arlington Cemetery had been laid out. Mary, his daughter and wife of Robert, had life estate, and each of the Lee daughters received a set amount of money when they reached the age of consent. Lee himself received nothing from his father-in-law, yet he was held responsible for the distribution of assets. Much of the Custis assets were in land and enslaved persons, but the enslaved individuals were to be manumitted one year after his death. However, Lee needed them to make the estates profitable, so there was some actual wealth to distribute to his daughters. When George Washington Parke Custis died in 1857 he, like so many southerners, was land rich and cash poor. When the manumission did not take place, the slaves began to leave anyway. Lee had several brought back to Arlington and "punished" severely. After the U.S. Army seized the Arlington Estate, the human property just melted away into the population of Washington D.C.

According to the author, the decision to offer his services to the Confederacy is still pretty much a mystery. Lee decided to offer his services to Virginia but his reasoning is pretty much unclear. Other southerners such as George Thomas and Montgomery Meigs chose to stay with the U.S. Army and their reasoning is quite clear.

The Charger



The Cleveland Civil War Roundtable

April. 2022

vol. 46 # 8

Lee felt that the southern people did not give their all for the cause. Vacillating they were very outspoken but slow to take up the cause when it came to sacrificing. Lee felt that the Confederacy needed to win in the short term or lose in the long run; thus creating in his mind the necessity for invading Maryland and Pennsylvania. He later stated that once the siege of Petersburg began “the game was up”

According to the author Lee suffered two heart attacks during the war. By the time he surrendered the Army of Northern Virginia he was pretty much physically a broken man. He lived at first with his family in a home of a friend in Richmond and then was offered a home “Derwent” overlooking the James River just west of Richmond. While living there he was approached by the board of trustees of Washington College in Lexington, Virginia, and decided to take the position of president of the institution. By the end of the Civil War the college had almost no money and only 93 students. Lee went to work creating a whole new institution. He became a first class fundraiser, approaching such people as Cyrus McCormick, the New York lawyer, Warren Newcomb, and Northern Democrats such as William Wilson Corcoran and George Peabody. An emphasis was put on mechanics, physical science, and modern languages. Greek and Latin were de emphasized and the faculty accepted such heavyweights as Richard Sears McCulloh, William Allen, and Edward Joynes. With the influx of all this new money, scholarships were offered to orphans and veterans of the Confederate Army. Several times Lee suggested that religion be relegated to the background of lectures and gatherings. By 1869 it had become evident that Lee had totally revamped both the Washington College Campus and its curriculum. His health began to fail during the summer of 1869, and he and daughter Agnes took a vacation to Florida via Wilmington, Charleston, and Savannah where people turned out in the thousands to see him, but he didn’t speak at all in many locations. It was at this time he visited the grave of his father Light Horse Harry Lee. Upon returning home he continued with his college duties, but in the autumn of 1870 he suffered a stroke and died shortly afterward at his home in Lexington.

At the close of the book there is a lengthy epilogue of Lee’s life. Lee had many flaws and people who say he was no friend the U.S. Constitution have a good case; however treason is never defined in the Constitution. There are many loopholes that can be exploited when arguing to the contrary. Lee was a product of his time. Not adhering to one religion strictly, he nevertheless was a firm believer in a higher power and that the power was behind him when he made his life decisions, including his exploitation of the enslaved African-Americans who lived on the estates he was left to disperse as executor of his father-in-law’s will. During his tenure at Washington College he firmly disciplined any students taking advantage of African-Americans living in the areas around the campus but was firmly against any admission of Black students to the student body. So where does that leave us? Yes, Lee had his foibles and by today’s standards was probably not a loyal American, but did he act in a manner in which he was taught to live? The author leaves the decision to his readers.

The Charger



The Cleveland Civil War Roundtable

April. 2022

vol. 46 # 8

No Shortage of Generals

© Brian D. Kowell March 22, 2022

In 1864, General Jubal Early's army moved down the Shenandoah Valley, crossed the Potomac River, and after pushing General Lew Wallace's Union forces from the crossings of the Monocacy River, marched to the outer defenses of Washington. As word of Early's men marching north reached General Grant, he sent Assistant Secretary of War Charles A. Dana to assess the situation before he sent troops.

Dana was alarmed by the disorganization of the Union defenses. There seemed that there was no shortage of generals but the chain of command was utterly confused. Dana complained to Grant, "There is no head to the whole, and it seems indispensable that you should at once appoint one." Dana commented that General Henry Halleck, who remained at his desk, was out of touch with what is going on around him. Navy Secretary Gideon Welles found Halleck "in a perfect maze – without intelligent decisions or self-reliance." Dana even reported that the Chief of Staff was "seriously impaired by the excessive use of liquor." He went on to say of Halleck that "he was so terror struck that he cannot even command three broomsticks." Halleck refused to issue any orders and blocked others from doing so.

It seemed that the Union's most incompetent generals had gathered around the capital. General Christopher Augar, according to Dana, had not visited any part of the lines and knows "as little respecting them as I did before I went out." General David Hunter would be the ranking officer if he arrived but he had retreated through the mountains of West Virginia almost to the Ohio River upon Early's advance. Besides, in Dana's opinion "he will not do." Even Secretary of War Stanton recommended Hunter to be relieved for incompetence. General's Couch, Wallace, McCook, Sigel and Gilmore were in the capital at the time. McCook, transferred after his mistakes at Chickamauga, was in charge at Fort Stevens. As the Confederates approached he had not sent any reconnaissance force to ascertain the strength of the Confederate forces so the Union officers guessed wildly as the magnitude of Early's threat. Dana quipped that all was needed now was Generals Milroy, McClelland, and Rosecrans to make the capital safe. And General Butler to direct them all.

As the Confederate's probed the Union defenses, Quartermaster General Montgomery Meigs arrived with 1,500 armed Quartermaster Bureau's employees. Admiral Louis Goldsborough sent armed sailors from the Navy Yard to Fort Lincoln and General Abner Doubleday commanded the capital's civilian volunteers. "Until you direct positively and explicitly what is to be done," wrote Dana to Grant, "everything will go on in a deplorable and fatal way in which it has gone on for the past week."

Finally six boat loads of General Horatio Wright's VI Corps arrived. Sent by Grant, they quickly filed into the capital defenses. Grant had ordered Wright to take charge of all. Early probed the Union lines but when he saw the forts and entrenchments filled with Union soldiers he withdrew. McCook did not pursue or send a force to follow the rebels. He instead ordered this artillery to fire 30lbs shells at the remaining Confederate skirmishers. On July 13, Wright set out in command of 10,000 men to pursue Early.

The Charger



The Cleveland Civil War Roundtable

April. 2022

vol. 46 # 8

With Early's army retreating, General Meigs marched his division of quartermaster's clerks and employees back into town. Admiral Goldsborough returned with his sailors to the Navy yard and "returned to smoking his pipe on his own doorstep." And General Doubleday was still at his post at the capital's easternmost defense but without out his civilian volunteers.

That evening, Lincoln's secretary, John Hay, asked the president for the news; Lincoln replied: "Wright telegraphs that he thinks the enemy are all across the Potomac but that he has halted & sent out an infantry reconnaissance for fear that he might come across the rebels and catch some of them." Asked by John Rawlins to sum up the pursuit of Early, Dana wired back that it proved on the whole "an egregious blunder."

Sources:

Lincoln's Informer: Charles A. Dana and the Inside Story of the Union War. Carl J. Guarneri. Pp 292-296

Diary of Gideon Welles, p 442

Papers of Ulysses Grant, Vol. 11. Pp228-232

Diary of John Hays, p 223.

Dana's Denials By Brian Kowell

Charles A. Dana was a managing editor of Horace Greeley's *New York Tribune* when the Civil War started. When Dana's and Greeley's editorial opinions differed about the Union's prosecution of the war, Greeley had him fired.

Dana was later drafted by Secretary of War Edwin Stanton to be his special agent in the field to report back to Stanton about generals and the progress of their campaigns. He was with General Grant at Vicksburg and Chattanooga, and before Chattanooga he was with General Rosecrans at Chickamauga. He would later be again with Grant during the Overland campaign.

His work earned him a promotion to Assistant Secretary of War and Stanton's right-hand man. In that position he was influential in issuing passes for news correspondents covering the armies in the field for their newspapers. Dana was not above having politics effect his decisions when issuing these passes. After the war, Dana admitted that he routinely denied the *New York World's* reporters passes to the front because he thought their paper was "notoriously treasonous and disloyal."

In November 1864, the *World's* editor, Manton Marble, appealed to Dana for assistance when one of his reporters was taken prisoner by the Confederates. Dana shed crocodile tears when he offered the consolation that reporters from a disloyal Northern paper "ought not to be treated with uncommon severity by the Rebel authorities." When Marble asked to have another correspondent given a pass to General Sherman's army, Dana again refused, explaining that the war office "did not consider that paper a proper one to receive such facilities."

The Charger



The Cleveland Civil War Roundtable

April. 2022

vol. 46 # 8

The Confederacy's Ferrous Stonewall in a Far East Civil War

by David A. Carrino

A common practice in sports is to compare the great players of the current generation to great players of the past. This happens for many players and in a number of different sports. For some players it happens even before those players have amassed a track record that allows such comparisons to be valid. LeBron James, even early in his career, was being compared to Michael Jordan. Patrick Mahomes, after just one Super Bowl victory, was being called the next Tom Brady. Shohei Otani, in only his fourth season, was being hailed as the new Babe Ruth. Although such comparisons quite often lead to vociferous disagreements among sports fans, these kinds of comparisons will continue to be made for as long as great players emerge in sports and for as long as sports fans have opinions. Perhaps the comparisons of past sports stars with subsequent ones come from a desire to affirm the perpetuation of sports excellence.

In the Civil War, if there was one person of military brilliance to whom his successors were compared it was Stonewall Jackson. When death forced Stonewall to depart the war, it required that his successors perform in a way that filled the vacuum created by his absence. Maybe this is why Robert E. Lee replaced Stonewall, a Virginian, with two Virginians who served under Stonewall earlier in the war: Richard S. Ewell and A.P. Hill. The performance of Ewell and Hill, especially at the Battle of Gettysburg, is often assessed in relation to how Stonewall would have done. As Civil War enthusiasts know, neither Ewell nor Hill came close to filling the capacious vacuum left by Stonewall's death. In fact, no one in the Confederacy was ever capable of becoming a true replacement for Stonewall Jackson. However, late in the Civil War another Stonewall was about to come on the scene on behalf of the Confederacy, although this Stonewall was intended to serve in a different and maritime branch of the Confederate military.

Civil War enthusiasts know well that the Confederacy suffered its greatest individual loss on May 10, 1863 when Stonewall Jackson entered Valhalla due to complications from pneumonia after the amputation of his left arm, which was wounded during the Battle of Chancellorsville. When Stonewall was conveyed by Valkyries to his eternity of dwelling among the slain heroes of all history, Stonewall's Confederate comrades were forced to carry on their war effort without his incomparable military prowess. As those comrades learned, in particular his former superior, Robert E. Lee, conducting a war without Stonewall was far more challenging. It can only be speculated how the Civil War would have progressed had Stonewall not died, but there is no doubt that his presence would have considerably helped the Confederacy's war effort. Asking someone to be the next Stonewall was an impossible task, but two years after Stonewall's death, another Stonewall was about to enter the war on the side of the Confederacy. This Stonewall was the ironclad warship CSS *Stonewall*, and her entry into the war was being closely watched and greatly feared by the enemy.

The *Stonewall* was the brainchild of James Dunwoody Bulloch. Bulloch was a member of the Confederate secret service and operated out of Liverpool in Great Britain. One of Bulloch's major contributions to the Confederacy's war effort was arranging the construction of ships for his breakaway nation. These included the commerce raiders CSS *Alabama* and CSS *Florida*. Bulloch also arranged the purchase of a ship named the *Sea King*, which was rechristened the CSS *Shenandoah* and which, like its forerunner the *Alabama*,

The Charger



The Cleveland Civil War Roundtable

April, 2022

vol. 46 # 8

preyed on Union shipping and eventually became the last element of the Confederacy to surrender. In addition, Bulloch arranged the acquisition of a number of blockade runners for the Confederacy and was the person who masterminded the smuggling of cotton from the South into England and the shipment of war materiel from England to the South. There is even some scant evidence, which is necessarily murky given Bulloch's clandestine operations, that Bulloch was an important source of funds for John Wilkes Booth's efforts. Bulloch was so effective in his role as a Confederate secret agent that Henry Sanford, the U.S. minister to Belgium, who was overseeing the Union's surveillance in England, called Bulloch "the most dangerous man the South have here and fully up to his business."

Interestingly, Bulloch's younger half-brother, Irvine Bulloch, served on the *Alabama* as her youngest officer and reputedly fired the last shots from that vessel before her ultimate demise at the hands of the USS *Kearsarge*. Bulloch's half-sister, whose maiden name was Martha Stewart Bulloch, was the mother of Theodore Roosevelt Jr., the 26th president of the United States, which made "the most dangerous" Confederate secret agent in Europe the uncle of a U.S. president. Not surprisingly, in light of Bulloch's wartime activities, particularly his possible connection to Abraham Lincoln's assassination, Bulloch lived out his postwar life in England, even becoming a British citizen. In fact, he was among the former Confederates who never was pardoned by the U.S. government. However, Bulloch did make a few secret postwar trips to the U.S. to visit his presidential nephew, and despite James Bulloch's appalling efforts on behalf of the movement to tear apart the United States, that presidential nephew wrote in his autobiography that "Uncle Jimmy" was "as valiant and simple and upright a soul as ever lived."

Prior to the Civil War, James Bulloch served for 15 years in the U.S. Navy. This experience prepared him well for his service with the Confederacy, in particular because he became well-versed in naval technology such as ship design and weaponry. Drawing on this knowledge and expertise, Bulloch designed a fearsome ironclad vessel in 1862. Perhaps because he suspected that his activities in England were being closely monitored, Bulloch contracted with the French shipbuilder Lucien Arman in Bordeaux for construction of two ironclads that were built according to Bulloch's design. During their construction, the ships were given the names *Sphinx* and *Cheops* in order to give the impression that the ships were being built for Egypt. Eventually the French government saw through the subterfuge and in February 1864 blocked the sale of the ironclads to the Confederacy for fear of severely damaging relations with the U.S. This left Arman without a buyer for the nearly completed vessels.

Conveniently for the shipbuilder, a war was in progress between Denmark and Prussia because of a dispute over territory that both countries bordered. Arman negotiated the sale of the *Sphinx* to Denmark and the *Cheops* to Prussia, which meant that he was supplying comparable warships to each of the combatants. The *Sphinx*, which left Bordeaux on June 21, 1864, was rechristened by Denmark the *Staerkodder* (which translates as strong otter), while Prussia renamed the *Cheops* the *Prinz Adalbert* after the Prussian prince who played a leading role in the creation of the unified German fleet. It would have been interesting if the sister ships had faced each other in battle, but this intriguing clash never took place, because the war ended (in Prussia's favor) before the ships joined the conflict. By that time, the *Sphinx*/*Staerkodder* had reached Copenhagen. Because the Danish government no longer needed the warship and refused delivery of the ironclad, Arman once more found himself without a buyer. Arman turned to his erstwhile customer, James Bulloch, whom Arman secretly contacted. After clandestine arrangements were made, the ship was purchased by the Confederate government in December 1864, and in early January 1865 a Confederate crew took possession of the *Staerkodder* in Copenhagen.

The Charger



The Cleveland Civil War Roundtable

April. 2022

vol. 46 # 8

Named to command of the newest addition to the Confederate navy was Thomas Jefferson Page, a Confederate naval officer who had served in the U.S. Navy prior to the war. Page, whose grandfather was a signer of the Declaration of Independence, was a Virginian who, like Robert E. Lee, gave his allegiance to the Confederacy after his native state seceded. There is conflicting evidence of whether the *Staerkodder* sailed from Copenhagen under a Confederate crew or under a Danish crew with Page and the Confederates as passengers. What is known is that, for purposes of deception, the *Staerkodder* was renamed the *Olinde* and departed Copenhagen under the Danish flag. Once out of Danish waters, Page rechristened the ironclad the CSS *Stonewall* in honor of the fallen Confederate icon.

Because Page's ship was an oceangoing vessel, she was fit to make the voyage across the Atlantic Ocean to her intended operations against the Union navy, in particular against blockade ships. The *Stonewall* was 171 feet, 10 inches in length with a beam of 32 feet, 8 inches. For comparison, the USS *Monitor* was 173 feet in length and had a beam of 41 feet, 6 inches. The *Stonewall's* displacement was approximately 1,400 tons with a draft of 14 feet, 4 inches compared to the *Monitor's* approximately 1,000 tons and 10 feet, 6 inches, respectively. The *Stonewall* was propelled by two 1,200-horsepower engines and could reach a top speed of 10 knots compared to 6 knots for the *Monitor*. If necessary, sail propulsion was also an option for the *Stonewall*, which had twin masts. On her deck were two armored gun towers. These were not rotating turrets, as on the *Monitor*, but fixed towers with multiple ports that allowed the muzzle-loading pivot guns to be fired in several fixed directions. The forward tower, which was circular, mounted a single 10-inch 300 pounder, while the aft tower, which was oval, mounted two 6.4-inch 70 pounders. In addition, the *Stonewall* had a steel ram on its bow. James Bulloch considered the ram essential for combat against Union ironclads, whose armor made them impervious to enemy fire, but whose wooden hulls made them vulnerable to a ram. As if all of that were not enough, Bulloch also envisioned the placement of two Gatling guns on deck to defend against boarding parties. In all, the *Stonewall* was a very formidable warship that could prove to be a much more worthy challenger to Union warships than were her predecessors, such as the CSS *Virginia* and the CSS *Arkansas*. When Page rechristened his ship, he foresaw the ironclad *Stonewall* helping to turn the tide of the war back to the intrepid days of Confederate successes, when the original *Stonewall* was inspiring thoughts of ultimate triumph in the minds of his secessionist countrymen. But as events played out, this was not to be, and even joining the Civil War proved to be far from smooth sailing for the CSS *Stonewall*.

The *Stonewall* departed Copenhagen in early January 1865 and entered the North Sea, where the weather was, in Page's words, "always boisterous in those latitudes in the winter season." No sooner had the *Stonewall* left Copenhagen than, true to Page's words, a gale engulfed the ironclad. During this storm Page learned, as he wrote afterward, that his vessel, rather than ride over the waves, "began to exhibit her powers of diving and coming up, in the fashion of the porpoise." The *Stonewall* weathered the storm and then put in at Quiberon Bay on the southern coast of Brittany in France in order to resupply. On January 28, 1865, the *Stonewall* set sail for Madeira, an island approximately 600 miles southwest of Portugal, to procure coal and other supplies for her long voyage across the Atlantic. For the first leg of the journey to Madeira, the ship left France and entered the Bay of Biscay, which, as Page wrote after the war, "lay like a mirror, reflecting the bright rays of the sun; while balmy air, fanned into the gentlest of breezes by the 'headway' of the vessel, promised a happy entrance into the broad Atlantic." But that "happy entrance into the broad Atlantic" soon became obstructed by another violent storm. The *Stonewall* was so badly battered by this gale that she sprang leaks in each of the caps over her two rudder heads. The leaks were

The Charger



The Cleveland Civil War Roundtable

April. 2022

vol. 46 # 8

temporarily fixed at sea, but the ship needed to return to port for repairs. Page sailed his damaged vessel to the port city of Ferrol in northwestern Spain, and there the ship remained for repairs until departing on March 24, 1865.

Despite the attempts of Lucien Arman and James Bulloch to conceal the sale of the ironclad to the Confederacy, John Bigelow, the U.S. envoy to France, became aware that the ship had been purchased by the Union's adversary. In response to this information, two Union warships, the USS *Niagara* and the USS *Sacramento*, were dispatched to at least shadow the *Stonewall* and, if possible, engage her. When the *Stonewall* left Ferrol on March 24, the *Niagara* and the *Sacramento* confronted her. Just like what happened over nine months earlier, when a crowd gathered near Cherbourg to witness the contest between the USS *Kearsarge* and the CSS *Alabama* (the latter vessel being another of James Bulloch's purchases for the Confederacy), a crowd waited on the Spanish shore to observe a naval battle between the *Stonewall* and her Union opponents. But the people went home disappointed, because Thomas Craven, the captain of the *Niagara*, who was the overall Union commander on the scene and who had an unfortunate surname in light of his decision in this situation, declined to engage the ironclad, perhaps because his naval duo consisted of wooden warships and he was mindful of what had happened to the USS *Cumberland* and the USS *Congress* at Hampton Roads. In essence, this is what Craven indicated at his court-martial on November 7, 1865 after being charged with "Failing to do his utmost to overtake and capture or destroy a vessel which it was his duty to encounter." Craven insisted, "With feelings that no one can appreciate, I was obliged to undergo the deep humiliation of knowing that she (the *Stonewall*) was there, steaming back and forth, flaunting her flags, and waiting for me to go out to the attack. *I dared not do it!*...We could not possibly have inflicted the slightest injury upon her, and should have exposed ourselves to almost instant destruction."

After the fruitless confrontation off the coast of Spain (which cost Thomas Craven a two-year suspension from duty as sentenced in his court-martial), the *Stonewall* steamed to Lisbon, Portugal to take on more coal and additional supplies, and then, on March 28, 1865, she at last began her long voyage across the Atlantic. All during her trek to Lisbon, the *Stonewall* was shadowed at a safe distance by the *Niagara* and the *Sacramento*, but the Union warships did not follow the ironclad any further. The *Stonewall's* next stop was in Nassau, Bahamas on May 6, 1865, after which the vessel went to Havana, Cuba. Thomas Page learned in Havana that the Civil War had essentially ended, which made him, like the captain of the *Staerkodder* before him, a warship commander with no war to fight in. Even worse, Page had no country to return to, since the Confederate States of America no longer existed. In need of fuel, supplies, and funds, Page turned over the *Stonewall* to the Spanish authorities in Havana for \$16,000, which he used to pay his crew. The Spanish authorities then handed over the *Stonewall* to the U.S. in July 1865 for the exact same sum, and the warship, whose arrival in the Western Hemisphere was awaited with great anticipation by both belligerents in the Civil War, was sailed to the Washington Navy Yard without ever firing a shot in anger either in Europe, her original anticipated area of operations, or in America.

This could have been the end of the strange and convoluted story of the CSS *Stonewall*, but another, and intriguing, chapter was yet to be added to her nautical biography, and this chapter would at last include the hostile activity for which she was intended. Moreover, this hostile activity was in the type of

The Charger



The Cleveland Civil War Roundtable

April. 2022

vol. 46 # 8

martial event like the one in which she had arrived too late to participate after her passage across the Atlantic. In addition, prior to her participation in that martial event, there was uncertainty regarding which side the ironclad would fight for. Interestingly, the *Stonewall* played an important role in the outcome of that martial event, and this led to a serious long-range consequence for the reunified country that the *Stonewall* was originally intended to help split permanently in two.

After remaining unused for over two years in the Washington Navy Yard, the *Stonewall* was tentatively sold to one of the opponents in an impending civil war in Japan. This war was in some ways a consequence of Matthew Perry's expedition to Japan in 1853, during which Perry forced Japan to open itself to Western trade. The imminent conflict in Japan pitted the forces of the Tokugawa shogunate against the forces of the emperor (a shogunate being a dynastic military dictatorship headed by shoguns, which was the ruling government in Japan beginning in the late 12th century). In the year 1600 a shogunate under Tokugawa Ieyasu became the dominant ruling authority in Japan and imposed a strongly isolationist policy and feudal system in the country. When Matthew Perry arrived and forced Japan to open its borders to the West, those in Japan who opposed isolationism saw how the isolationist policy of the shogunate had severely retarded modernization in Japan, and they desired a change in this policy and a restoration of ruling power to the emperor. Hostilities broke out in January 1868 between forces of the shogunate and forces loyal to the emperor, and the war, which came to be known as the Boshin War, lasted for a year and a half.

In contradiction of its avowed policy of isolationism, the Tokugawa shogunate, in order to assimilate modern weapons into its arsenal in preparation for the impending civil war, entered into an agreement with the U.S. in 1867 to purchase the mothballed *Stonewall*. With this agreement, the U.S. government was doing what it had chastised European countries for doing during the American Civil War, that is, providing warships to one of the combatants in the forthcoming civil war in Japan. The *Stonewall* was renamed *Kotetsu* and was sailed to Japan by an American crew. By the time the vessel arrived in Japan in January 1868, war had begun, and the U.S., which maintained an official stance of neutrality, did not deliver the warship to her buyer. However, the *Kotetsu* was eventually turned over to imperial forces and then was put into service against the faction that had originally purchased her.

In May 1869 the *Kotetsu* participated in an important battle known as the Battle of Miyako Bay. In this engagement, a shogunate warship named the *Kaiten* sailed toward the *Kotetsu* under an American flag in order to surprise the imperial ironclad. Once the *Kaiten* was near the *Kotetsu*, samurai jumped onto the *Kotetsu* from the deck of the *Kaiten*, which was higher than the deck of the enemy vessel. However, the *Kotetsu* was able to repel the boarders with a Gatling gun, just as envisioned by James Bulloch, the designer of the ship that had been built for a different civil war. The Battle of Miyako Bay was a victory for the imperial forces, which were subsequently able to attack one of the last strongholds of the shogunate on an island in northern Japan. In this attack, the imperial forces inflicted a decisive defeat on the shogunate in the Battle of Hakodate, a combined land-sea battle in which the forces of the shogunate were soundly defeated. In the naval portion of the battle,

The Charger



The Cleveland Civil War Roundtable

April, 2022

vol. 46 # 8

the *Kotetsu* was instrumental in the triumph by the imperial navy, and the ironclad also supported the landing of imperial forces for the land battle. The Battle of Hakodate, which was the Boshin War equivalent of the Battle of Appomattox Court House, essentially ended the war. The imperial forces were victorious in the war, and the emperor, Emperor Meiji, was restored to ruling power. After the war the *Kotetsu* was renamed *Azuma* in late 1871, which gave this ship another in the long list of her names since she began her existence as the *Sphinx*. After nearly two decades in service in the Japanese navy, the *Azuma* was decommissioned and eventually sold for scrap.

The emperor whom the *Kotetsu* helped to restore to power outlived the ironclad by over twenty years. Under Emperor Meiji's rule, Japan instituted a number of political and social reforms. Chief among these was an abandonment of the isolationist policy of the Tokugawa shogunate. Japan also initiated a major industrialization, and through this became a dominant power in the Pacific. Hence, the Boshin War resulted in Japan turning away from its period of isolationism, begat its ascension to dominance in the region, and eventually led to a period of aggressive expansion that ultimately resulted in world war. Because the *Kotetsu* was instrumental in the outcome of the Boshin War, it can be said that a former Confederate warship was an important component of the historical timeline that led to Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor.

The lineage from Emperor Meiji to the Pearl Harbor attack included Meiji's grandson, Emperor Hirohito, the Japanese emperor during World War II, who was born while his grandfather still ruled Japan. In September 1941, at a conference in Japan of that nation's government and military leaders, including Hirohito, there was intense discussion about the advisability of waging war against the West. At one point Hirohito recited a poem that his grandfather, Meiji, composed. This poem translates into English as follows.

The seas of the four directions—

all are born of one womb:

why, then, do the wind and waves rise in discord?

Perhaps Hirohito recited this poem because of his misgivings at that time about going to war against the West.

It is not known if Hirohito was aware that his grandfather came to power in part due to a warship that at one time bore the name of a Confederate general. That warship was originally not intended to help Hirohito's grandfather, but to help the Confederacy, which, at the time that the ship was purchased, still had not filled the void left by the death of the Confederate general after whom that ship was named. From the time of Stonewall Jackson's death, the Confederacy had failed to find the next Stonewall, and everyone who had tried to replace him fell far short of the Confederate icon. Having failed to find the next Stonewall in human form, the Confederacy turned to a mechanical apparatus as the next Stonewall, an ironclad successor to the redoubtable Stonewall Jackson. The Confederacy's quest to find the next Stonewall was, in a way, like sports teams seeking to elevate their fortunes by finding athletes who, in the opinion of some, are sports successors of outstanding players of the past, such as LeBron James as the next Michael Jordan, Patrick Mahomes as the next Tom Brady, or Shohei Ohtani as the next Babe Ruth. Two of these sports successors, LeBron James and Patrick Mahomes, helped to deliver championships to their teams, and as fans of Major League Baseball know, Shohei Ohtani can be excused for not yet likewise accomplishing this, partly

The Charger



The Cleveland Civil War Roundtable

April. 2022

vol. 46 # 8

because of the short time that he has been in Major League Baseball, but also due to the repeated failures of his team's upper management to provide adequate on-field resources to support both Ohtani and the other superb player on the team's roster, Mike Trout. Similarly, the ironclad *Stonewall* was hoped by her 'team' to be the successor to the original *Stonewall* that would help to deliver ultimate victory. However, this was not to be, because the CSS *Stonewall* arrived too late to even join the contest. Instead, the *Stonewall* lost not just the opportunity to participate in the Civil War, but eventually also her identity.

The ironclad warship that came into existence in Bordeaux, France flew six flags above her during her lifetime (France, Denmark, the Confederate States of America, Spain, the United States of America, and Japan), and she bore the same number of names (*Sphinx*, *Staerkodder Olinde*, *Stonewall*, *Kotetsu*, and *Azuma*). This appropriately reflects the highly varied career that this vessel experienced. Ironically (no pun intended), her sister ship, the *Cheops*, did not come close to enjoying the long life and military success of her sibling. The *Cheops/Prinz Adalbert* was taken out of service after only seven years due to defects in the armor plates, problems with the sailing rig, and serious leaking issues. Even after considerable refurbishing of the vessel, her hull rotted, and the ship was decommissioned, disarmed, and broken up. Perhaps the sister ship that began as the *Sphinx* was able to have a long and successful career because she, for part of her existence, bore the name of the indomitable *Stonewall Jackson*, and in recognition of this, his spirit gazed down from the halls of Valhalla on his namesake and bestowed his military prowess upon her.

The performance of the *Kotetsu* in the Boshin War is evidence that this ship was quite formidable. But while *Stonewall Jackson's* onetime ironclad namesake played a substantial role in bringing Emperor Meiji to power, the original goal for the vessel was to help keep Jefferson Davis in power. When the vessel was built, her intended use was to participate not in Japan's civil war, but in a different civil war. However, given the declining fortunes of the Confederacy, it is unlikely that the CSS *Stonewall* could have altered the outcome of that civil war, even if she had been able to join it sooner than when she actually arrived in the Western Hemisphere. This is almost certainly true even if the flesh-and-blood *Stonewall* had still been alive to employ his military skill on land while his namesake warship used her extensive maritime prowess against the Union navy. In the end, although Emperor Meiji benefited greatly from the ship that once bore *Stonewall's* name, while Jefferson Davis, the intended beneficiary of the ironclad, did not, ultimately both countries benefited from these contrasting nautical scenarios for the *Stonewall/Kotetsu*. This is because Japan was able to put an end to its long, antiquated rule by shoguns, and the United States was able to end its Civil War without needing to deal with another *Stonewall*.

Author's note: The CSS *Stonewall* was not the only vessel in the Confederate navy that was named after *Stonewall Jackson*. Two other warships in the Confederate navy that were named after *Stonewall Jackson* were the CSS *Stonewall Jackson* and the CSS *Jackson*. The CSS *Stonewall Jackson* was a cottonclad gunboat that operated in the early months of 1862 as part of the Confederacy's River Defense Fleet in the lower Mississippi River. During the fighting on April 24, 1862 when David Farragut ran his Union fleet past Forts Jackson and St. Philip, the *Stonewall Jackson* rammed and seriously damaged a Union vessel. Subsequent to this, the *Stonewall Jackson* was hit multiple times by enemy shells and withdrew. Pursued by Union warships, the *Stonewall Jackson* ran ashore and was burned.

The Charger

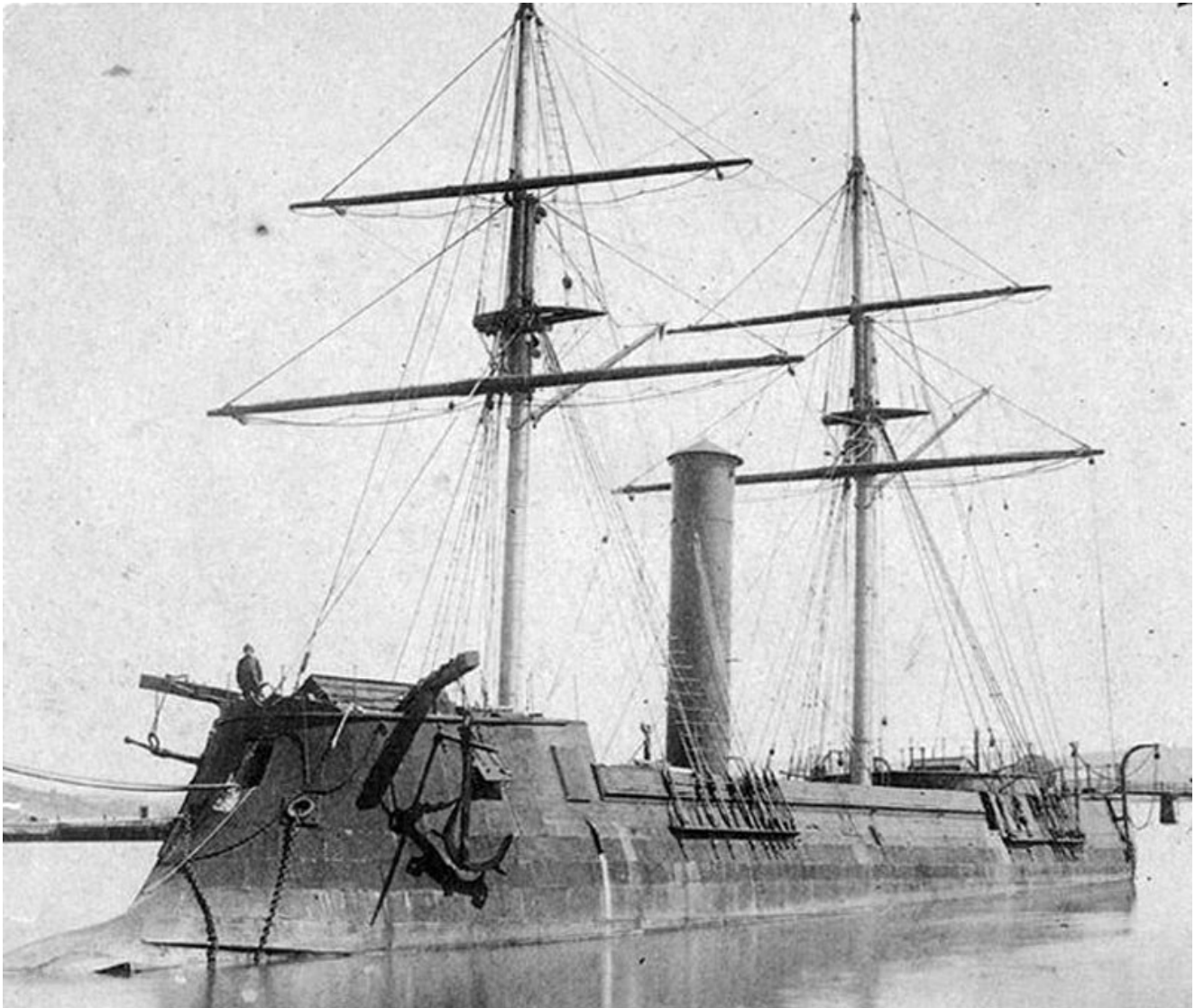


The Cleveland Civil War Roundtable

April. 2022

vol. 46 # 8

The CSS *Jackson* was an ironclad that was built in the navy yard in Columbus, Georgia. Originally named the CSS *Muscogee*, she was renamed *Jackson* before her construction was complete. On April 16, 1865, when construction of the *Jackson* was nearing completion, the city of Columbus fell to the Union raid that was led by James Wilson, and the *Jackson* was burned by Union troops and set adrift in the Chattahoochee River where she sank. The *Jackson* was raised in 1961, and her remains are now on display in the National Civil War Naval Museum in Columbus, Georgia.



The Charger



The Cleveland Civil War Roundtable

April. 2022

vol. 46 # 8

Meeting April. 13, 2022

Speaker: Bob O'Connor, noted Civil War historian and author

Program: Role played by Sarah Slater, a Confederate operative living in Washington, D.C.,

Location: The Holiday Inn Independence at Rockside Road just off I-88

Time: Social Hour 6 pm. Presentation 8pm

The talk will be both in-person and streamed live so that many Civil War enthusiasts can enjoy our program.

For reservations go to: ccwrtreserve@gmail.com or call, 440-449-9311

clevelandcivilwarroundtable.com/

Follow us on Twitter

<https://twitter.com/>



Like us on Facebook

[https://www.facebook.](https://www.facebook.com/)

