



The Cleveland Civil War Round-Table
P.O. Box 18900, Cleveland, Ohio 44118

THE CHARGER

Vol. 18 #4

347th Meeting

DECEMBER, 1996

Tonight's Speaker

Mark Grimsley

Mark Grimsley's Topic

*"The Hard Hand Of War"
Sherman's March to the sea*

Mark Grimsley is an assistant professor in the Department of History at The Ohio State University. He specializes in American military history with a research focus on the Civil War. He also has a long-standing interest in the problem of war and moral judgment. His first book, *The Hard Hand of War: Union Military Policy Toward Southern Civilians, 1861-1865* (Cambridge University Press, 1995) won the Lincoln Prize in April 1996 and was a featured selection of the History Book Club. His current work includes an edited volume on *The Collapse of the Confederacy* and a study of the Wilderness-James campaign of May-June 1864.

Grimsley received his Ph.D. from The Ohio State University in 1992. He holds an M.A. in War Studies from Kings College London, U.K., having studied there in 1984-85 and done a special subject in the ethics of war. Before that he took M.B.A. from Ohio State in 1982.

In addition to his academic pursuits, Grimsley has maintained a commitment to writing history for the non-specialist. His first published work of popular history appeared in *Civil War Times Illustrated* when he was twenty; since then he has written fourteen other articles for that publication, including four full-length special issues devoted, respectively, to the lives of Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, Ulysses S. Grant, and Jefferson Davis as well as a three-part article dealing with Nathan Bedford Forrest.

Grimsley's interest in the Civil War dates back to a twenty-page "novel," set during the conflict, which he wrote at age ten. Two years later this interest was fanned into a lifelong passion when he read *A Stillness at Appomattox* by Bruce Catton, an author whose stylistic gifts and quality of insight he still admires.

Union General William T. Sherman's *March to the Sea* from Atlanta to Savannah, Georgia then to Raleigh, North Carolina starting in November of 1864, was the first and last time in American History the devastation of war were brought to American civilians. For five months Sherman's army of 65,000 devastated the middle South. It captured three State Capitals and burned one of them Columbia, South Carolina, to the ground.

Date: December 11, 1996

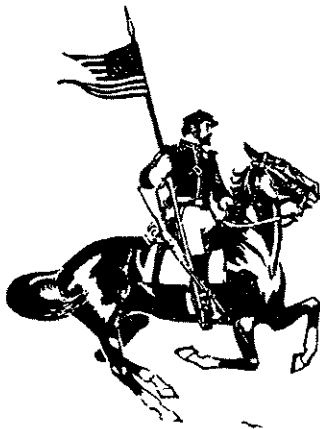
Place: The Hermit Club

Time: Drinks 6 PM
Dinner 7 PM

Reservations: Please call
JAC Business Communications
at 861-5588.

RESERVATIONS ARE A MUST!

The Cleveland Civil War Round-Table 1957 * 1996



President: Dan Zeiser
Vice President: John Moore
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The Cleveland Civil War Round-Table meets normally on the second Wednesday of each month from September through May. The Round-Table also sponsors a Fall field trip each year to a selected Civil War site.

Dues are \$35.00 per year.

Membership information can be obtained from Secretary Dick Crews: (216) 752-9961 or (800) 800-8310

Past Cleveland C.W.R.T. Presidents

1996	John Sutula	1976	Milton Holmes
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1993	Kevin Callahan	1973	Arthur Jordan
1992	Bob Baucher	1972	Bernard Drews
1991	Joe Tirpak	1971	Kenneth Callahan
1990	Ken Callahan Jr.	1970	Frank Schuhle
1989	Neil Glaser	1969	Donald Heckaman
1988	Martin Graham	1968	Frank Moran
1987	George Vourlojianis	1967	William Schlesinger
1986	Tim Beatty	1966	Donald Hamill
1985	Brian Kowell	1965	Lester L. Swift
1984	Neil Evans	1964	Guy DiCarlo, Jr.
1983	William Victory	1963	Paul Guenther
1982	William Harkness	1962	Edward Downer
1981	Thomas Geschke	1961	Charles Clarke
1980	Charles Spiegle	1960	Howard Preston
1979	William Bates	1959	John Cullen, Jr.
1978	Richard McCrae	1958	George Farr, Jr.
1977	James Chapman	1957	Kenneth Grant

Calendar of Events

December 11, 1996

Professor Mark Grimsley
Ohio State University
"The Hard Hand of War"

January 8, 1997

"The Decisive Battle of the War"
Al Enlow, Matt Slattery, Tom Dempsey,
Mike Hardy, Scott Maybaum, William Vodrey

February 12, 1997

Dr. John Hubbell
Kent State University
"Lincoln"

March 12, 1997

John Taylor
"Bloody Valverde, New Mexico"

April 9, 1997

Jay Ruoff
Peninsula Roundtable
"Vallandigham & The Copperheads"

May 14, 1997

40th Birthday Celebration



Henry Heath
Major General, CSA
Born December 16, 1835 died 1899

Reservations are a must ! Call (216) 861-5588.

The Fascinating "What if's"

Most Civil War "what-if" looks take the logical approach: if the North won the Civil War as we know it, why not have the South win in an alternative history? Many point to a single turning point in the war, a moment at which something different happened than as we remember the war.

by William F.B. Vodrey¹

General George McClellan wins the Presidency

John Robert Skimin's Gray Victory (St. Martin's Press, 1988) is a good example of "What if". The book suggests that, had Confederate President Jefferson Davis not replaced Gen. Joe Johnston Gen. John Bell Hood during Sherman's Atlanta campaign, Sherman would have been unable to seize Atlanta before the 1864 election, Lincoln would have lost to George McClellan, and there would have been an early armistice. The book takes place in 1866, two years after the U.S. recognized the Confederacy's independence. Lincoln has retired back to Springfield; John Wilkes Booth is still a noted and successful actor. Davis is facing his own reelection campaign and, under public pressure, appoints a military court of inquiry to examine J.E.B. Stuart's notorious ride around the Army of the Potomac just before the Battle of Gettysburg (in Skimin's book, Stuart didn't die at Yellow Tavern in 1864, but has remained as commander of all Confederate cavalry). Stuart's defense counsel is none other than John Singleton Mosby, the great Rebel raider, now heading the CSA's intelligence service. The Confederacy is further troubled by an underground abolitionist organization known as "Abraham," inspired by Lincoln's now-rescinded Emancipation Proclamation. The intrigue and backroom deals of Richmond eventually bring none other than Robert B. Lee to the stand to testify in Stuart's behalf, just before the guerilla of Abraham strike. Although Skimin's writing sometimes owes more to Harlequin than to Bruce Catton, he skillfully evokes postwar Richmond society and convincingly takes you there.



General George B. McClellan

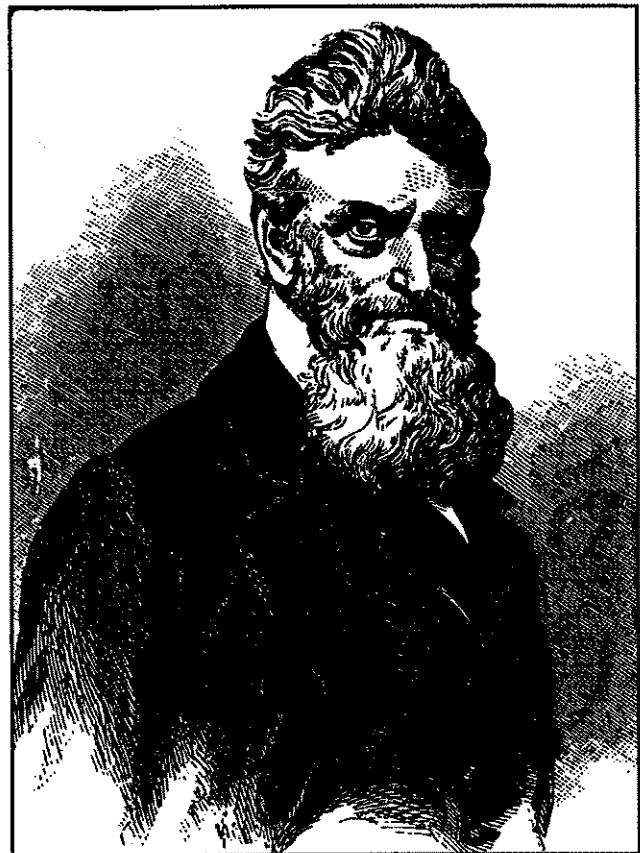
¹William F. B. Vodrey is an assistant County Prosecutor and a member of the Cleveland CWRT since 1994.

The Confederate Army equipped with AK 47's

A good bit more *farfetched*, but better written and more interesting overall, is Harry Turtledove's The Guns of the South (Ballantine Books, 1992). Turtledove's plot has disgruntled white South Afrikaners from our time sending back thousands of AK-47 machine guns, via a time machine, to the Confederacy in early 1864. Yeah, right. Still, once you get over your initial suspension of disbelief, Turtledove has a fine story to tell. Lee's army easily defeats the Yankees in the Wilderness, and races ahead to seize Washington, D.C. The U.S. sues for peace, and Great Britain recognizes the Confederacy's independence. Lincoln, mortally wounded politically, loses the election that fall to Gov. Horatio Seymour of New York (Seymour has Ohio Copperhead Clement Vallandigham as his running mate). In time, Lee is elected President of the Confederacy and sets about healing his new nation's wounds - including an implausibly rapid abolition of slavery. Still, Turtledove writes well and keeps your interest throughout.

John Brown's Raid is successful

Not every alternative history has the Confederacy winning, however. Terry Bisson's Fire on the Mountain (Avon Books, 1988) asks, what if John Brown's 1859 raid on Harper's Ferry had succeeded? Bisson's book is exceptionally sweeping in its portrayal of how history would have been changed: a genuine, nationwide slave rebellion is kindled, leading to secession - not of the Confederacy, but of **Nova Africa**, established by the newly-free slaves and their abolitionist friends from the North. The book is set in 1959, as the descendants of one of John Brown's followers take a historical tour of the Shenandoah Valley, and as Nova African astronauts prepare to land on Mars - for the second time. The book offers a generally convincing portrait of everyday life in this very different alternate world, but several historical details don't ring true. For instance, Lincoln is described as having led a slave holder-backed "reinvansion" of the South in 1870 to overthrow **Nova Africa**, which sounds unlikely given his entire political career up to that point, even before John Brown's raid. Too often, Fire on the Mountain reads like a fantasy, without the essential ring of historical truth. Still, stranger things have happened over the centuries, and like all good alternative histories, the book offers some diverting moments and sly asides as to how our own world turned out.



Hudson, Ohio native John Brown



OLD ABE THE WAR EAGLE

Old Abe hits the sauce in Mississippi

Old Abe was the famous eagle mascot of the **Eighth Wisconsin**. Many civil war units had mascots but "**Old Abe**" became the most famous. He was sold to the unit by the the McCann family of Jim Falls, Wisconsin. The McCann's acquired the eagle as a baby from Chief Sky of the Lac du Flambeau band of Chippewa Indians. The chief had killed Abe's mother and sold the eaglet for a small bag of corn. The McCann's soon found out what a big appetite a eagle had and were anxious to sell the bird. In a forerunner of things to come Abe was purchased by a **taavern owner** for \$ 2.50 as a gift to the newly forming **Eighth Wisconsin**.

After several months of training the Unit headed South. Old Abe did not like the South, besides Confederate commanders putting a price on his head, the southerners called him names like *Wild Goose* and *Yankee crow*.

To control Abe his feathers were clipped. This however did not stop him from having the run of the camp. He tipped over water pails, chased large insects, learned to catch bullets which the men rolled along the ground, attacked clothes hung out to dry, and raided the provisions of the company. The sight of cooks chasing Old Abe down a company street while the eagle clutched the main ingredient for a officers chicken dinner filled the camp with delight.

However, like most soldiers who become bored and home sick he found relief in Alcohol. By chance Old Abe discovered an illicit bottle of wine, hidden away in a soldiers belongings. Abe pilfered the bottle, consumed its contents, and became drunk. On another occassion, a soldier left unguarded a sauce of peach brandy. Old Abe always on the watch, drank it and suffered the consequences.

Before the Eighth Wisconsin left Mississippi Old Abe was always tied to the nearest branch.

The Greatest Snowball Fight of the War—March 22, 1864

During the winter of 1863-64, General Joe Johnston's Army of Tennessee was quartered near Dalton, Georgia. Harsh winter weather set the stage for one of history's greatest snowball fights. It began with a few random tosses between members of General Cheatham's Tennessee Division and Walker's Georgia Division. The fight escalated and soon nearly 5000 troops were engaged. Military ranks were formed and the men maneuvered and charged across the snowy fields.

At one point the Tennesseans broke the center of the Georgia line and even captured the colors of the 41st Georgia. Finally, a colonel wisely called a halt to the battle. Many claimed that it was as hard fought an engagement as any waged against the Yankees.



GREED IN THE CIVIL WAR

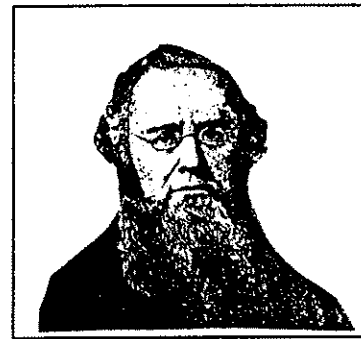
by Matt Slattery¹

Not all of the action in the Civil War took place on the firing line. Nathan Miller in his entertaining "*The Founding Finaglers*" relates some of the behind the lines action. At the start of the war there was great confusion and lack of direction. In spite of such a shortage of arms that 1812 War flintlocks and foreign army rejects were being bought, a U.S. arsenal advertised for sale 5,000 revolvers at \$3.50 each. An enterprising man put in a successful bid in spite of having no cash. But he went to another supply officer and obtained a purchase order¹ for 5,000 revolvers at \$11.50 each. With the contract in hand he obtained a bank loan and transferred the guns from Owner A to Owner A, pocketing the difference.

Revolvers are also the items in a case illustrating the value of who knows who. During one interval in the war, Colt sold the army 30,000 guns at \$25.00 each while Remington, with an equivocal shooter at \$15.00 received orders for only 5,000.

All of the finagling did not take place on land. There being a dearth of transportation, the War Department bought a pair of boats for \$90,000 more than they cost to build, in spite of marine experts warnings that they were unfit for service. One sunk on its maiden voyage. The other fortunately never left the dock.

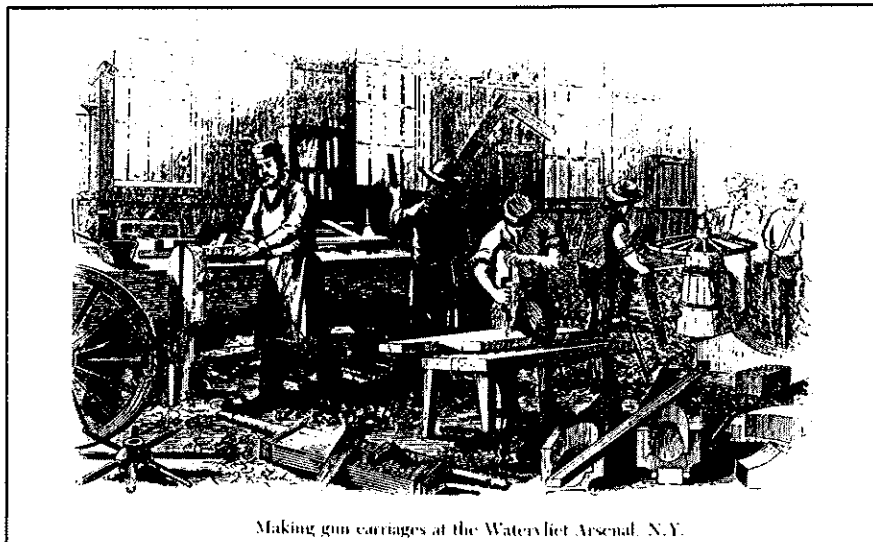
There was no end or limit to the scandals (many of which are related in this book) although things were tightened down after Lincoln shipped his Secretary of War Simon Cameron off to Russia as ambassador, replacing him with the demanding Edwin Stanton.



EDWIN STANTON

Miller says that war contracts totalled **one billion dollars**(we're talking 1860 dollars) and that estimates of profit range from 25% to 50%.

Among men of military age who never put on a uniform were **Jim Fisk, Jay Gould, Pierpont Morgan, Collis Huntington, Andrew Carnegie, and John D. Rockefeller.**



Making gun carriages at the Watervliet Arsenal, N.Y.

¹ Matt Slattery, retired since 1974 has been a Cleveland CWRT member on two occasions.



Dear Members:

Last month we were graced with a fine presentation by Brigadier General (Retired) William Tidwell. General Tidwell related the evidence that has come to light in recent years about the connection between the Confederate Government and the plot to kidnap President Lincoln. According to our speaker, even Robert E. Lee must have known something of the plot so he could coordinate the army's movements with it. Say it ain't so, JET.

This month our speaker will be Professor Mark Grimsley of the Ohio State University. Prof. Grimsley is the author of *The Hard Hand of War* and will speak on one of the aspects of his book. His talk is entitled "Thieves, Murderers, Trespassers: The Mythology of Sherman's March" and will compare popular conceptions of Sherman's march to the reality, exploring the roots and purposes of the mythology surrounding this famous event. It promises to be an interesting presentation. Come and join us in celebrating the anniversary Sherman's Christmas present to Lincoln! (Yes, I know it's not exactly the anniversary date, but close enough.)

Please remember to make your reservations. Our meetings have been very well attended so far this year -- I hope you can continue to attend. If you can make it, I promise you excellent speakers on interesting topics. In January, Dick Crews will host a debate by several of our members on the decisive battle of the war. Dick promises a lively debate. February brings us Dr. John Hubbell on Lincoln and McClellan, while March means the battle of Valverde, New Mexico. In April, Jay Ruoff of the Peninsula Round Table will speak on Vandalism and the Copperheads. Finally, May will be a celebration of our 40th Anniversary. I hope to see you this and every month.

Dan Zeiser

P.S. Best Wishes for a Happy Holiday Season.

Maintaining Army Discipline

Military authorities resorted to a great variety of punishments in an effort to maintain discipline. For minor offenses one of the most widely used penalties was confinement in the guard house, which usually was not a house at all, but a tent, a stockade, or a small plot of ground watched over by one or more armed guards. Confinement ranged in duration from a few hours to a month, depending on the seriousness of the offense; sometimes prisoners were limited to bread-and-water rations during all or a part of their incarceration.

Another common punishment was the wearing of a ball and chain. The ball was normally a cannon ball, weighing from six to thirty-two pounds, and it was attached to the leg by a chain two to six feet long. Culprits were required to walk about the camp, for varying periods, dragging the shackles behind them. A similar penalty was the carrying of a heavy object of some sort—a log balanced on the shoulder, a bag of dirt or bricks tied to the back, or a rock or cannon ball held in the hands—for repeated stints of one to four hours interspersed by brief periods of rest. This could be a very painful punishment. A Texan told of a comrade who, for firing his gun in camp, had to carry a heavy log for three hours: "The first hour he done well, the second hour he was walking slow and looking serious and changing the stick from right to left and from left to right and calling for the time of day, and long before the third hour was out he was begging for mercy."

A corrective frequently applied by unit commanders was to force men to parade the company streets wearing large placards specifying their offense, such as "Coward," "Thief," or "I stole a skillet." A Union cavalryman had to walk up and down the parade ground carrying on his back a saddle that he had stolen. A Confederate who appropriated a citizen's pig had to wear the porker's skin around his neck in the presence of his comrades; and another Southerner who got the jitters while on picket and shot a dog had to lug the dead animal about the camp at double quick pace. A Confederate found guilty of selling whiskey in camp was placarded with the notice "Ten Cents a Glass," and ridden about the camp on a rail, with three bottles dangling from his feet.

Drumming a coward out of the ranks of the Army of the Potomac.



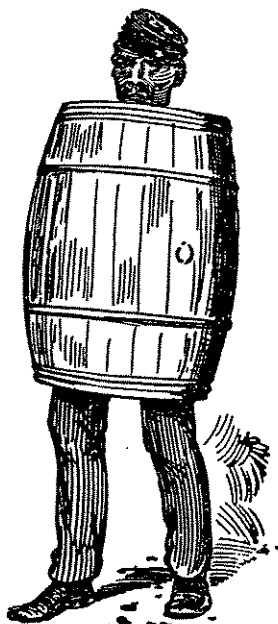
Many petty misdoers were subjected to the humiliation of "wearing the barrel shirt." The barrel was fitted by cutting a hole in the bottom, so that it could be slipped over the wearer's head, and by making openings in each side through which to pass his arms. Usually a sign indicating the misdeed was attached to the outside of the "shirt."

Other lesser punishments were assignment to extra guard duty, though some officers condemned this practice on the ground that it tended to degrade a responsible function intimately associated with soldierly honor; digging ditches; grubbing stumps; riding the wooden horse, a horizontal pole held aloft by two upright beams; standing on some conspicuous pedestal, such as a barrel, stump, or box; and cleaning the company grounds.

A penalty frequently imposed for insubordination was bucking and gagging. This consisted of placing the offender in a sitting position, tying his hands together and slipping them over his knees, inserting a pole or musket beneath the knees and over the arms and tying a stick or bayonet in the mouth with a string. When prolonged for several hours, as frequently was the case, this was a terrible punishment. An officer who witnessed the bucking and gagging of a Federal artilleryman at Memphis in 1864 wrote afterward to his wife: "[after] 4 hours he was sobbing and crying as if suffering greatly. When untied he was not able to walk. . . . He was *carried* to his quarters."

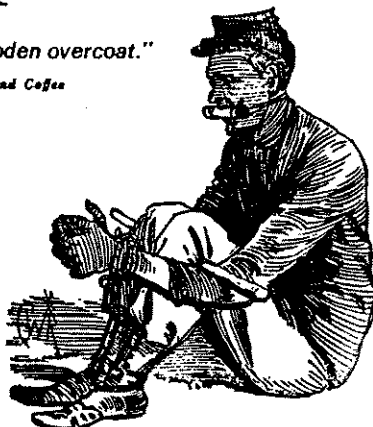
Even more inhuman was the punishment, frequently meted out for "back talk," of tying men up by their wrists or thumbs with a rope thrown over a limb. Sometimes the victims were allowed to rest their full weight on their feet, but the general practice was to tighten the rope until only the toes touched the ground, thus placing a great strain on the wrists or thumbs and causing the cord to cut into the flesh. Little wonder that men subjected to this torture after a while groaned and screamed in agony and that comrades, incensed by the brutality, angrily demanded their release and even cut them loose, sometimes at the risk of being subjected to the same punishment themselves.

A cruel punishment used in the artillery was to strap a culprit, with arms and legs extended in spread-eagle fashion, to the spare wheel carried on the rear of the caisson. If the vehicle remained stationary, and if the victim lay with his head at the top of the wheel for no more than an hour or two, the discomfort might be relatively mild. But if the wheel was given a half-turn so as to place the prisoner in a horizontal position, the time extended to several hours, and the caisson driven over rough roads, as was sometimes the case, it became an excruciatingly painful punishment.



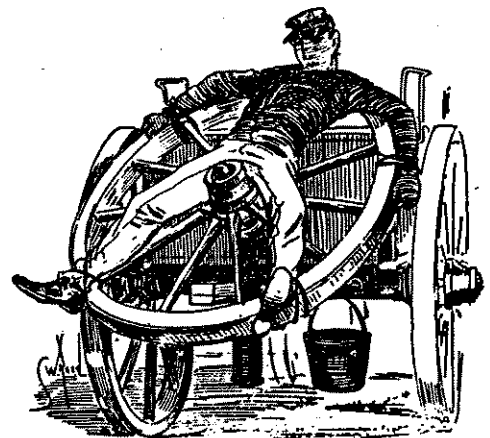
Wearing the "wooden overcoat."

John Billings, Hardtack and Coffee



Bucked and gagged.

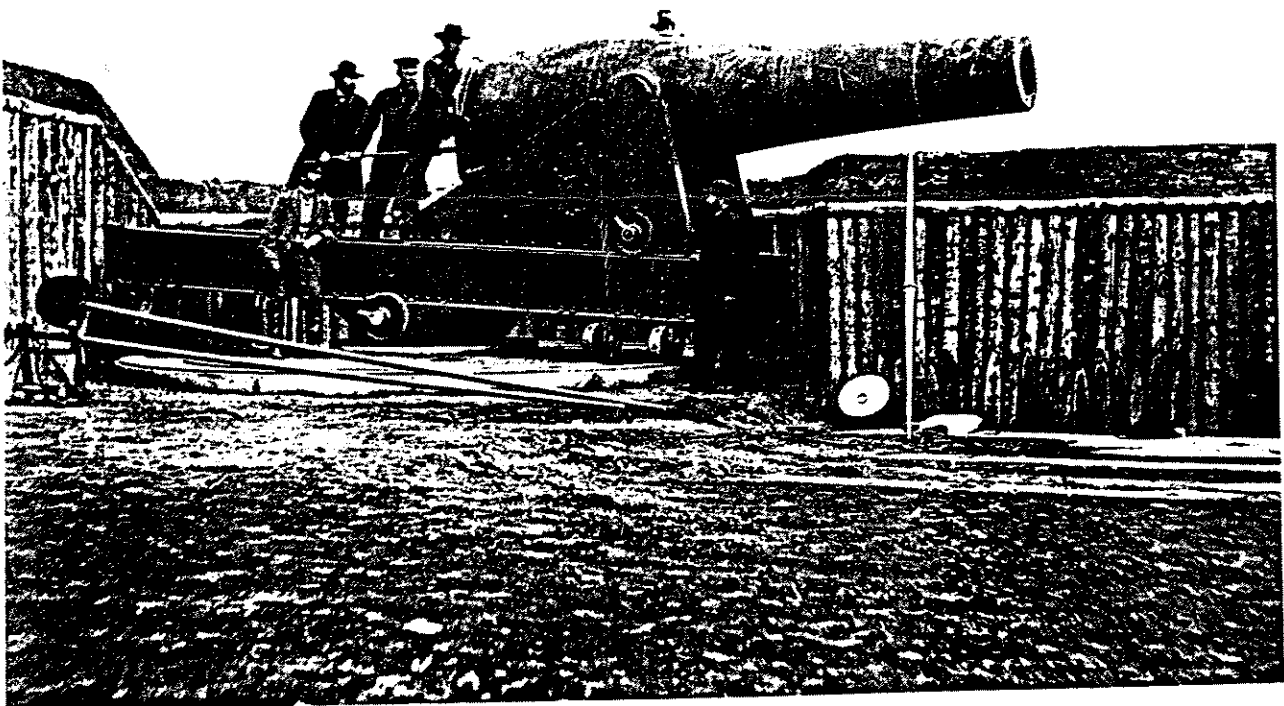
John Billings, Hardtack and Coffee



Spread-eagled.

John Billings, Hardtack and Coffee

The Big Guns

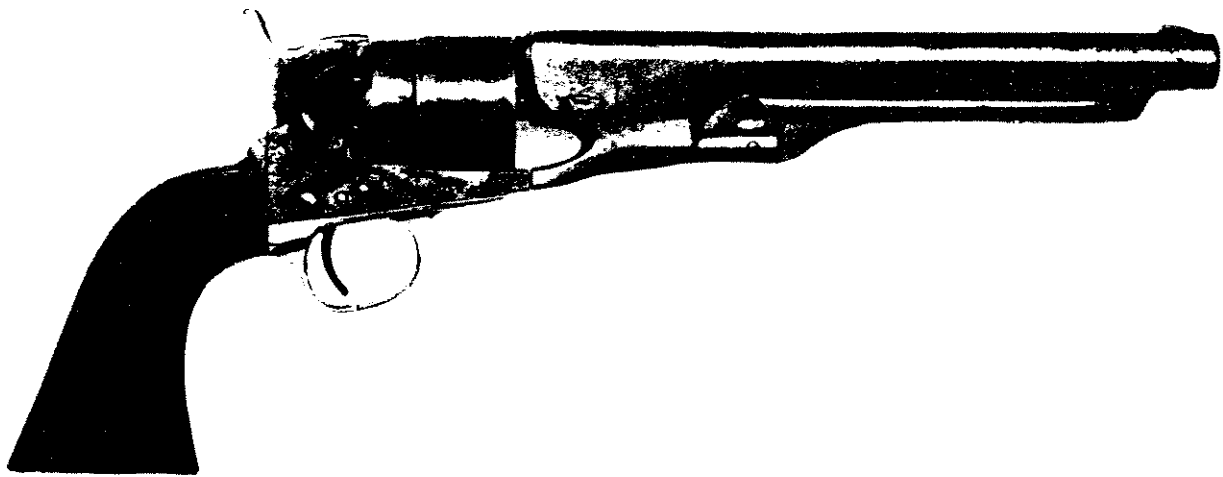


National Archives

Columbiad in Battery Rodgers, Alexandria, Virginia, mounted on wrought iron.

◆ SIDE ARMS ◆ of the Civil War

Colt Revolvers Model 1860 Army and Model 1851 Navy



Specifications

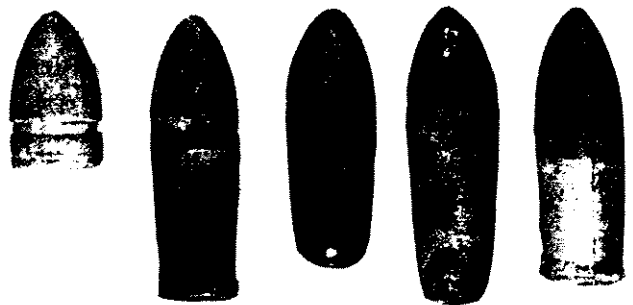
"Army"
Length: 14"
Weight: 2 lbs., 11 oz.
Caliber: .44

Colt revolvers in calibers .44 and .36 were the most famous and widely used handguns to see service during the Civil War. These arms had gained reputations as effective and reliable weapons well before 1861.

The prominence of Colt revolvers in the years prior to the war meant that many could be found in private homes. Most of those in southern hands were carried to war by Confederate volunteers. Those in northern homes often went into service as the personal side-arms of Union officers.

Federal government purchases of Colt "Army" and "Navy" revolvers amounted to 38% of the total revolvers acquired for war use. Most of these went to arm Union cavalymen.

All Colt "Army" and "Navy" pistols used during the war were six-shot, single-action, percussion revolvers. Colts were present on every field of battle from 1861-65. They were prized and well liked by all whose lives often depended upon them.

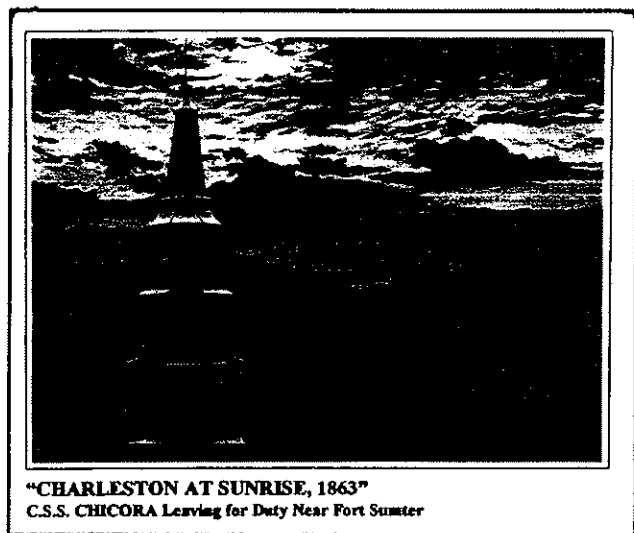


Ammunition for the Colt "Army" by Colt (left), Hazard (left center), D.C. Sage (right center), and Watervliet Arsenal (right).

The November, 1996 issue of *America's Civil War* magazine featured an article on our Cleveland Civil War Round-Table member Bill McGrath.

William McGrath brings a knowing perspective to marine art in *Charleston at Sunrise, 1863*.

by Peter DePree



Cleveland, Ohio, native William R. (Bill) McGrath might be the top maritime Civil War artist working today. Certainly, he knows his subject top to bottom and inside out. The 51-year-old former commercial artist speaks eloquently about the war on the water, spouting dates and poundages barrel diameters and logistical information like spray off a chop-cutting, copper-plated hull.

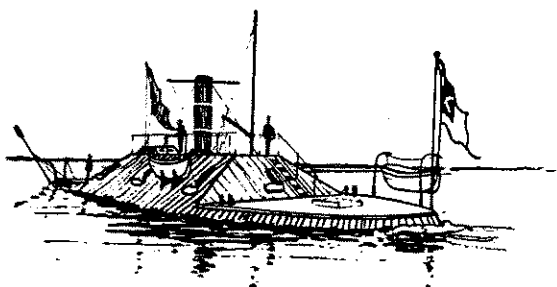
Frequently overlooked, the war's seagoing, theater is a rich vein of drama and pathos. McGrath's *Charleston at sunrise*, however, reflects a contemplative mood. "I show the Confederate ironclad *Chicora* in the background," says McGrath. "It went back and forth from the city and was stationed generally out by Fort Sumter to

keep the Union ironclads from coming in. There were two ironclads that were in Charleston for harbor defense to keep out the Union blockading ships, early in war they went out one evening and attacked two Union wooden gunboats, capturing one and chasing the other off. After that the Union sent down four ironclads much more powerful than the Confederates' to counteract them. They never went on the attack again, becoming defensive, virtual floating batteries instead.

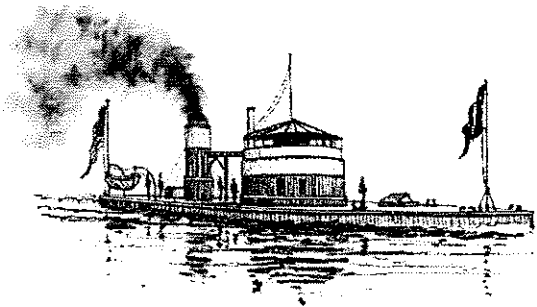
"Although the Union had the great bases and shipyards that could build these ships, a lot of the Confederates' ironclads were jury-rigged in the field. Surprisingly, Richmond had three ironclads, Charleston had three, Savannah had three total—two were done, one was captured and one was almost done when [General William] Sherman finally captured the city."

McGrath drew on his architectural background and conducted extensive research for *Charleston at Sunrise*. "I did two or three days research in Charleston," McGrath points out, "photographing scenes and different buildings. I wanted the church steeple in the foreground—a prime target for Union gunners when they were selling the city because the white tower stuck out like a sore thumb. They painted the tower slate gray to blur it from Union gunners, so I moved the period of the piece up to '63, while it was still white.

"When I was there they were doing restoration work, and I couldn't get up in St. Michael's scaffolded steeple. I moved the view, took photographs of the steeple, then backed everything up, using my experience in architectural perspective to superimpose the steeple accurately. Civil War historian P.C. Coker had taken a whole series of photos from the steeple, which I used as reference and there was a Civil War-era photo taken from that church that I used to isolate period buildings. Finally, I strolled along the streets and picked out the remnant buildings (there are quite a few left) and



C.S.S. Chicora



U.S.S. Saugus

photographed them up close. But to me, the important part of that canvas is the sky. I was running down by the batteries along the water at 6 one morning, rounded the corner, and there was this spectacular sunrise. So I ran back to my room for my camera and shot a whole roll of film. People who work down there say that's exactly how the sky looks. "I try not to keep on repeating the same type of sky or lighting. If you look at something at noon it looks sterile, but at 6 a.m. or 8 at night when the light is low in the sky, you get a different feel for it and sometimes different colors that just don't show up otherwise. I try to capture lighting that is a tad out of the ordinary. *Charleston at Sunrise* is a good example- a blue sky with white clouds just wouldn't have evoked that moody atmosphere."

McGrath lays out his sketch in pencil on tracing paper before transferring the finalized sketch to canvas, then paints it in oil and alkyd. *Charleston at Sunrise* took longer than his usual two months to finish because of its complexity. In fact, the artist notes, the research can take triple the time it takes to do the painting itself.

"I always liked history as a kid, the Civil War particularly," says McGrath, "and it just kind of flowed into doing this. I'm sure I'll continue learning about the naval aspects for the next 15 years because it's a surprisingly complicated subject. Most Civil War aficionados are intimately familiar with the land battle Gettysburg, Antietam, Shiloh but haven't been exposed to the rich naval side of it. Ever since the movie *Gettysburg*, every land-battle artist is doing a Civil War painting on Gettysburg. So I keep threatening to do my rendition of a monitor at Gettysburg!"

In 1969, McGrath attended Officer Candidate School in the U.S. Coast Guard, and later became an officer. He already had a degree in

architecture. When the Coast Guard asked where he wanted to go, McGrath told them "anywhere but Cleveland. So they assigned me to the 42nd floor of the Federal Building in downtown Cleveland. After a year and a half as an architect-engineer, I hurt my back, got out and worked a couple years for architects, then 18 years as a commercial artist.

"I was admiring an article on John Stobart (one of best marine artists around) in an in-flight magazine once when my wife turned to me and said, 'Well, you could probably do that!' So after those 18 years of always doing something for someone else on commission, I'm doing what I want to do now. It's fun... These ships have history and personality."

To relax, McGrath enjoys playing basketball, baseball and golf. But, according to McGrath, his wife keeps saying he's too old to be playing sports. "There are too many things I like to do," says the artist. "I've made stained-glass windows. Every time a window would break in our house, I'd replace it with a stained-glass window. I've designed furniture. Done remodeling I'd love to get into sculpture. My wife says I'm a jack-of-all-trades and master of none."

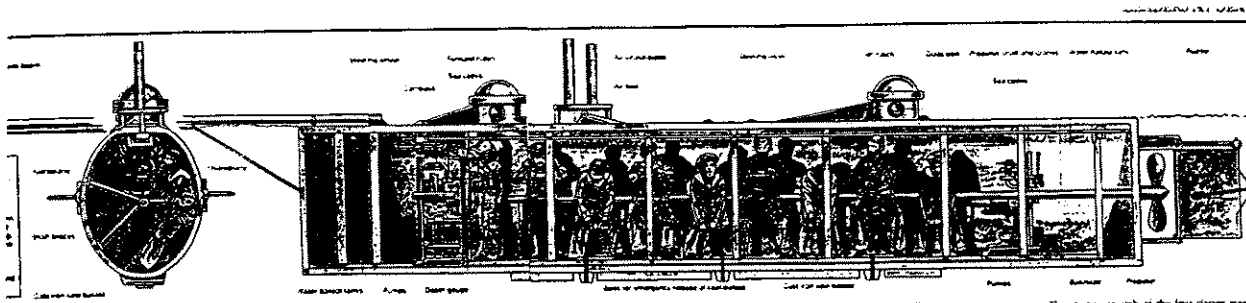
But when it comes to Civil War maritime material and tactics, McGrath is certainly a consummate master. His research for a painting of the Confederate submarine *Hunley* attacking USS *Housatonic* on February 17, 1864, was so thorough that McGrath is called upon now to lecture on Civil War submarine warfare.

Built in Mobile, Ala., by an inventor named Hunley, CSS *Hunley* underwent preliminary testing in Mobile, then shipped to Charleston to break the blockade. "But in Charleston," relates McGrath, "they put it in

tanks for submerging. One of the crew accidentally left one of the valves open, and it swamped and sank. What amazed me about that ship was that they lost three nine-man crews and yet had no trouble getting volunteers to go right back in again.

They pulled this thing up, hauled out the dead bodies out, and then lined up to go back in it again! Which speaks volumes about the chivalry and mindset of the people who fought the Civil War."

Hunley himself went out as a member of the crew and was killed. He is buried in the cemetery near

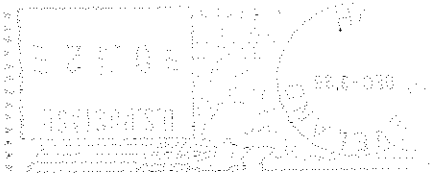


Charleston. After six to eight months of practice, the submarines' fourth crew was charged with venturing out to attack one of the harbor-blockading ships. "The Union knew the Confederates were fooling around with a submarine," McGrath relates, "but didn't know what it would look like—they just knew it was something that slipped in underwater. Frantic about losing their ships, they backed the monitors and ironclads off, leaving a picket line of wooden vessels closer to shore. So when the *Huntley* went out, the first thing she came upon was *Housatonic*. She attacked it and planted a spar torpedo, a 25 foot spar paced with 60 pounds of power in the torpedo (actually a mine tipped with a sharp spike). There were eight guys in there cranking away, and *Hunley* ran up against the ship and imbedded this spike in the thin copper-sheeted hull, then backed up. When they tugged on the lanyard running to the mine from inside the sub, it detonated. *Hunley* almost got away, but for some reason sank before reaching base. "The hull that I'm showing on *Housatonic* in the background of the painting, is accurate," McGrath points out. "The half hull to its sister ship is in the David Taylor Research Center in Washington, D.C. My contact there makes models for the Navy Department, rebuilding and repairing them.

He sent me photos of the half hull model along with the details of how that works, so I'm real happy with the accuracy in that painting." "Some Civil War paintings look terrific but they're just not accurate," says McGrath. "More than 90 per cent of people just don't know if it's right or not, but you do have that 1 or 2 percent who are real history experts and spot glitches. I'm painting for myself, but I want to make it as accurate as possible." Shipwreck aficionado Clive Cussler surreptitiously assembled a team a year and a half ago to salvage *Hunley*. McGrath recalls that a group of divers spotted his print *C.S.S. Hunley* at a Charleston Civil War show and surprised the artist by conspiratorially whispering to him: "We've found it. We've bringing it up." Cussler's team hopes to salvage *Hunley* later this year in the Atlantic, just outside Charleston Harbor. If the divers are successful, McGrath will have the authentic subject to paint from.

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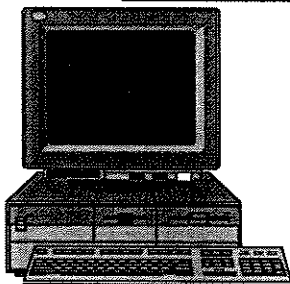
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Robert E. Lee

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