

# THE CHARGER

December, 1999

374 Meeting

Vol.21 #4



The Civil War Soldiers on both sides were very similar. They were men of Anglo-Saxon stock, often men of the same family. Their basic weapon were in the majority of cases the same. Both sides faced the same problems of discipline inherent in armies of volunteers hastily raised in a country of rugged individualists whose nationals placed freedom of speech and action above all else. Desertions and "absenteeism" plagued both sides. Both sides had their moments of triumph and of defeat, of heroism and of panic.

*Tonight's Speaker:*

## Don Allison

Don Allison is a newspaper editor in the Northwest Ohio city of Bryan. He is also a reactor with the 100th Ohio Volunteers. He appeared in the movie *Gettysburg* and TNT mini series *Andersonville*.

Don will discuss his book, "*Hell on Belle Island*." Stories about the horrors at Andersonville prison are legion but overlooked are the earlier sufferings and deaths of Northern captives on Belle Isle in the James River at Richmond, Virginia.

---

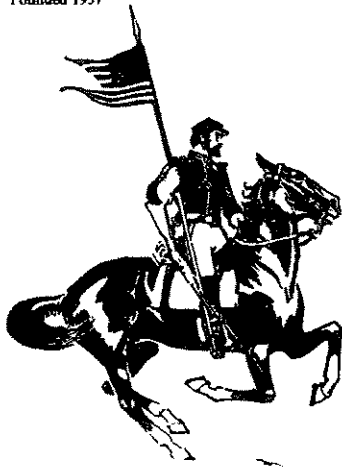
*Date:* **December 8, 1999**

*Place:* **The Hermit Club**

*Time:* **Drinks 6 PM**  
**Dinner 7 PM**

*Reservations:* **Please Call**  
**JAC Communications**  
**at (216) 861-5588**

Founded 1957



The Cleveland Civil War Round Table PO Box 1800 Cleveland, Ohio 44118

### About the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable

The 127 men and women of the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable reflect the ethnic, racial, and religious diversity of Greater Cleveland. Members range in age from 16 to 93 years old. The common bond is the belief that the American Civil War was the *defining* event in United States history.

Dinner meetings are normally held on the second Wednesday of each month, September through May. The Roundtable meets at a historic private club in the Playhouse Square area of downtown Cleveland.

Dinner is \$20.00. Club dues are \$40.00 per year.

#### PAST CLEVELAND C.W.R.T. PRESIDENTS

1999 Dick Crews	
1998 John Moore	1977 James Chapman
1997 Dan Zeiser	1976 Milton Holmes
1996 John Sutula	1975 Thomas Gretter
1995 Norton London	1974 Nolan Heidelbaugh
1994 Robert E. Battisti	1973 Arthur Jordan
1993 Kevin Callahan	1972 Bernard Drews
1992 Bob Baucher	1971 Kenneth Callahan
1991 Joe Tirpak	1970 Frank Schuble
1990 Ken Callahan Jr.	1969 Donald Heckaman
1989 Neil Glaser	1968 Frank Moran
1988 Martin Graham	1967 William Schlesinger
1987 George Vourlojianis	1966 Donald Hamill
1986 Tim Beatty	1965 Lester L. Swift
1985 Brian Kowell	1964 Guy DiCarlo, Jr.
1984 Neil Evans	1963 Paul Guenther
1983 William Victory	1962 Edward Downer
1982 John Harkness	1961 Charles Clarke
1981 Thomas Geschke	1960 Howard Preston
1980 Charles Spiegle	1959 John Cullen, Jr
1979 William Bates	1958 George Farr, Jr.
1978 Richard McCrae	1957 Kenneth Grant

December 8, 1999



## Hell on Belle Isle

Don Allison

January 12, 2000

## The Great Debate

*Confederate options after the fall of Atlanta*

MODERATOR: DICK CREWS

February 9, 2000

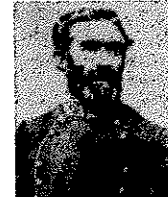


## Ulysses S. Grant

*From The Wilderness to Cold Harbor*

NORTON LONDON

March 8, 2000



## Braxton Bragg

*Was he really that bad?*

DAVE SMITH

April 12, 2000



## THE SONS OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

DAVE WOOD

MAY 10, 2000

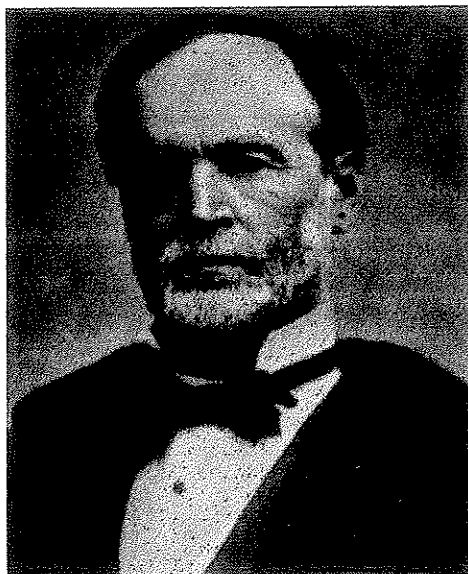


## PATRICK CLEBURNE

CRAIG SYMONDS

# CUMP AND COMPANY

A NEWSLETTER FOR FRIENDS AND FANCIERS OF GENERAL WILLIAM T. SHERMAN



The above masthead is the newsletter of two ladies: Dori McCann and Doris Walker. They are unrelated. One lives in suburban Pittsburgh and the other in Fayetteville, North Carolina. Although Doris Walker, who lives in North Carolina, is not a native Southerner.

The following two articles are written by the Dori and Doris. First, the Christmas story by Dori McCann and the second, the first of several articles, by Doris Walker on William T. Sherman's invasion of North Carolina in early 1865.

**The newsletter is bimonthly and only costs \$12.00 per year.**

**Check made out to: Doris McCann**

**218 Station St.**

**McDonald, Pa. 15057**

They also are looking for articles on Sherman and can be reached at the above address or Email: [dwalker214@aol.com](mailto:dwalker214@aol.com).

# CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS

By Dori McCann

What would our holiday celebration be like without a festive Christmas tree or a reading of the poem "A Visit From St. Nicholas?" Had it not been for an article in *Godey's Lady's Book*, or an interfering friend named Miss Harriet Butler, those traditions might not be a part of modern-day celebrations.

In the winter of 1822, the Reverend Clement Clarke Moore, a professor at New York's General Theological Seminary, composed a poem to amuse his children on Christmas Eve. The now-famous poem began '*T'was the Night before Christmas...*

The following autumn, Miss Harriet Butler from Troy, New York, was visiting the family and read the poem. She was so impressed with it, that she decided to send a copy anonymously to the Troy Sentinel without the author's knowledge or consent. The editor of the newspaper printed it, and Miss Butler sent Dr. Moore a copy, thinking he would be thrilled. He was not. He became annoyed that the poem he had written to entertain his children should be printed publicly and he decided to not claim authorship.

But the public loved the poem! It appeared in a book collection of poetry in 1837, and by 1844, Dr. Moore was so overwhelmed by the delight of its readers, that he finally had it published under his own name. Did you ever wonder about the Victorian visions of sugar-plums dancing around in everyone's heads? Well, sugar-plums were exotic sweetmeats, a combination of fruit and nuts, traditionally only available during the holiday season.

In the 1830's, German Immigrants came to my home state of Pennsylvania, and introduced the custom of bringing a freshly cut evergreen tree indoors to decorate. In the 1840's, when England's Queen Victoria and her German born husband Prince Albert, introduced the Christmas tree as part of the royal family's celebration, the story was featured in a copy of *Godey's Lady Book*, published in America. Soon, every woman wanted the *pretty German toy* as the first Christmas trees were called, and it passed from folk custom to tradition.



*Hope you take time from your busy schedules to make a few holiday traditions of your own.*

*Dori McCann*

# Sherman's Final Challenge: North Carolina

*A look at some of the events during Sherman's trek through the Old North State*

**By Doris A. Walker**

When one examines Sherman's Carolinas Campaign, it becomes evident that the first part was a rapid succession of blows dealt exclusively by the Union forces. The second part, dealing with the northern half of the Carolinas, was not quite so one-sided, in *fact*, it could be argued that it was a rapid succession of surprising blows dealt at the Union.

From the onset of that campaign in January 1865 through the end of the war in April of the same year, it can be likened unto a freight train barreling toward its destination. It left Savannah, GA, under full steam, roaring fast and furiously, but as it got closer to the station, the brakes were gradually applied more often. The Civil War was ending and its bloody activities lessened. Before it was over, though, the South would flex its muscle one more time in North Carolina, and Sherman would be subjected to a myriad of different emotions as events, some beyond his control, accompanied the grand finale.

By the time March, 1865 rolled around, Sherman's army had already passed through South Carolina in a destructive way. The ruins of the capital city of Columbia had barely stopped smoldering. The entire state was marred by widespread devastation. A private in Sherman's army said it best perhaps when he declared that *"by the time we were done with South Carolina it was pretty much a used up place."* The idea to bring war to the very doorsteps of a people that had called for it the loudest was not really new, but never before in modern history, and certainly not *during* the Civil War, had it been executed with quite so much punishing precision as in South Carolina. The word "punishing" seems fitting since the Federal army was eager to show the state that was first to secede and first at firing its guns in anger, thereby plunging the country into a blood-bath, what war really felt like. When confronted with that reality, it was not a comfortable feeling, to be sure.

As a result, a near paralyzing fear had gripped the inhabitants of the Palmetto State; a fear that had for weeks already, spilled over into the neighboring Tar Heel State of North Carolina. Heightening the anxiety of the population, was the frustrating inability by anyone to pinpoint exactly what paths the relentless Yankee columns would choose on their march through the Carolinas. In anticipation of Sherman's arrival, people simply fled before him or braced for the worst.

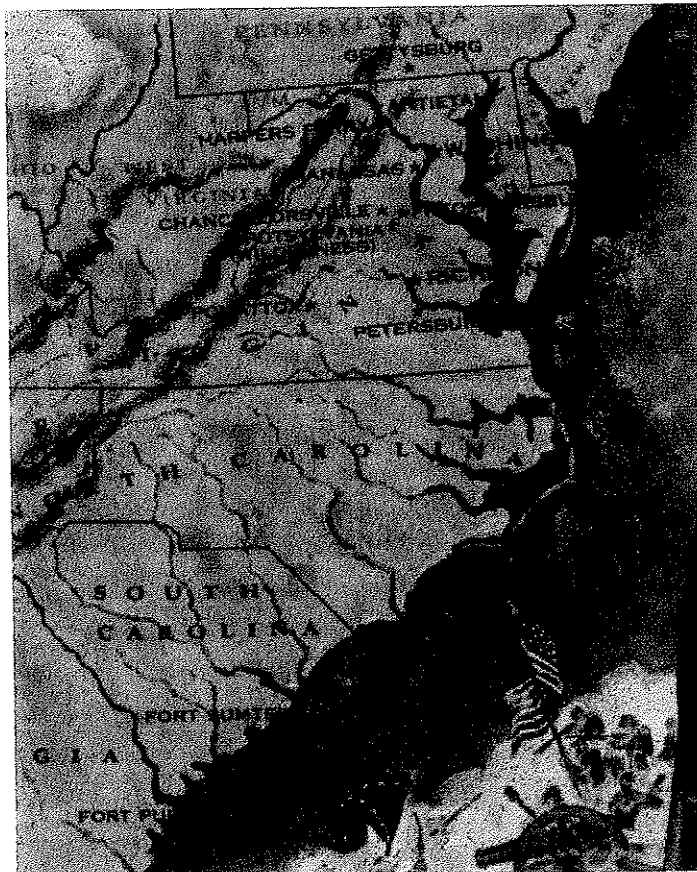
Major General William T. Sherman, at the head of his grand army, was, among other things, a master strategist and an undisputed expert at keeping his army's destinations so secret that often even his own soldiers were uncertain where a new day's march would take them. He also meant every word when he confidently declared, *"I go where I please!"*

All sorts of outlandish rumors preceded the army's arrival. It was not uncommon to predict murders, rapes, and every other heinous crime the human mind can imagine. That kind of fear was of course unfounded. Sherman's forces destroyed property by design as part of its "hard war" policy, but it did not as a policy destroy human life. Some former slaves reacted with genuine surprise when they finally saw the blue coats for the first time after weeks of anticipation: "*You look normal and we thought you had horns*" indeed, everyone expected a legion of devils, in one way or another. Sherman himself considered the mass hysteria created by the rumor mill a powerful psychological tool that he expertly exploited to his fullest advantage.

His veteran army had met with virtually no opposition from Confederate forces since the one-day battle for Fort McAllister and the short stand-off before the surrender of Savannah, both in Georgia, in December 1864. Now it was nearly Spring and the small pockets of resistance that did occur, orchestrated mainly by Confederate cavalry, was in part so insignificant that sparsely anything was written about it. There were some minor skirmishes near the state line between South and North Carolina near the small, rural community of Cheraw, and a few other places, but all this was considered nothing more than a nuisance by the Federals. As one of Sherman's soldiers once referred to these incidents by comparing them to flea bites; "*fleas nipping at the heels of a giant.*"

**The Union army crossed over into North Carolina, March 1, 1865.**

*[Part II. Sherman's army is attacked in North Carolina by what is left of the Western Confederate army in the January, 2000 issue of THE CHARGER.]*



# News from South America

To Cleveland Civil War Round Table  
Att: Dick Crews

Sept,24, 1999

Dear Dick,

It was with with great pleasure that I've received your last mail with the news of my acceptance as an out of town member of the Cleveland Civil War Round Table, which made me both very happy and proud to belong to a group of people that even not knowing personally share such a common interest.

Please excuse my delay in answering your letter, I was out of the country on vacations in Istanbul, Turkey, and luckily both me and my wife came out of the sept.13 earthquake unharmed. The first one back in august was much more powerfull, and claimed many lives. The curious note is that even there I've found a book store with a civil war volume on the Naval War, by a man named Anderson. Anyway it's good to be back home.

I'm sending three more drawings that were made last month with an old pen and ink technique, and I hope you enjoy them. They are a part of a set of sketches that I'm planning to arrange in a sequence, as in a short story, but for now it's just an idea!

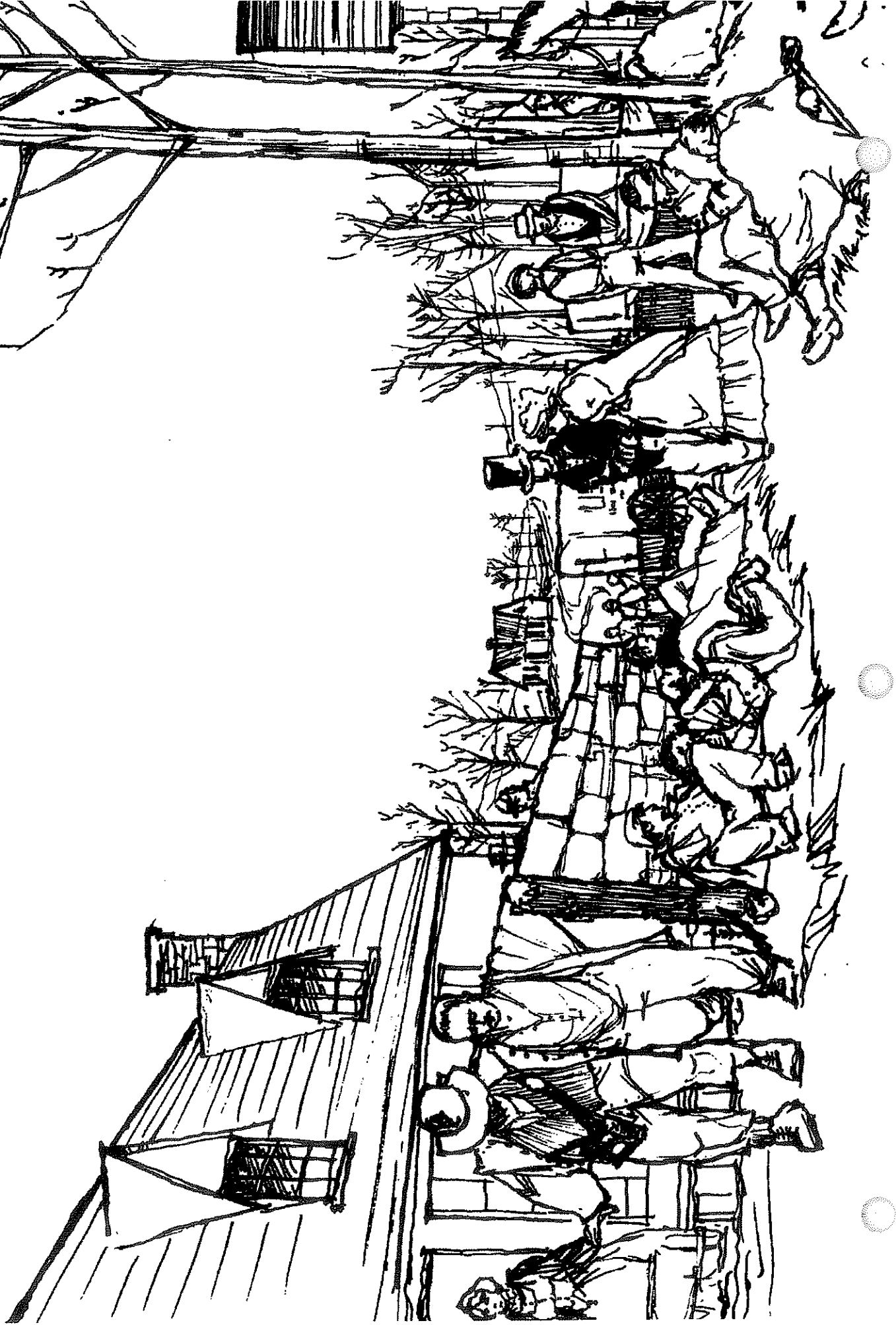
Also please find attached the \$20,00 in this volume for the costs, and hopefully if everything goes well next year I will make a visit to my friends in Aurora and if possible attend to one of the CWRT meetings and meet you personally.

Thank you again for your attention and help,

Yours sincerely,

  
JOAO CASARI.

The latest drawing from our South American member Joao Casari





# President's Letter

Your attention please - the December meeting will be the last of the millennium - wow hard to believe - I hope we can all share the experience.

But before then next century begins (yeah I know, technically the 20<sup>th</sup> Century includes the year 2000), a word about the November meeting - Books. Yes, we "got" books. That is one of the legacies of last month's meeting when we were educated and entertained by a lively presentation put on by self proclaimed "vagabond historians" Thomas Goodrich and Debra Hiebert of Topeka, Kansas. Both Thomas and Deb are authors. Thomas has done extensive research on the war in Kansas, Missouri and the Indian territories. His research showed in the scope of his talk and is well documented in the books that he has written. In addition to the books bought by various individuals, we as a club bought one of each and will be raffling them off in the coming months. As a result of Thomas and Deb's talk I for one have a greater recognition of just how little I know of the great scope of the U. S, Civil War and in particular the tragedies that took place in Missouri and Kansas both before and during the war. I will never look at the Kansas Jayhawk mascot in the same light hearted way again. I will also treasure my own real hair - inside joke between we who were there.

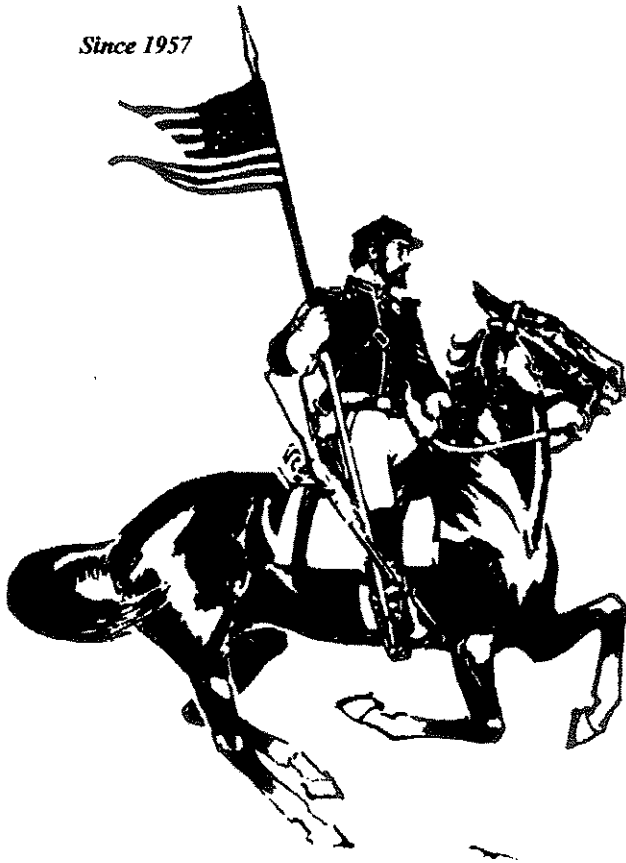
This month we will have the pleasure of a visiting speaker from our own state, Mr. Don Allison of Bryan, Ohio. Don will be speaking to us about the story of Union soldier J. Osborn who lived in Northwest Ohio, Southern Michigan and Northeast Indiana before the war. J. Osborn Coburn served in the 6<sup>th</sup> Michigan Cavalry. He was captured and imprisoned on Belle Isle near Richmond, Virginia. Don's research into the experiences of J. Osborn Coburn was initiated by his fascination with the Coburn's diary of that described his experience as a soldier and a Prisoner of War. Don's research is documented in a book he has written titled Hell on Belle Isle: Diary of a Civil War POW.

Please remember to call the Hermit Club and make your reservation ahead of time for our meeting. An accurate count of attendance ahead of time through reservations is a big help in keeping our expenses down.

*So, I look forward to wishing all of you a very special Happy New Year at what will be last meeting of the Cleveland Civil War Round until the year 2000!*

**Bob Boyda**

Since 1957



Cleveland Civil War Roundtable PO Box 18900 Cleveland, OH 44118

**Wednesday, December 8, 1899**

