

# **THE CHARGER**



## **The Cleveland Civil War Roundtable**

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**February 2024**

**Vol. 48, No. 7**

### ***EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE***

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<http://www.clevelandcivilwarroundtable.com>

Editor – Kent Fonner

E-mail Editor at [dkfonner@gmail.com](mailto:dkfonner@gmail.com)



**SPEAKER** – Dr. Michael Dory, a retired history professor and long-time member of CCWRT

**LOCATION:** The Holiday Inn Independence at 6001 Rockside Road, Independence, Ohio 44131, off US Interstate 77

**TIME:** Social Hour at 6:00 PM and Presentation at 7:00 PM

**For reservations email:**

[ccwrtreserve@gmail.com](mailto:ccwrtreserve@gmail.com). To ensure a dinner is reserved for you, the reservation must be made by Tuesday, February 6, 2024

**Website:**

<http://www.clevelandcivilwarroundtable.com>

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**MEETING** – February 14, 2024

**PROGRAM** – “The 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment after the Battle of Fort Wagner”

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## *President's Message*

### **Fellow Roundtable Members:**

Last month marked the 67<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first meeting of the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable. We celebrated it with the Annual Dick Crews Memorial Debate, once again moderated by Judge William Vodrey. The debate topic was “Was Meade aggressive enough in chasing Lee after Gettysburg?”. Our debaters and their positions were as follows:

<del>Bill Toler</del> /Lily Korte:	Defending Meade
Chris Howard:	Defending Meade
Steve Pettyjohn	Critical of Meade
Gary Taylor:	Critical of Meade

Lily Korte stepped in for Bill Toler on the day of the debate as Bill was unavailable due to illness.

Our social hour slide show was a history of the debate which included the prior 28 years of debate topics, participants, and winners (mostly). Why such a lengthy recap of last month's debate? To put together the slide show of the history of the debate I had to go back to *The Charger* for the last 28 years. Unfortunately, there were a couple of years where they never said who won the debate and I had to piece together some of the other details of the debates. Therefore, for the benefit of future chroniclers of our debate history, the winner of the 2024 debate was **STEVE PETTYJOHN**. There was also an unanswered question in *The Charger* last month for which you had to come to the

meeting to learn the answer, “who is the grand champion debater who has participated in five debates?” For all those who can't sleep at night because they don't know the answer to this question, the answer is...Mel Maurer.

The debate topic was a good intro for our upcoming field trip to Gettysburg this fall. I am very excited about the progress we've made in putting the plan together for the field trip and hope to have the final plan in your e-mailboxes by the February meeting. The final plan will include a suggested reading list to help refresh your knowledge before the trip. In putting the suggested reading list together, I read that bibliographers estimate that perhaps over 30,000 books have been written about the Battle of Gettysburg or the Gettysburg campaign. In consultation with some of our experts within the Roundtable, we've whittled that list down to eighteen books for you to choose from. Remember to block out 19-22 September 2024 on your calendar to join us at Gettysburg.

This month's speaker will be long-time member Dr. Michael Dory whose topic will be “The 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment after the Battle of Fort Wagner”. The heroic actions of the 54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment at the Battle of Fort Wagner became well-known thanks to the movie *Glory*. But this regiment's service continued after that battle, and the regiment made important contributions to the Union's war effort during that time. For example, in February 1864, the Union began its fourth invasion of Florida, and three African American units were involved, including the 54th Massachusetts. At the Battle of Olustee, the 54th Massachusetts fought gallantly. Mike's presentation will examine the contributions

of this storied regiment after the Battle of Fort Wagner.

I look forward to seeing all of you at the meeting on February 14<sup>th</sup>.

Thanks,

Bob Pence

### *The Editor's Desk*



Nothing is quite so fragile as institutional memory. Frequent changes in leadership, membership turnover, and the difficulty of finding permanent and accessible storage for archives all play a part in creating an atmosphere where an organization's history can become erased. It is important that new members of the CCWRT are exposed to the achievements of our past. Unless one knows where he has been and where he is in the present, it is difficult to project a path to the future. An organization that pays little attention to its history is like a human being suffering with amnesia. The membership loses perspective and wanders aimlessly through a wilderness of false memories and uncertainty as to their institutional identity.

Accordingly, in the last few issues of "The Charger," we have published a list of CCWRT Past Presidents. Many are now gone from our midst, but many are still here—a resource for newer members to explore the history of CCWRT and our achievements as well as our failures.

In this issue, you will find an account by Past President Steve Pettyjohn explaining how the CCWRT weathered the Covid 19 pandemic when so many other organizations and businesses failed. Based on the presentation he made at the CWRT Congress in August 2023, his remarks make interesting reading.

Also in this issue is another contribution to our "Civil War Roots" column written by the editor. We look forward to contributions for this column from other members of the CCWRT. Certainly, many of you have something to share.

In addition, we want to welcome a new contributor, John Syrone, and his article about Civil War soldier, William Stacy, and his widow, Louisa, who are buried in Brecksville, Ohio. John was inspired to submit this article by our field trip to Manassas. Stacy was killed at 2<sup>nd</sup> Manassas, and his story has much to tell about the Civil War on a more personal level.

Finally, as some homework for this meeting's presentation on the 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts, you should check out Dennis Keating's book review essay on the two regiments from Ohio that served in the United States Colored Troops (USCT). As always, Dennis does a great job in bringing important material on Civil War history to our attention.

## **CIVIL WAR ROOTS**

### **John Simpson, Co. A, 140<sup>th</sup> Penna Infantry**

Submitted by Kent Fonner

My grandmother, Annie (Simpson) Fonner, had an uncle John who enlisted in the 140<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Infantry shortly after reaching his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. The Simpsons were farmers in Morris Township, Greene County, Pennsylvania, near a small village on Bates Fork Creek named Hopkins' Mill, later known as Swarts, after the establishment of a train stop there during the construction of the Waynesburg and Washington Railroad. Annie's grandfather, John Simpson, was the son of a Methodist minister, Reverend John Simpson, who emigrated to the United States from Ireland in the 1790s. Making his way to southwestern Pennsylvania, Reverend Simpson founded a prosperous farm and a Methodist meeting place on a ridge just south of the Mill. At his death, the family donated a parcel of ground to the congregation, and a small country church, Simpson's Chapel, and a cemetery were established on the ridge (Simpson's Ridge). In the 1870s the chapel was moved to the village below and was christened "The Swarts Methodist Church," eventually part of the "Nineveh Circuit."

John Simpson, Annie's uncle, was the younger brother of her father, Hugh. The young man enlisted in Company A, 140<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Infantry, on February 27, 1864. At the time, he joined the army with two schoolmates, Daniel S. Hopkins and Job Smith, Jr. Hopkins wrote an unpublished memoir of his war experiences in which he described the departure of these three new recruits:

"On the 26<sup>th</sup> of Feb 1864 at the age of 18 in company with 2 of my school mates John Simpson and Job Smith, we bid adieu to friends and loved ones, and left our homes at Hopkins Mills Greene Co Pa to enlist in the 140<sup>th</sup> Regt Pa Vol."

The three young men had an exciting time in the initial days of their enlistment. Most recruits were gathered at the county seat in Waynesburg and either marched or were taken by wagon down the dusty country roads to Rice's Landing on the Monongahela River. For most, this was their first trip on the river. In the autumn of 1862, "The Greene County Rifles," the first recruits for Company A, found that the riverboat they were riding to Pittsburgh encountered such sandbars that they had to unload and walk for miles along the riverbank until deeper water was available. One recruit for the 18<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Cavalry remembered the trip as one long drinking party for his fellow enlistees, and he found solitude by climbing onto a raft of towed logs. It often took twenty hours to make the sixty-mile trip downstream. Hopkins noted that this was the trio's "first boat ride." He wrote, "the day was rather pleasant and the senary [sic] was grand and all things considered the trip was pleasant and we enjoyed it very much."

Unfortunately, the "pleasant" times did not last for these three adventurers. Hopkins was the only one who survived the war. Job Smith was listed as MIA on May 12, 1864, at Spotsylvania Courthouse, VA. In his memoir, Hopkins explains that Job was captured and later died at Andersonville. As for my grandmother's young uncle, John Simpson—he was severely wounded in action on August 14, 1864. He died a bit over a month later, September 17, 1864, and was buried in the National Cemetery at Arlington, VA.



Steve Pettyjohn, Past President CCWRT, on “Emerging from Pandemic Panel” at CWRT Congress, 2023

### ***CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE CONGRESS CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABILITY***

Submitted by Steve Pettyjohn

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

In August, 2023, President Bob Pence and Membership Director Steve Pettyjohn attended the national conference of the Civil War Roundtable Congress held at Gettysburg. The mission of the Congress is to help the Roundtable movement survive and grow. The topic for the August meeting was sustainability. Steve Pettyjohn had been participating in Congress Zoom meetings since serving as Vice President of Cleveland CWRT in 2019. He was asked to participate in a panel discussion regarding how we dealt with the pandemic and subsequent issues. As part of this, he was asked to write an opening statement. The following is an edited and updated version that will hopefully be of use to future members in understanding what we did during that critical time.

**COMING OUT OF THE PANDEMIC:****REVISION 2 of PANEL NOTES FOR CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE CONGRESS MEETING AT GETTYSBURG (AUGUST 2023)**

I have been asked to focus on two areas that impacted our organization during and after the pandemic. The Cleveland Civil War Roundtable was founded in 1956 and between then and the 2020 pandemic we had changed venues exactly once. We were able to successfully do that as well as come through the pandemic with what I call a very good degree of organizational health in the process.

I define organizational health as the ability of the organization to strive to achieve its mission by effective governance, leadership, and participation of members. We think valid measurements would be dues paying members, attendance at presentations and at field trips, support by the group of related activities and active participation in governance and support of the group.

Like most volunteer groups, we had our ups and downs over the years. The group was founded by primarily Legal and Business professionals along with educators. Membership in the 2010s was generally thought to be around 100-125, but when checking on dues paying members in 2017, we found it to be 55. After a program to ensure members paid their dues, we were at 85 when the pandemic hit in March 2020. Program attendance had been increasing as well during this time frame. During January through March, attendance ranged from 80 to over 100 for our Lincoln Birthday celebration. Attendance at meetings had been gradually increasing over the 2017-2020 due to an emphasis on quality of speakers and improving communication with members. Also, our Executive Committee became more active in the year before as we worked to improve organizational effectiveness.

Our East side venue, Judson Manor, our meeting site for over two decades, was at an Art Deco Hotel that had been converted to a retirement home but had two large meeting rooms and a good food service. An important consideration during this time before the pandemic was the belief that our tenure at Judson Manor might be coming to an end. The Banquet/Service function had been outsourced to a third-party management group and there had been at least two changes in companies and changes in the management personnel that we dealt with for our meetings. Price for dinner had increased from \$20 when I joined in 2010 to \$35 during the 2019-2020 campaign. This was in addition to a number of add on fees for AV support, etc. In addition, we felt an increasing sense that we were viewed as an annoyance instead of an asset.

In 2019, President Ellen Connally and VP Steve Pettyjohn began a search for alternatives. Input was solicited from membership and criteria established for a new venue. This included geographic location and accessibility by driving, free parking, access to meeting rooms from the parking area, suitability of meeting rooms, AV and internet support, food quality, service and price. When the shutdown hit in March, 2020, we were well on our way in our search for a new venue. These efforts accelerated in the summer when we thought there was a chance of resuming in person meetings in the fall or winter. We chose the Holiday Inn in Independence, Ohio. It is near the intersection of two major interstates and is almost equidistance from all areas in Cuyahoga County. Unfortunately, we were not to host our first meeting there until May 2021

when Terry Winschel helped inaugurate our new site. While we are committed to using this site through the 2023-2024 campaign, we are looking at potential alternatives due to feedback from members regarding food quality and suitability of the meeting rooms made available for our use. We know that we lost about a dozen members to a sister group that meets east of Cleveland. However, dues paying membership has continued to be in the 80-85 range since the move. Attendance has gradually improved from the mid-30s right after the pandemic to the 50-60 range in spring 2023.

Every group has a formal organization and it also has a culture of how things really get done. Sometimes this can be a two-edged sword, but for us it seems we were lucky as both formal organization and culture were blended to strengthen the group during the pandemic.

We have a written constitution adopted in 2006 that provides for an Executive Committee to provide leadership for our group that is composed of:

- President
- Vice – President
- Treasurer
- Secretary
- Historian

In addition, there are four Directors elected on an annual basis. Finally, each past president served as a director for two years after their service as President.

We have a tradition that members are solicited to join the leadership group and making a commitment to serve in the constitutional positions for four years, starting as secretary, moving to treasurer, vice president and then president followed by service as a director. This had the potential of providing considerable stability for the leadership group and also creating a flow of fresh blood for our group. New members are frequently asked to take on a leadership role. Both our current VP and Treasurer joined during the pandemic. The flow upwards allows the following:

Service as Secretary – get to know the members with duties at meetings and membership activity;

Treasurer – learn about finances of the organization and also membership;

Vice-President – Plan next year’s programs and field trip;

President – Execute Plans and provide leadership of organization and hold regular Executive Committee Meetings to attend to business.

Unfortunately, during the 2010’s, the Executive Committee did not meet on a regular basis until 2019-2020. The Shut Down in spring 2020 created a challenge to maintaining our constitutional leadership as nominations and elections were held in April and May. The Executive Committee started meeting by Zoom and voted to hold elections via email. An election committee of past presidents was created per the constitution and administered the election.

I was the “beneficiary” of these efforts as I was scheduled to be President for 2020-2021. In addition to the elected officers, the historian, and the two past presidents, I appointed directors to serve on the Executive Committee. These included past presidents and others who had served in critical positions. Our “Signal Corps” consisting of our email chair, our website chair, and social media coordinator were included. I also included the co-editors of our monthly electronic newsletter/magazine. We conducted monthly business meetings on Zoom using an agenda that was published before the meetings. Reports were expected from officers and committees as identified in the monthly agendas. We devoted considerable effort to communications with members including email and physical mailings. Our website committee of three worked very hard to revive and modernize the website. We tried Facebook and Twitter with mixed success. We established an Editorial Board which drafted an Editorial Policy to apply to all Roundtable publications. Most importantly, we moved to Zoom effectively for our programs after a typically roller coaster learning curve.

Our schedule traditionally calls for speakers from September through December, a membership debate in January, and then speakers from February through May. We were able to do this through an established communication process with our speakers that involved a Monday night “rehearsal” before our Wednesday meetings. Our speakers were all very cooperative and this kept Zoom incidents to a minimum. We were fortunate in having members with Zoom experience and also hired a college student to assist in Zoom support. This helped considerably when we went back to live meetings which were conducted as hybrid for about two years after the end of the pandemic. We also experimented with a YouTube Channel where we posted speaker presentations with their approval.

One of the highlights of our year is the annual debate which was conducted during the pandemic via Zoom and then on a hybrid basis since then. It has been an effective way to get new people involved with the group. Our immediate past president along with all of the current officers are debate veterans. I should add that our immediate past president is 32, our VP and Treasurer are under 40. They all participated as fairly new members.

We have continued to build on these efforts with an emphasis on communication and providing quality speakers. During the 2021-2022 campaign under President Mark Porter and during 2022-2023 with President Lily Korte, we continued to maintain a paid membership of 81-82. Attendance at meetings continued to improve with several members continuing to participate via Zoom. We were able to attract some speakers to present using Zoom from their home locations while broadcasting at the meeting along with transmitting to members at their homes. This proved to be a real challenge for us from a technology viewpoint. At the end of 2023, the Executive Committee made a decision to drop the hybrid approach and encourage in person attendance.

Our current President, Bob Pence, is looking for improved methods to obtain member feedback and obtain ideas to enhance our meetings and membership participation. He has already posted a schedule of monthly Zoom meetings for the Executive Committee to attend to the business of organizational health. He is also leading outreach to other historical organizations in our area



including a cooperative effort with two other Cleveland area Roundtables to bring General Grant [a/k/a Curt Fields] to Cleveland.

#### JANUARY 2024 UPDATE:

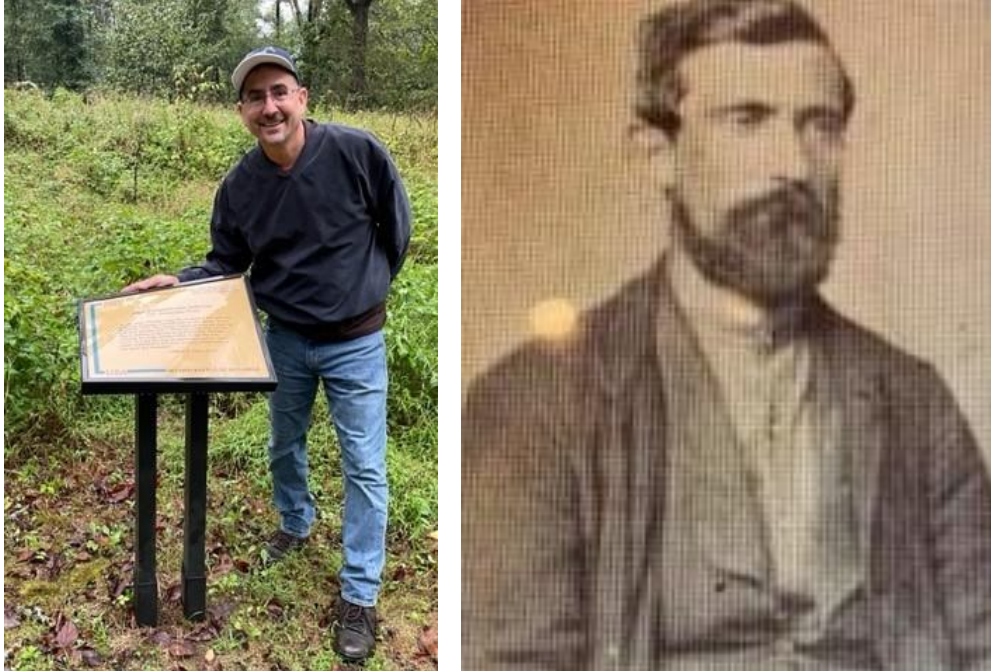
The 2023-2024 campaign year has gone very well under the leadership of President Bob Pence. He appointed two standing committees, Membership and Social Media, which meet regularly prior to the monthly Executive Committee meeting. He has led a vigorous outreach program to build membership. One of the things that we learned at the August conference was that many people don't know that Roundtables exist and that is why they don't join. One response is that we were able to get the donation of car magnets with our name and logo that have been distributed to all members. Bob led the outreach effort with a weekend at Hale Farm during their Civil War encampment in August with an information booth staffed by CWRT members and Bob himself. Other efforts have included the dispersal of over 1,500 Informational rack cards to libraries in our area. In addition, a CWRT display was set up at a local Library for a month. We also established an "Ambassador" Program where guests and new members were assigned to a table hosted by existing members whose assignment was to make them feel welcome. We plan to be actively involved with National History Day by providing prizes related to Civil War era themes. The Membership Committee is also looking at ways to interact with other civil war and history related groups to increase our visibility. The visit by General Grant [Curt Fields] brought out the largest audience for a meeting since February 2020. We had a least 105 in attendance. Attendance at meetings has been more robust with an average of over 65 at recent meetings. The Membership Committee set a goal of increasing membership to over 90 by May 2024 and 100 by May 2025. As of the January meeting, we are at 95 dues paying members. While things are looking positive currently, we know that we must continue with outreach efforts to sustain the organization. We are an older group and attrition of members is an ongoing process due to inevitable aging so we will continue to think of new and innovative ways to reach out to the public and recruit new members.

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### *The Tale of William Stacy*

by John Syrone

It has often been said that stories are the fabric of humanity as they have the capacity to transport us to different places. I cannot think of a more unique story than the one of William Stacy. Having been a resident of Brecksville, Ohio for 25 years, I know the long and rich history that Brecksville has with the Civil War. I would often walk through the Brecksville Cemetery and see the graves of numerous Civil War soldiers. Memorial Day in Brecksville has a long history of honoring those old soldiers and remembering the sacrifices of those who gave the "last full measure" to their country.



The author, John Syrone, standing with the 63<sup>rd</sup> Penna marker at Manassas and William Stacy

At the outbreak of the Civil War, Brecksville heeded the call from President Lincoln for volunteers and answered with a resounding affirmative. The 1860 census listed 1,024 individuals residing in Brecksville including 499 female and 525 male residents. During the war, 88 men either enlisted, were drafted or acted as substitutes for pay. There is even an interesting story surrounding John Brown and Brecksville. One of the volunteers from Brecksville, Harry Snow, remembers a story told by his mother, Harriet Snow. She recalled an incident that her father, James Lockert, related concerning the selling of sheep to John Brown along Boston Road. According to records, John Brown was living in Richfield, Ohio in the early 1840s and was investing in the wool business. Four of his children died in northern Summit County because of “black diphtheria” and are buried in East Richfield Cemetery. The disease was a common affliction that affected many children in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The word, “diphtheria” is derived from the Greek word for leather and this name was given to the disease due to its distinctive features. Common symptoms were the accumulation of a thick leathery tissue in children’s throats that made it difficult if not impossible to breathe and swallow.

Before leaving for the most recent Cleveland Civil War Roundtable field trip to Manassas, I decided to take the short drive to Brecksville Cemetery and capture a photograph of the gravesite of William Stacy. I knew that he was buried in Brecksville Cemetery and fought at the Second Battle of Manassas, but my discovery led to a more encompassing glimpse of his life. Circumstantial evidence suggests that William Stacy immigrated to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania from Ireland in 1816. Census records confirm that he may have traveled with both his parents, John and Eliza Stacy, along with two sisters, Dorthea and Margaret. Census records also indicate that the family brought with them three chests and bedding on the ship *Conestoga* William’s age at this time would have been around 5 or 6. From there the story takes a turn. Archival records

for William Stacy are very sketchy until the 1860s, but there is information about his wife, Louisa Stacy Stone. Louisa was a resident of Brecksville, Ohio who had strong ties to Brecksville. Her parents, Solomon Stone and Nancy Nash Stone had lived in Brecksville for many years. Solomon's mother, Deborah Comstock, had relatives who still live in the Brecksville area and the Comstock home is one of the many historic homes of Brecksville. Solomon and Louisa appear in the 1850 census living in Blissfield, Michigan. Louisa appears as Louisa Stacy but there is no record for William Stacy. Apparently, Louisa's brother was a successful merchant in Blissfield. Solomon Stone died in 1840 and is buried in the Blissfield Cemetery along with several of the Stone children and family.

According to census records, Louisa and William Stacy were living in McKeesport, Pennsylvania 1860. William is listed as a grocer with Louisa. The record also indicates that they had \$3,000 in personal estate value and \$2,000 in real estate value. As a result of their successful business, they were able to hire a domestic employee, Luiza Stoner, age 18, from Germany to work in their store. Louisa Stacy's mother, Nancy, was living in Brecksville with her daughter and son-in-law Harriet and Julius White and the White's six-year-old daughter, Celestia Stacy White. William Stacy must have been an important and integral member of the Stone family to have Louisa's sister give her daughter a middle name "Stacy". Nancy was 72 during the 1860 census and she lived sometimes in Brecksville, but mostly in Blissfield until her death in 1867 at the age of 80.

Following the Union defeat at the First Battle of Manassas, President Lincoln issued a call for three-year enlistments of volunteers. William Stacy offered his services to the Union cause. It would not be surprising if Louisa and William had several emotional conversations regarding this decision. At the time of his enlistment, William was either 51 or 52. The intriguing feature of his age is the fact that 19<sup>th</sup> century life expectancy was 39.4 years. William must have been in exceptional physical shape, or he must have held some significance in McKeesport as a businessman. Nevertheless, William's muster roll confirms his enlistment into Company I as a Sergeant on August 19, 1861. Company I was referred to as the McKeesport Rifle Grays, because many of the men in it were recruited from the McKeesport area of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The overall commander of the 63<sup>rd</sup> Pennsylvania Volunteer Regiment was Colonel Alexander Hays, a West Point graduate and veteran of the Mexican American War. Hays still bore scars wounds received at the Battle of Resaca and National Bridge during that war.

During the fall and winter of 1861 and 1862, the 63<sup>rd</sup> Pennsylvania drilled and prepared for action. Assigned to the 3rd Brigade of Samuel Heintzelman's Division, the 63rd saw its first action in the Peninsula Campaign. The regiment received its "baptism by fire" during the Battle of Williamsburg and subsequent action at Fair Oaks and Malvern Hill. In his book, *Under the Red Patch, the Story of the Sixty-Third Regiment*, Colonel Hays wrote "As we gathered up our shattered fragments, after the Battle of Malvern Hill, only two hundred and seventy-eight men were fit for duty out of over one thousand that had started out a few months before. Where were the others? In the gloomy fens of Yorktown, on the bloody field of Fair Oaks and Seven Pines; in the pestilential swamps of the Chickahominy the deadly fever had carried off many more, until

of a full and complete regiment of stalwart men, less than three hundred were left to answer roll call.”

After the failure of the Seven Days Battles, the 63<sup>rd</sup> received its orders to be transferred from the Peninsula to the Army of the James under General Pope. The 63<sup>rd</sup> was assigned to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Army Corps under General Heintzelman, but now in the 1<sup>st</sup> Division with General Philip Kearny in command, and the 63<sup>rd</sup> was assigned to the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade under General John Robinson. To this point in the story, William “Stacy” had survived the ordeals of the Seven Days Battles and the subsequent bivouacking in the area surrounding Harrison’s Landing. William had also survived numerous engagements, marches through swamp-infested regions, and the daily ordeals of life as a 3<sup>rd</sup> Sergeant in Company I. It would be splendid if we had correspondence between William and Louisa detailing the experiences of life for both. Currently we do not have any letters or journals that allow a glimpse into their lives but we must surmise and even presume that they did correspond with one another. What was William thinking of at this time as he made his way on transports from the James River to spots along the Orange and Alexandria Railroad that transferred his regiment into their next action? How was Louisa carrying on the family grocery store in McKeesport, Pennsylvania with the help of a young female worker? Sadly, she had no idea that her husband was just about to enter the final phase of his life.

The 63<sup>rd</sup> Pennsylvania arrived on the morning of August 29<sup>th</sup> at the Second Manassas battlefield in reserve. After eating their breakfast, the men could hear the fighting that was taking place along the long line on which General Pope positioned his army to confront Confederate General Stonewall Jackson’s Corps. After a series of frontal attacks along the left side and the middle of the line, Pope decided to launch his largest attack of the day along the right side of his line with 2,700 troops. Pope assigned the 1<sup>st</sup> Division under General Kearney to lead this assault around 5 pm. Pope believed that Jackson’s troops were at a breaking point after two other assaults earlier in the day. Leading the initial attack was the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade under General Robinson who had the 63<sup>rd</sup> Pennsylvania, 105<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania and 20<sup>th</sup> Indiana at his disposal with support from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade under General David Birney. In total, Kearny had 10 regiments arrayed for the assault.

Moving through wooded terrain, the 63<sup>rd</sup> Pennsylvania received its orders from General Kearney who told Colonel Hays, “Colonel Hays, move your regiment until the right rests where the left now is, and charge, and the day is ours.” Through the fairly wooded terrain, the 63<sup>rd</sup> lost direct contact with the 105<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania. Approaching the unfinished railroad, the 63<sup>rd</sup> caught sight of General James Archer’s Brigade of Tennesseans who were just arriving at the cut about the same time as the 63<sup>rd</sup>. Hays ordered his men to charge with bayonets fixed. As the 63<sup>rd</sup> approached the position of the railroad cut they were hit by a severe volley of fire that according to the regimental historian caused the regiment to “shrivel up Undaunted by the initial repulse, the 63<sup>rd</sup> gathered its troops again for another attempt to take the unfinished railroad cut. By all accounts, this second assault brought the regiment toe to toe with Archer’s Tennesseans as volleys roared through the woods. During this second attempt to take the cut, Colonel Hays received a severe wounding in his leg, and command of the regiment devolved to Major Kirkwood, who attempted to lead yet another assault at the railroad cut. This third and final

plunge brought the regiment to its closest advance to the railroad cut but with devastating losses. Kirkwood was forced to retire the regiment to the cover of trees as twilight was beginning to descend upon the battlefield. With calls of “rally around the flag” reverberating on the field, the remaining members of the 63<sup>rd</sup> Pennsylvania retreated to a safer position with only 75 men reporting for duty. In the official report that was written by Adjutant George Corts, he wrote, “They could not be driven from the front, and we were subsequently forced to retire, being almost out of ammunition, and our effective force being reduced to one-half the number we came upon the field with.”

It was sometime during the battle that William Stacy was killed. Estimates of the length of time of the assault in the railroad cut were about one hour, indicating the ferocity of the struggle for that position. Attempts were made to retrieve the bodies but were called off due to the approaching darkness and the continuous volume of Confederate firing in that area. The 63<sup>rd</sup> along with the rest of Pope’s army retreated by the evening of August 29<sup>th</sup> for the safety of the defenses of Washington D.C.

News of the battle would have been received throughout the cities of the North. Casualty lists of the battle would have reached the areas of McKeesport, Pennsylvania and Brecksville, Ohio quickly. For example, after the Battles of Antietam and Gettysburg it was reported in Brecksville that casualty lists were read out on the steps of the Red Brick Store in that city. The devastating news would have reached Louisa in McKeesport, Pennsylvania and the information would have been communicated to the Stone families in both Brecksville and Blissfield. The following casualty list of the 63<sup>rd</sup> Pennsylvania appeared in the *Pittsburgh Gazette* on September 11, 1862.

What can be ascertained is that William Stacy is reported to be buried in the Brecksville Cemetery. The marker clearly states his name and provides information about his regiment and the Second Battle of Manassas. The question remains why Brecksville is William Stacy’s final resting place. The Confederate army would have quickly vacated the Manassas battlefield as it prepared for the impending invasion of Maryland that culminated in the Battle of Antietam the following month. It is feasible that burial parties and the newly established Sanitation Commission were able to document the names of the Union soldiers killed during the battle. It is also possible that Louisa Stacy and the Stone families in Brecksville and Michigan could have arranged the transport of William’s body to Brecksville for his final resting place. Both families were engaged in the merchant business and would have access to transportation and shipping schedules. They could have arranged for William’s body to be transferred from the battlefield to Brecksville.



Louisa Stacy, who was forced to continue living her life without William died in 1896 and is also buried in the Brecksville Cemetery alongside her husband. The record has been incomplete on where she spent her years after the Civil War. Records do show that she received a military pension. There is also a record indicating in her last will and testament that Celestia “Lettie” Stacy Coates was the executor of her estate. Louisa shares a family burial plot with her niece Celestia and Celestia’s husband, William Coates. William Coates was educated at Oberlin College and began teaching at the Brecksville district school at the age of 17, while still managing a family farm. William Coates also served as a Deputy County Clerk for Cuyahoga County. Louisa’s brother and sister lie in the same cemetery in the Stone Family plot with their spouses.

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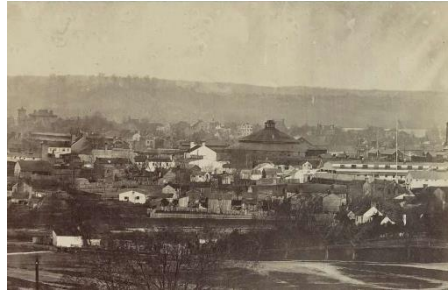
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### *The Perils of Picket Duty in Alexandria, Virginia.*

Submitted by Brian D. Kowell

In 1861 the Confederate forces occupied Alexandria, Virginia. Private Edgar Warfield of the 17<sup>th</sup> Virginia Infantry had left his position as an apothecary clerk to join the 17<sup>th</sup> Virginia which was raised in Alexandria. He reported that guard duty was a rather pleasant experience at that time in Alexandria:

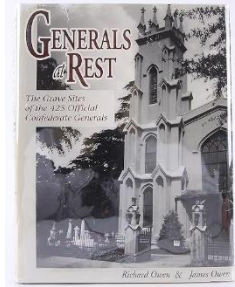
“Certain posts were very desirable, especially those near which some of our popular young ladies lived. The post most sought by the boys was on the south side of King Street between Henry and Fayette, and many tricks and maneuvers were resorted to in order to get posted on that and other desirable stations. On this particular post eatables and drinkables were plentiful at times, and until a late hour there was also the company of bright and pretty girls. As an added attraction, a Mr. Martin who owned a brewery at the corner of King and Fayette Streets, kept a keg of ale on tap in his front vestibule for the benefit of those who cared to indulge.”

One night while on guard duty, Warfield was talking with Billie Wright who was manning an adjacent post. The two could hear loud voices of a fight coming from a nearby house. It was a fight between “an Irishman and his wife. At the time there was a great many Irish in the city, drawn by the coal trade, which was very large and employed many hands. The fight continued so long that Billie thought it was our duty to go across the square and try to put an end to it. I argued that we should not leave our posts for such a purpose but Billie, who was a lively sort of fellow and always ready for fun and frolic, thought this was a golden opportunity for a little excitement. I finally yielded and went with him. In the meantime the fight had grown warmer and a number of others, both men and women, were taking sides, some with the old man and others with the old woman, It began to look like a free-for-all.”

Warfield tried to persuade Billie not to interfere, “but no, nothing would do but he must go in. Well, he went in. In a twinkling of an eye the participants on both sides, quit fighting each other, and making a common cause turned on him. With a clean pitch on their part, out came Billie, gun and all, on to the sidewalk, nearly upsetting me in his hasty exit. It took very little more argument on my part to convince him that we had no business there; and so the military beat a hasty retreat.”

From: Warfield, Edgar, *A Confederate Soldier's Memoirs*, Richmond, Masonic Home Press, 1936.

## BOOK REVIEWS



James Owen and Richard Owen, *Generals at Rest: The Grave Sites of the 425 Official Confederate Generals* (White Mane Publishing Company, Inc: Shippensburg Pennsylvania, 1997) ISBN 1-57249-045.

One of the more intriguing books I've read in the past several years is a work that contains a huge amount of information on the graves of all 425 Confederate Generals. Photos, locations, and a brief biography of each general—this book makes a tremendous addition to one's research library. The authors, a father and son team, spent twenty-seven years compiling this wonderful research tool. Each gravesite is documented with a picture, description, and directions on how to reach the site. According to James Owen, in his forward dated May 10, 1997, they contacted Ezra Warner in Palo Alto, California to ask about the location of several Confederate graves. (Warner is the author of "Generals in Gray" and "Generals in Blue", both of which are definitive works and contain the biographies of all official Civil War General officers and in my opinion both are a must for any Civil War library.) Mr. Warner was very enthusiastic about the Owens' project of locating these historic graves and said that he didn't think anyone else had done this. So, the authors set out to do what no one else had ever done. In doing so they ran into difficulties they had never dreamed would arise. As Mr. Owen states that since the beginning of the project film and photography had changed tremendously so they visited some graves twice or three times to get the best pictures. Locations of certain graves also proved to be a problem. Owen states "General Hugh Mercer was buried in a cemetery in Baden-Baden, Germany. The superintendent arranged for his nephew to be there during my visit, as he was proficient in English. I was shown the plot (No grave marker) where Mercer was buried, and the official cemetery records that recorded the date for internment and the location. There was no record showing that his remains were ever removed. However, in Bonaventure Cemetery in Savannah, Georgia, there is a gravestone indicating General Mercer is buried there.

Other difficulties arose such as the search for General Lewis Armistead who according to James Owen "died of wounds received at Gettysburg and was buried in St. Paul's Church Cemetery in downtown Baltimore." There is a question as to where his remains lie within this cemetery. Although a marker has been erected in his family plot, many feel that he is actually buried in the crypt of Revolutionary War hero, John Eager Howard, which is the family vault of Armistead's wife.

The authors certainly go the extra mile when providing information that I don't believe one can find anywhere else. The book's introduction contains an alphabetical listing of states and the number of General officers that are buried, were born, and died there. (Ohio lists no deaths, no burials and six births) Of the foreign births France and England list three and one respectively. Four died in Mexico, one died in Germany and two died in Canada. Other branches of their



research include data on deaths of general officers. Eighteen generals died in 1862, seventeen died in 1863 including Stonewall Jackson and thirty-five died in 1864. Six were killed during the Battle of Franklin, Tennessee and six were also killed in the Gettysburg Campaign in 1863.

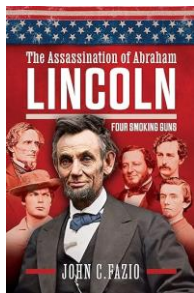
Cemeteries with the most gravesites are also listed. Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond heads the list with twenty-six, Elmwood Cemetery in Memphis Tennessee comes in second with twelve. Twenty-five U.S cemeteries in all contain the graves of Confederate generals. Woodlawn Cemetery in New York City brings up the bottom of the list with four. This does not count the foreign gravesites or the graves that have fallen into disrepair and have been forgotten. As of 1997 eight of the generals lie in unmarked graves. (Four are in Louisiana.) At least six others have tombstones that are practically illegible. On the other hand, approximately twenty-four have received new markers since 1972.

At the end of the book as an addendum to the index there is a list of the “hard to find graves.” Although the book was published in pre-GPS days it is still sometimes difficult to find out of the way places or to locate the grave when one arrives. The authors provide a detailed description of several out of the way places and how to get there for any dedicated Civil War Buff that is insistent on finding these graves or just as a help for one doing genealogical research.

All in all, this coffee table sized book is a tremendous work, three hundred and fifty-nine pages, print which is easy to read and photos of each general, the kind of book one can curl up with on a bad weather day and spend hours going over. Plenty of photos, incidental information regarding the gravesites and a handy compilation of, as I said, information that I do not think one can get from any other source. The Owens, both Richard and James, are to be congratulated on their work and their contribution to American History.

Published in 1997, *Generals at Rest* may still be available at bookstores, but one can definitely find it online or at Abe Books, American Book Exchange, or Amazon Books. One may have to track it down but if found it will make a huge addition to any Civil War Library.

—Paul Siedel



John Fazio, *The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln: Four Smoking Guns* (Pen and Sword Books: Havertown, PA, 2023).

The Cleveland Civil War Round Table has among its many other assets some very talented writers and researchers. Chief among them in my opinion is Mr. John Fazio. When I read his latest work, I came to realize that we have one of the foremost authorities on the Lincoln Assassination right here in Cleveland. He has been on television, has written several books and now his latest, *The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln: Four Smoking Guns*, is one of the best I have read. Although the reader must have some prerequisite knowledge of the event, Mr. Fazio breaks the crime down into four very concise and readable chapters. He also includes a Preface and Introduction

in which he tells the story of the Lincoln assassination, how the Confederate Secret Service in Canada was involved and who in Richmond were principal players, namely major figures in the Confederate Government.

His research has brought to light four figures and the roles they played in the crime which according to Mr. Fazio began to take shape in 1864 and originally included the assassination of Lincoln, Johnson, Seward, Stanton, and Grant. He contends that the unsuccessful kidnapping plot which was supposed to take place near the summer retreat of the Lincoln Family was never meant to be carried out and that it was just a ruse to try to hold the group of assassins together.

In Chapter One he approaches the first smoking gun when he examines the “Canadian Cabinet” headed by Jacob Thompson and later by Edwin Lee and how they enlisted one Joseph Hyams to deliver clothing infected with smallpox to people in the U. S. Government. The plot failed when Lincoln never received the infected clothing. Hyams was evidently never paid and the attempt was never successful.

In chapter two he approaches the second “smoking gun” which involves Judah Benjamin, and Lewis Thornton Powell. Fazio contends that the Wistar Raid and later the Dahlgren-Kilpatrick Raid instigated the Confederate Government in Richmond to consider a “Black Flag” approach to warfare and that this philosophy grew stronger with them as the War approached it’s final months. The Dahlgren-Kilpatrick Raid had the objective of burning Richmond and killing or capturing Davis and his cabinet. The Confederate Government responded by creating a plot which probably consisted of Judah Benjamin, Lewis Thornton Powell, John Surratt and John Wilkes Booth. Whose objective was to murder everyone in the top levels of the U.S. Government. During the later half of 1864 it was arranged that Booth acting as organizer and pawn of the Richmond government was to do the job. The plot eventually petered out on the night of April 14, 1865 except for the attack on Secretary William Seward and of course the murder of the President.

The third “smoking gun” involves the Francis Harney Mission. This plan developed in the last days of the War and according to Mr. Fazio’s research involved John Mosby. The plot consisted of blowing up the West Wing of the White House while the heads of government were gathered there. The Harney mission formed at Upperville, Virginia, in the heart of Mosby’s Confederacy, rode down the Little River Turnpike, but were arrested near Burke, Virginia in Fairfax County. The Plot never came to fruition. Also involved in this was General Gabriel Raines, chief of The Torpedo Bureau which oversaw the production and testing of sub-terra shells, coal bombs etc. Fazio contends that the Confederate Government, namely Davis and Benjamin, along with the Canadian Cabinet orchestrated and planned the destruction of the White House and all the Government officials that were in it at the time.

The Fourth Smoking Gun involved John Surratt, Judah Benjamin and one Henri Beaumont de Sainte-Marie. This involves the escape of John Surratt (Booths right hand man and the second in command of the assassination ring) It seems that John Surratt abandoned his mother Mary to stand trial and later to hang for her part in the plot. He however escaped to Canada, was sheltered by several members of the Catholic Clergy and later fled to Europe and became a guard with the Papal Zouaves. It seems that as soon as the Pope at the time found out who he really was he fired

him, Surratt eventually fled to Alexandria Egypt where he was captured by U.S. Agents and returned to the U.S. Where he eventually stood trial and was acquitted on a technicality. A person by the name of Henri Beaumont was acquainted with Surratt and discussed the plot with him while on board ship between Canada and Great Britain. Surratt told St. Marie that there were many more high level people involved than anyone knew about and that they would never be known. This brings up the question of Who were these people.

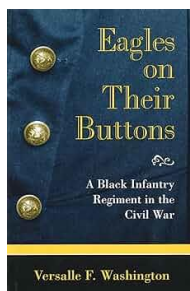
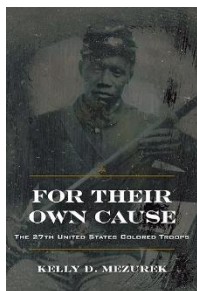
Mr. Fazio produces several contentions throughout the book: One being that The Plot began to take shape in 1864 as soon as the defeat of the Confederacy became certain, that it was instigated by high level Confederates as a reaction to the Dahlgren-Kilpatrick Raid and a Black Flag Philosophy was taken toward the prosecution of the War by the Confederacy. This includes the assassination of high-level U.S. officials. He contends that the kidnapping ruse which occurred in March of 1865 was just that and that the object of Booths operation was always the murder of the president. That Booth was just a stooge for the real planners of the plot which were people high up in the Confederate Government.

The book is highly readable, well organized, and well researched, although it does go into detail with which only devotees of the crime will be familiar. Mr Fazio evidently has done much research regarding this and has come up with some conclusions that may have missed the historians over the years. All in all, I would recommend “Four Smoking Guns” for one who is familiar with the Lincoln Assassination; but because it is so involved it may not be an easy read for those young historians just being introduced to the event.

—Paul Siedel

### *Ohio Soldiers in the USCT: A Review Essay*

By Dennis Keating



Kelly D. Mezurek. *For Their Own Cause: The 27<sup>th</sup> United States Colored Troops* (The Kent State University Press: Kent, Ohio, 2016)

Versalle F. Washington. *Eagles on Their Buttons: A Black Infantry Regiment in the Civil War* (University of Missouri Press: Columbia, MO and London, 1999)

Ohio provided two regiments for the United States Colored Troops (USCT) during the Civil War. Altogether, 5,902 Blacks from Ohio served in the USCT, the second highest number from the Free states, only fewer than those from Pennsylvania. Books about the history of these two regiments are reviewed below.

The 27<sup>th</sup> USCT was the second Black regiment formed in Ohio, after the 5<sup>th</sup> USCT. In this book, Walsh University Professor Kelly D. Mezurek tells the story of this regiment, not only its wartime service from April, 1864-September, 1865 but also the situation in Ohio both before the war and leading to the creation of all-Black units in the Union Army, and the challenges that Black units and their soldiers faced both during the war, and then after the war. Mezurek throughout the book focuses not only on the regiment but also on individual soldiers and their families.

Despite growing Abolitionist sentiment that led to the emergence of the Republican Party and the 1857 election of Salmon P. Chase as Ohio's Governor and the Underground Railroad that helped escaped slaves to freedom, Mezurek documents how Blacks were treated as second-class citizens in Ohio. For example, in the wake of the Dred Scott decision by the U. S. Supreme Court, Ohio enacted the Visible Admixture Law which allowed election judges to challenge and reject anyone determined to be of African heritage and therefore a Negro without citizenship rights. In 1859, the Ohio Supreme Court ruled that this law was invalid. Mezurek says:

“[T]he end of the decade left many African Americans concerned about their status in the Northern free state. While many significant changes had occurred that allowed some in the black community to have confidence and hope for the future, the daily reality of their second-class status and the racial beliefs held by most white Ohioans could not be denied.” (p. 26)

With the onset of the Civil War, following the leads of prominent blacks like Frederick Douglas and John Mercer Langston, many Ohio Blacks volunteered to serve in Ohio's military units. But, their offers were rejected first by Governor William Dennison and then by his successor David Tod. When the state of Massachusetts organized two Black regiments (the 54<sup>th</sup> and the 55<sup>th</sup>), many Ohio Black volunteers joined those units. At a January 16, 1863, Cleveland rally to celebrate President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, Douglas and Langston renewed their call for Ohio to enlist Blacks into its military response to Lincoln's calls for volunteers. In the face of falling enlistment rates, Governor Tod changed his position and on June 22, 1863, he announced that the state would recruit an all-Black regiment: the 127<sup>th</sup> Ohio Volunteer Infantry, which would become 5<sup>th</sup> USCT. Langston was named as one of the main recruiters. Once organized, it left on November 14, 1863, for Ft. Monroe, Virginia.

On January 11, 1864, the federal Bureau of Colored Troops authorized Tod's successor as Governor John Brough to recruit a second USCT regiment from Ohio – the 27<sup>th</sup>. Despite the resentment of Blacks about the pay discrimination that denied Black recruits bonuses and set the pay of USCT soldiers at \$10 monthly compared to the \$13 monthly pay of White soldiers, Blacks did enlist in the 27<sup>th</sup> regiment. Both of these two Ohio USCT regiments were led by White officers, as required by the federal government. The commander of the 27<sup>th</sup> was physician Albert M. Black, formerly Lieutenant Colonel of the 49<sup>th</sup> Ohio Volunteer Infantry. However, he would spend most of his time in Columbus on recruitment duty.

On April 18, 1864, the 27<sup>th</sup> USCT left to join Ambrose Burnside's Ninth Corps in Annapolis, Maryland. The 27<sup>th</sup> would be assigned to General Edward Ferrero's 4<sup>th</sup> Division. Instead of being assigned to combat duty, the 27<sup>th</sup> found itself during Grant's Overland campaign guarding the

Corps' supply wagon train and constructing fortifications. This kind of guard and labor duties would characterize much of life of the regiment. Its assigned fortification construction duty continued as the corps arrived at the siege of Petersburg on June 19, 1864.

However, this would dramatically change on July 30. Planning had begun earlier to have Pennsylvania miners construct a mine under the Confederate defenses faced by Burnside's corps. Due to conflicts between the Army of the Potomac commander George Meade and Burnside, Black troops were shifted from leading the attack that would follow the explosion of the mine. Instead, by lottery, Burnside had his weakest division commander lead the attack (who instead cowardly avoided the combat). The 27<sup>th</sup> became the rearguard unit of Ferrero's 4<sup>th</sup> Division, eventually joining the chaos of the disjointed and terrible Union defeat at the battle of the Crater. In this initial combat, the 27<sup>th</sup> suffered according to differing accounts between 67-93 casualties, which included 7-18 killed. This would be the highest loss suffered by the 27<sup>th</sup> in its four combat engagements.

The second came as Grant sought to lengthen and weaken Lee's line of defense of the railroads to Petersburg supplying his besieged army. The 27<sup>th</sup> was now part of the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division of the Ninth Corps, now commanded by General John G. Parke, formerly Burnside's Chief of Staff. It was part of a movement to try to cut the Southside Railroad. At the end of October 1864, Grant's forces attacked the Confederates at the battle of Hatcher's Run but were unsuccessful in breaking through the Confederate defenses. During this battle, the 27<sup>th</sup> suffered 18 casualties (including 3 officers).

That Fall, the 27<sup>th</sup> joined Ben Butler's Army of the James outside of Richmond and became part of the all-Black 25<sup>th</sup> Corps commanded by Godfrey Wietzel. Following Butler's unsuccessful attempt in December to capture Fort Fisher, guarding the port of Wilmington, North Carolina, Grant assigned General Alfred Terry, commander of the 24<sup>th</sup> Corps, to renew the attack in concert with the U.S Navy fleet led by Admiral David Porter. The 27<sup>th</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup> USCT were part of Terry's force that attacked Fort Fisher on January 15, 1865, but by the time that the 27<sup>th</sup> reached the fort, the Confederates had evacuated it. However, the 27<sup>th</sup> did capture the two wounded commanders of the fort as they attempted to escape. The 27<sup>th</sup> suffered only 5 casualties and this would be the next to last of its limited combat experience. While it was part of Terry's force that next attacked Wilmington, it entered the city on February 22 after the Confederates had already evacuated and it had suffered only 6 casualties in the previous February 10 assault on the Confederate defenses.

Terry's forces then headed north to unite with William Tecumseh Sherman's army as it marched into North Carolina to confront Joe Johnson's small Confederate army. Terry's command was not involved in the battle of Bentonville which ended hostilities before Johnson's surrender. Eventually, the 27<sup>th</sup> returned to Wilmington as part of the postwar Federal occupation force. It mustered out on September 21 and then returned to Columbus. Thus ended the military history of the 27<sup>th</sup> USCT.

During its service, it lost 167 soldiers, 27 from battle-related causes and 3 from non-battled related incidents; 137 of its soldiers died of disease. This compared with the 81 the 5<sup>th</sup> USCT lost in combat and its other 21 percent lost to disease (p. 218).

This is not the end of Mezurek's history of the 27<sup>th</sup>. His chapter on "A Soldier's Life" recounts a list of the many problems faced by the Black Ohio soldiers of the 27th. They included:

- The lack of adequate medical care;
- The terrible treatment by Confederates of Black prisoners;
- Harsh disciplinary actions against some Black soldiers;
- The unequal pay policy (eventually corrected by the Congress) and long delays in the actual receipt of pay, a hardship for soldier's families dependent upon it;
- The religious spirit that was constrained by a lack of chaplains.
- Mezurek also talks about Black soldiers' use of music and songs to counter these problems and uses letters written home to illustrate the soldiers' concerns.

In his last chapter ("A Veteran's Life"), Mezurek discusses more problems faced by the veterans of the 27<sup>th</sup>. First, they were not recognized for their service upon their return to Ohio, as were many White regiments. And they met White discrimination against Blacks, just as there was before the war. In the postwar period, this now included White resistance to the new rights embodied in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Amendments to the U.S. Constitution. In Ohio, as a result of the 1868 election, the Democratic legislative majority rescinded the earlier ratification of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment and there was considerable opposition to the right in the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment of Blacks being able to vote. Mezurek points out:

"In October 1865 the National Equal Rights League with John Mercer Langston as president met in Cleveland to demand equal rights, including suffrage for African Americans...In August 1867 delegates to the convention of Colored Citizens called for a day of fasting and prayers to encourage Ohio's voters to remove the word "white" from the suffrage clause in the state constitution."  
(p. 221)

Black veterans and their widows had problems gaining pensions, although this was not limited to Blacks.

In 1892, Black USCT veterans participated in a re-enactment at the annual Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) encampment in Washington, D.C. of the May, 1865 Grand Review of the Union armies, from which USCT troops were excluded.

Mezurek concludes his history:

"Although the majority of black soldiers contributed mostly through backline support during the rebellion, the 27<sup>th</sup> USCT served in two important Union campaigns, the siege of Petersburg and the capture of Fort Fisher, and they experienced the day-to-day realities of war in many ways similar to white Ohioans. While second-class treatment pervaded their tour of duty, they did not focus on issues of race in their private letters. Like most soldiers, they participated in excessive marches, suffered from poor diets, and tolerated unbearable physical conditions. They died from

disease, were killed in battle, and experienced broken hearts when they left families behind. And in the postwar period, many similarities continued.” (p. 262)

Mezurek’s book is well documented and written. For the Black experience, both military and civil, in Ohio before, during, and after the Civil War, I recommend it.

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Versalle F. Washington’s history of Ohio’s first USCT regiment is much shorter than Mezurek’s work, only 80 pages of text, without repeating much of the material covered by Mezurek. Washington’s monograph, nevertheless, is also interesting, including connections to Oberlin and the heroic tale of its four Black Medal of Honor awardees.

After Secretary of War Stanton granted Ohio Governor Tod permission to recruit Blacks for the USCT, Ohio Black recruits began to enlist on June 22, 1863. Tod appointed O.S.B. Wall from Oberlin to assist John Mercer Langston to recruit across the state. Training took place at Camp Delaware north of Columbus (where 15 recruits died of disease). Giles Waldo Shurtleff from Oberlin College became the Lieutenant Colonel and James Conine the Colonel of the regiment. It joined the African Brigade of the 18<sup>th</sup> Corps in North Carolina.

The 5<sup>th</sup> USCT’s first non-labor experience was its participation in the two Union raids on Richmond: the Kilpatrick-Dahlgren raid (February 5-9, 1864) and the Wistar raid (March 9-10, 1864), both unsuccessful. Its next major test was its participation in the Union attack on Petersburg on June 15, 1864, in which it proved its combat mettle, while losing four killed and thirty-one wounded. It would later have two of its officers killed by Confederate sharpshooters during the siege. After receiving reinforcements and having Shurtleff replacing Conine as its commander, it was transferred to General Ben Butler’s Army of the James.

Chapter 5 recounts its major engagement over its service at the battle of New Market Heights on September 29, 1864, when it was part of the attack on Richmond’s defenses. Butler sent his forces against the Confederate defenses, strong but undermanned. Despite taking 236 casualties (out of a regimental total of 540), including seven officers, the 5<sup>th</sup> USCT penetrated the Confederates line, although eventually Butler’s overall attack was not successful. With the regiment’s white officers, including Shurtleff, wounded four Black sergeants took the lead in continuing the regiment’s advance. For their heroism, they were awarded the Medal of Honor: Powhatan Beaty, James Bronson, Milton Holland, and Robert Pinn.

The regiment next participated in the second attack on Fort Fisher and its capture under General Terry (after Grant replaced Butler following his failed first attempt). It was placed in defense against a Confederate counterattack which did not occur and did not suffer any casualties. After that, however, it participated in the subsequent assault on the defenses of the port city of Wilmington. In this last of its three major combat engagements, the 5<sup>th</sup> USCT suffered another 39 casualties.

It spent the rest of its time in camp and occupation duty in Goldsboro, North Carolina. It mustered out on September 26, 1865, in Columbus Ohio. In his farewell address to the regiment, Shurtleff said:

“Your record is one of which you may well be proud. God will reward you for your sacrifices and a grateful nation appreciates your service.”

Shurtleff’s statue stands in Oberlin.

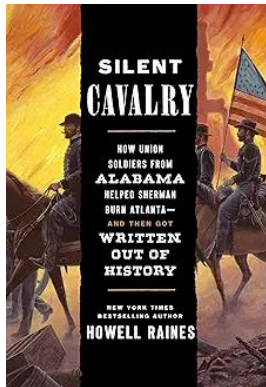
Washington concludes:

“During their two years of service, the 5<sup>th</sup> USCT saw significant changes in the status of blacks and of African-American soldiers—changes that often resulted from the example the soldiers set.” (p. 77)

This history too presents an informative picture of the experience of Ohio Black soldiers in the Union army.

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Ron Gorman. The Battle of New Market Heights: the 5<sup>th</sup> USCT’s “Glory”. Oberlin Heritage Center Blog (September 24, 2014)



Howell Raines, *Silent Cavalry: How Union Soldiers from Alabama Helped Sherman Burn Atlanta—and Then Got Written Out of History* (Crown Publishing Group: New York, 2023).

WESTERN VIRGINIA, EAST TENNESSEE, THE FREE STATE OF JONES IN MISSISSIPPI—for decades we knew that in 1861 there was no “SOUTH”—instead there were a multitude of “SOUTHS,” some of which had no interest in the institution of slavery and no desire to secede from the United States. I enjoyed this book, but if you are looking for a military history of the 1<sup>st</sup> Alabama Cavalry (Union), this may not be the book you want. The author is a descendant of Unionist families from northern Alabama, and the book has much to say about the internal conflict in Alabama between the hill people of the northern counties of the state and a Confederate state and national government insisting that the population provide manpower and resources for the rebellion. As a result, nearly 3000 white residents fled their homes in northern Alabama and enlisted in Federal regiments. Winston County (known as the Free State of Winston) and neighboring areas provided enough recruits after the United States army captured Huntsville in the Spring of 1862 to form a cavalry regiment, the 1<sup>st</sup> Alabama Cavalry (Union). Although loyal CSA government officials and citizens dismissed the men as nothing but “moonshiners,” “cotton thieves,” “feudists,” and “ignorant hillbillies,” the regiment did a service to Lincoln’s war effort by providing excellent scouts, spies, raiders, and foragers for Grant and Sherman. The 1<sup>st</sup> Alabama escorted Sherman’s cartographer, Lt. Col. Andrew Hickenlooper, on mapping expeditions during



the Atlanta campaign; and, during the March to the Sea, it was the 1<sup>st</sup> Alabama that escorted General Sherman and his headquarters staff through Georgia to Savannah.

The bulk of the book, however, is concerned with social, cultural, and political history of Civil War and post-Civil War Alabama down to the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s. The author conducts and reports on his intense investigation to understand the conflict he often heard about in his family between his grandparents and their “damn Democrat neighbors.” He describes a family dinner in Winston County when he and his mother visited the family accompanied by a young Black girl who was working for them in their home in Montgomery. When it came time to serve lunch, his grandfather insisted that the girl sit with the family at the dining table. When a cousin objected to the arrangement, he told him that if he did not like it to take his plate and go eat on the porch.

Like western Virginia, eastern Tennessee, southeastern Mississippi, and parts of Texas where immigrant Germans had made their homes, northern Alabama unionists experienced harsh treatment by Confederate Home Guards and Provost Marshals seeking to rid the region of army deserters, draft dodgers, and outspoken opponents to the rebellion. Property destruction and murders were the weapons of both sides in the conflict, and Howell Raines provides a great deal of material on the subject. As a journalist and retired executive editor for the *New York Times*, Raines brings skill to his investigation.

Essentially, after the war, the history of Northern Alabama and the 1<sup>st</sup> Alabama Cavalry (Union) fell prey to the state historians dealing in Lost Cause Myth. Generally, the 1<sup>st</sup> Alabama was dismissed as militarily ineffective and never employed as front-line troops. Raines does spend a great deal of time bursting this old CSA fantasy, even presenting evidence that some documentation on the regiment’s history may have been deliberately destroyed by state archivists. One interesting story he tells is about a time he and his son were doing research at the Alabama state archives. They asked for some records listed as 1<sup>st</sup> Alabama Cavalry. The archivist came back with the file and told them they probably would not be interested in it. The file was clearly marked as a Confederate cavalry regiment. When they opened the box, however, they were quite surprised and pleased to find it contained a muster roll for the 1<sup>st</sup> Alabama Cavalry (Union). He was able to confirm this by comparing the names to lists of names they had of known troopers in the unit. There is hope that other records are similarly mislabeled.

Generally, the book reads like a combination of Alabama Civil War historiography, regimental history of the 1<sup>st</sup> Alabama Cavalry (Union), family memoir (one of Raines’ ancestors at 17 years old served as a blacksmith for the 1<sup>st</sup> Alabama), and a good detective story. If you are looking for something different to read on the Civil War other than pure military history, you should check this out.

—Kent Fonner