



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

THE CHARGER

Vol. 18 #5

348th Meeting

January, 1997



Robert E. Lee

West Point Superintendent 1854.

January 19, is the birthday of Robert E. Lee. In parts of the South it is an official holiday. Many consider Lee the greatest American general in History, not just of the Civil War, but of all wars American's have fought.

Certainly the legend of Robert E. Lee lives with us today. This issue of THE CHARGER will look at this icon of our Civil War.

January's meeting is a debate.

"The Decisive Battle of the War."

A Debate Between:

Tom Dempsey - Chattanooga

Al Enlow - Gettysburg

Mike Hardy - Wilderness

Scott Maybaum - Vicksburg

Matt Slattery - Antietam

Bill Vodrey - New Orleans

Date: January 8, 1997

Place: The Hermit Club

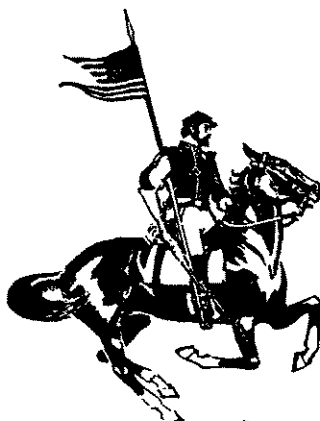
Time: Drinks 6 PM

Dinner 7 PM

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

Happy Fortieth Birthday, Cleveland Round-Table

The Cleveland Civil War Round-Table 1957 * 1997



President: Dan Zeiser
Vice President: John Moore
Secretary: Dick Crews
Treasurer: Bob Boyda

Editor of the **THE CHARGER**

Dick Crews
3673 Traver Rd.
Shaker Heights, Ohio 44122
(216) 752-9961 (800) 800-8310

Published by **JAC Communications**
Hanna Bldg, Cleveland, Ohio
(216) 861-5588
John & Anne Caputo

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 Butula	1976	Milton Holmes
1995	Norton London	1975	Thomas Gretter
1994	Robert E. Battisti	1974	Nolan Heidelbaugh
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 Spiegler	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

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

Gettysburg
Field Trip 1997
Sept 25 - 28



C.S.A. Brigadier General Richard B. Garnett
Died in Picketts charge, Gettysburg,
July 3, 1863

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

"Robert E. Lee: A Fond Remembrance"

by
Joe E. Tirpak¹

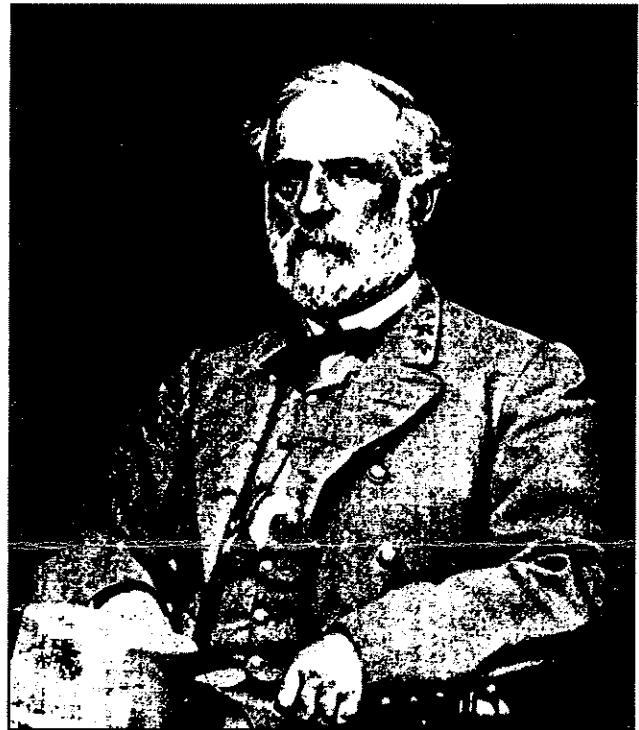
Admittedly, I am a Robert E. Lee admirer. As I confessed to you during my presentation in December of 1995, he was my boyhood hero and nothing has changed for me regarding this man. January 19, 1997, will mark the one hundred ninetieth birthday of this often discussed and much studied Icon. I am honored to be asked by Dick Crews to write this article for *The Charger*.

Historians continue to debate Robert E. Lee's efficacy as a commander. One of the most recent books about Lee is entitled, "Lee the Soldier," by Gary W. Gallagher, published by the University of Nebraska Press. In this book Mr. Gallagher has set up yet another in the endless debates about Lee's abilities as a commander of the Army of Northern Virginia.

The type of questions raised by the contributors can basically be summarized as: "Did Robert E. Lee's decisions, orders and advice prolong or shorten the life of the Confederate States of America?" "Was Lee a consummately skillful commander, or has he undeservedly enjoyed an inflated reputation?" Far be it from me to enter into debates with the likes of Gallagher, Krick, Castel and others. For me he was by far the best the South had to offer. Period, end of debate.

Character

To me, one word defines Lee: "CHARACTER." According to Webster's Dictionary, when talking about an individual, the word character can mean the following: It can mean a distinguishing mark; essential quality or qualities; or individual peculiarity. I suspect each of these characteristics is present in the overall personality and character of Lee.



Robert E. Lee a week after the surrender, in uniform for the last time

¹ Joe E. Tirpak is owner of a Management Services Company and a past President of the Cleveland CWRT.

The early years

A brief overview of the early years of Lee's life is in order, because it was those early years that helped to shape Lee the man. History books say he was the fourth of five children born of the second marriage of Henry Lee to Ann Hill Carter. My research shows Lee as the fifth of six children of this second marriage.

Algeron Sidney Lee died in infancy. The others in order of birth included Charles Carter Lee (1797), Ann Kinkock Lee (1800), Sidney Smith Lee (1802), Robert Edward Lee (1807), and Catherine Mildred Lee (1811). Lee was born at the ancestral home of the Lee's called



Stratford Hall

Stratford Hall. What was significant about this beautiful plantation that overlooked the Potomac River is that Lee was born in the same room as two of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. Richard H. Lee and Francis "Light Foot" Lee. Lee's father was the famed Henry or "Lighthouse Harry" of Revolutionary War fame. He was Washington's Chief of Cavalry. Lee's mother, Ann Hill Carter came from reputedly the wealthiest family in Virginia.

Schooling

Lee's schooling included the prominent Alexandria Academy and of course, West Point where he excelled as a student and where his leadership capabilities surfaced.

He finished second in his class (1829) and was Adjutant of the Corps in 1828-1829. Friends called him the "Marble Model." He seemed made to wear the uniform.

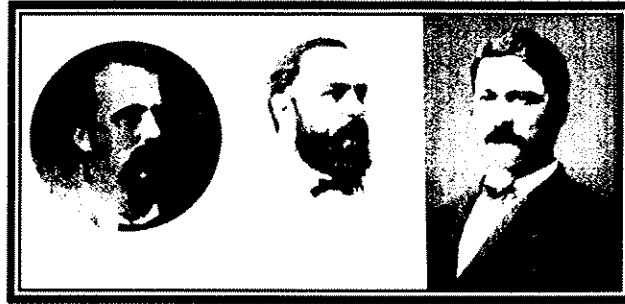
Marriage

R.E. Lee married Mary Randolph Custis on June 30, 1831, at Arlington house. Mary was the only daughter of George Washington Parke Custis, the adopted son of George Washington. This marriage, wrote a biographer, "In the eyes of the world, made Lee the representative of the family of the founder of American Liberty." Quite a legacy indeed! From the personal letters I have read



Lee Daughters: Mary, Agnes, and Mildred; no picture of Annie is known to exist

of Lee to his wife and children I would conclude he was a very devoted husband and father. They had seven children in fourteen years. They raised three sons and four daughters.



Lee's Sons: Robert Jr., Rooney, and Custis. Each of his sons fought in the Civil War.

Military Overview

While this article's focus is not about Lee the Commander, but Lee the "Man," a brief military overview is in order. Lee was an Engineer by training and spent many years of his military career away from home. Always an exemplary soldier, Lee's mentor was General Winfield Scott who grew very fond of him. During the Vera Cruz expedition on the march to Mexico City his extraordinary skills and soldiering won him the lasting confidence and esteem of Scott.

Lee became Superintendent of West Point in 1852. In 1855, Jefferson Davis, then Secretary of War for the United States approved a transfer of Lee from staff to line and commissioned him a Lt. Colonel of the Second Cavalry and sent him to west Texas where he served from 1857 to 1861. He was home on leave at Arlington House at the time of John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry in October of 1859. Lee was asked to lead the forces that put down Brown's insurrection.

In February of 1861 Scott recalled Lee from Texas. Politically a Whig, Lee was strongly attached to the Union and the Constitution. Scott offered Lee the command of the U.S. forces.

Lee's fateful Decision

As much as he cared for the Union, he was first of all a Virginian and he truly loved the Old Dominion. He could not bear to think of a national army invading Virginia to coerce it back into the Union or of himself leading that army. After agonizing deliberation, he decided he must resign his commission, return home, and offer his services to his home state. The rest of course is "history." Our Roundtable and others across the country endlessly debate the Civil War, the what ifs(?), and who should have done what(?), etc. Regardless, the outcome never changes!

The aftermath

In the years after the war, Lee was the "Hero" of the South. With dignity and without bitterness, he accepted defeat and preached to his people the necessity of peace and national unity. Offered many jobs, he accepted the Presidency of Washington College at Lexington, Virginia. Later it was renamed Washington and Lee University. Lee felt a strong duty to guide the youth of the South in the postwar years. He died on October 12, 1870. His body rests in a mausoleum in the chapel of the university.

Conclusions

Lee faced many disappointments and hardships in his life beginning with the fallen fortunes of his father. Others included: the responsibilities of caring for his invalid mother and subsequently invalid wife; the tardy promotions of his military career; the loss of Stratford Hall; the loss of Arlington House; and the eventual defeat in the Civil War. Think of the burdens he was asked to carry, the decisions he was asked to make, and the price he was asked to pay? Yes, my fellow historians, we should be asked to carry such burdens and make such decisions!

I close with my favorite quotation by Robert E. Lee because it embodies everything about him that I admire.

"I have fought against the people of the North because I believe they were seeking to wrest from the South its dearest rights. But, I have never cherished toward them bitter or vindictive feelings, and I have never seen the day when I did not pray for them."

Can we at least agree, Robert E. Lee was a man of great character and dignity who did his duty as he saw it!

J.E.T.
1/97

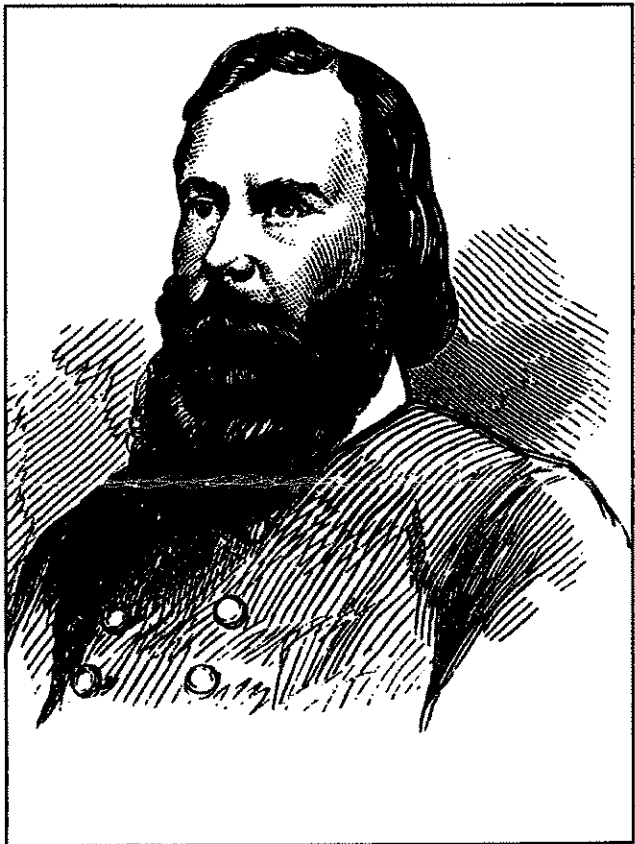


Richmond's statue bears one word: LEE

Following the end of the War Between the States General Robert E. Lee was made a saint by the people of the South. Lee's commander of 1st corps, Army Northern Virginia, General James Longstreet wrote extensively after the War. He praised and criticize Robert E. Lee. The people of the south would not accept criticism of their hero, Robert E. Lee. The following which was published in 1879, is Longstreet's strong criticism of Robert E. Lee at Gettysburg.

Longstreet: Lee In Pennsylvania

Before discussing the weak points of the Gettysburg campaign, note that during the crisis of that campaign, Robert E. Lee lost the matchless equipoise that usually characterized him, and that whatever mistakes were made were not so much matters of deliberate judgment as the impulses of a great mind disturbed by unparalleled conditions. General Lee was thrown from his balance (as is shown by the statement of General Fitzhugh Lee) by too great confidence in the prowess of his troops and (as is shown by General Anderson's statement) by the deplorable absence of General Stuart and the perplexity occasioned thereby. with this preface I proceed to say that the Gettysburg campaign was weak in these points—adhering, however, to my opinion that a combined movement against Rosecrans, in Tennessee, and a march toward Cincinnati would have given better results than could possibly have been secured by the invasion of Pennsylvania: First, the offensive strategical, but defensive tactical, plan of the campaign, as agreed upon, should never have been abandoned after we entered the enemy's country. Second, if there ever was a time when the abandonment of that plan could have promised decisive results, it was at Brandy Station, where, after Stuart had repulsed the force thrown across the river, we might have fallen on that force and crushed it, and then put ourselves in position, threatening the enemy's right and rear, which would have dislodged him from his position at Fredericksburg, and given us the opportunity for an effective blow. Third, General Stuart should not have been permitted to leave the general line of march, thus forcing us to march blindfolded into the enemy's country; to this may be attributed, in my opinion, the change of the policy of the campaign. Fourth, the success obtained by the accidental encounter on the 1st, should have been vigorously prosecuted, and the enemy should have been given no time to fortify or concentrate. Fifth, on the night of the 1st, the army should have been carried around to Meade's right and rear, and posted between him and his capital, and we could



General James Longstreet

have maneuvered him into an attack. Sixth, when the attack was made on the enemy's left, on the 2d, by my corps. Ewell should have been required to co-operate by a vigorous movement against his right and Hill should have moved against his centre. Had this been done, his army would have been dislodged, beyond question. seventh, on the morning of the 3d it was not yet too late to move to the right and maneuver the Federals into attacking us. Eighth, Pickett's Division should not have been ordered to assault Cemetery Ridge on the 3d, as we had already tested the strength of the position sufficiently to admonish us that we could not dislodge him. While the co-operation of Generals Ewell and on the 2d by vigorous assault at the moment my battle was in progress, would, in all probability, have dislodged the Federals from their position. it does not seem that such success would have yielded the fruits anticipated at the inception of the campaign. The battle, as it was fought, would, in any result, have so crippled us that the Federals would have been able to wake good their retreat, and we should soon have been obliged to retire to Virginia with nothing but victory to cover our waning cause.

The morals of the victory might have dispirited the North, and aroused the South to new exertions, but it would have been nothing in the game being played by the two armies at Gettysburg. As to the abandonment of the tactical defensive policy that we had agreed upon, there can be no doubt That General Lee deeply deplored it as a mistake. His remark, made just after the battle, "It is all my fault," meant just what it said. It adds to the nobility and magnanimity of that remark, when we reflect that it was the utterance of a deep-felt truth, rather than a mere sentiment. In a letter written home by General Lee, in January, 1864, he says: "Had I taken your advice at Gettysburg, instead of pursuing the course I did, how different all might have been." Captain T. J. Gode, of Houston, Texas, a gentle man of high position and undoubted integrity, writes to me upon this same point as follows:

"Another important circumstance which distinctly remember was in the winter of 1864, when you sent me from East Tennessee to Orange Court-House with dispatches for General Lee. Upon my arrival there, General Lee asked me in his tent, where he was alone with two or three Northern papers on his table. He remarked that he had just been reading the Northern official report of the battle of Gettysburg; that he had become satisfied, from reading those reports that, if he had permitted you to carry out your plans on the third day, instead of making the attack on Cemetery Hill, we would have been successful." I cannot see, as has been claimed, why the absence of General Lee's cavalry should have justified his attack on the enemy. On the contrary, while they may have perplexed him, I hold that it was additional reason for his not hazarding an attack. At the time the attack was ordered, we were fearful that our cavalry had been destroyed. In case of a disaster, and a forced retreat, we should have had nothing to cover our retreat. When so much was at stake as at Gettysburg, the absence of the cavalry should have prevented the taking of any chances.

James Longstreet

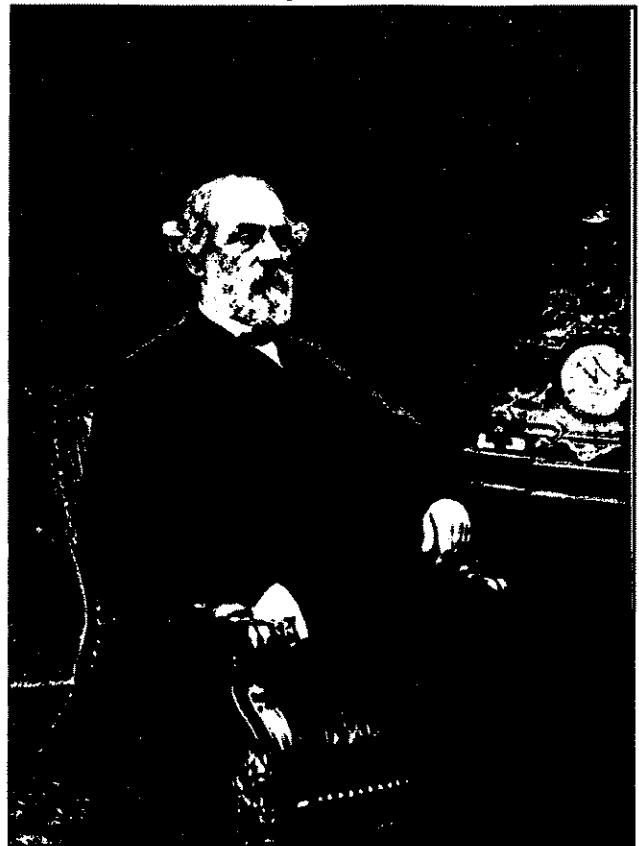
**Gettysburg
Field Trip 1997
Sept. 25 - 28**

Washington College

**"Lexington, Virginia,
March 25. 1866.**

"My Dear Sir: I am very glad to learn from your letter of the 13th inst. that you have written your son in reference to his neglect of his studies. I am sure your letter and the kind admonition of his mother will have a beneficial effect upon him. I have myself told him as plainly but as kindly as I could that it was necessary for him to change his course, or that he would be obliged to return home. He has promised me that he would henceforth be diligent and attentive, and endeavor in all things to perform his duty. I hope that he may succeed, for I think he is able to do well if he really makes the effort. Will you be so kind as to inform Mrs. W that I have received her letter of the 19th. It will give me pleasure at all times to aid her son in every way I can, but if he desires no benefit from his connection with the college it will be to his interest to return home.

"Very truly your obedient servant, R.E. LEE."



Robert E. Lee as President of Washington College

Washington College,"Lexington, Virginia, March 19, 1868.

"My Dear Sir: Before this you have learned the affecting death of your son, I can say nothing to mitigate your grief or to relieve your sorrow; but if the sincere sympathy of his comrades and friends and of the entire community can bring you any consolation, I can assure you that you possess it in its fullest extent. When one, in the pureness and freshness of youth, before having been contaminated by sin or afflicted by misery, is called to the presence of his Merciful Creator, it must be solely for his good. As difficult as this may be for you now to recognize, I hope you will keep it constantly in your memory and take it to your comfort; and I pray that He who in His wise Providence has permitted this crushing sorrow may sanctify it to the happiness of all. Your son and his friend, Mr. Birely, often passed their leisure hours in rowing on the river, and, on last Saturday afternoon, the 4th inst., attempted what they had more than once been cautioned against-to approach the foot of the dam, at the public bridge. Unfortunately, their boat was caught by the return-current, struck by the falling water, and was immediately upset. Their perilous position was at once seen from the shore, and aid was hurried to their relief, but before it could reach them both had perished. Efforts to restore your son's life, though long continued, were unavailing. Mr. Birely's body was not found until next morning. Their remains were, yesterday, Sunday, conveyed to the Episcopal church in this city, where the sacred ceremonies for the dead were performed, by the Reverend Dr. Pendleton, who nineteen years ago, at the far-off home of their infancy, placed upon them their baptismal vows. After the service a long procession of the professors and students of the college, the officers and cadets of the Virginia Military Academy, and the citizens of Lexington accompanied their bodies to the packet-boat for Lynchburg, where they were placed in charge of Messrs. Wheeler & Baker to convey them to Frederick City.

"With great regard and sincere sympathy, I am,"Most respectfully, R.E. Lee"

Appomattox

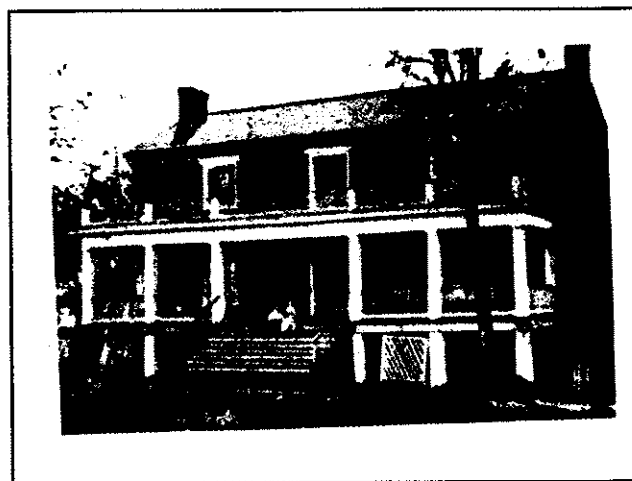
HEADQUARTERS. ARMY of NORTHERN VIRGINIA,
April 10, 1865.

"After four years' of arduous service, marked by unsurpassed courage and fortitude, the Army of Northern Virginia has been compelled to yield to over whelming numbers and resources. I need not tell the survivors of so many hard-fought battles, who have remained steadfast to the last, that I have consented to this result from no distrust of them; but, feeling that valor and devotion could accomplish nothing that could compensate for the loss that would have attended the continuation of the contest, I have determined to avoid the useless sacrifice of those whose past services have endeared them to their countrymen. By the terms of the agreement, officers and men can return to their homes and remain there until exchanged. You will take with you the satisfaction that proceeds from the consciousness of duty faithfully performed and I earnestly pray that a merciful God will extend to you His blessing and protection. With an increasing admiration of your constancy and devotion to your country, and a grateful remembrance of your kind and generous consideration of myself, I bid you an affectionate farewell.

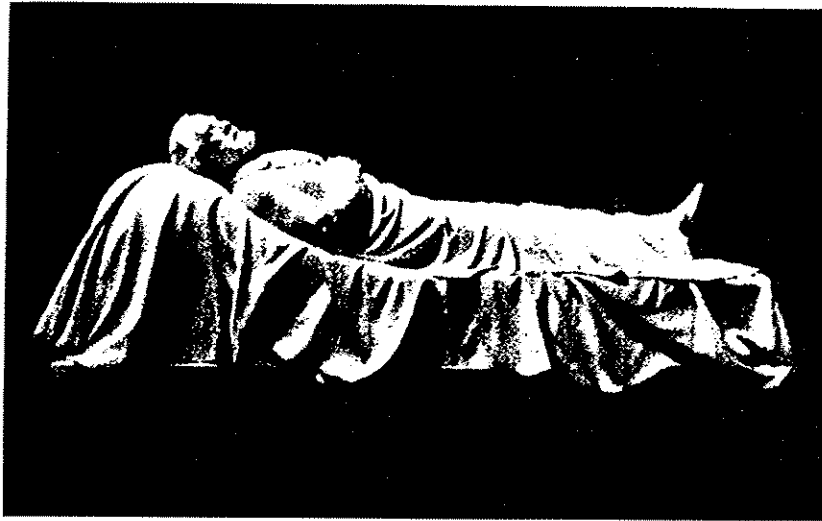
"R. E. LEE, General."



Robert E. Lee, sketched following his meeting
with Grant



The McLean House photographed two days after the surrender



Robert E. Lee Crypt, Washington and Lee University, Lexington, Virginia

The Death of Robert E. Lee

by Dick Crews

Robert E. Lee died on October 12th of 1870. He had taken ill two weeks prior. Further adding to the R.E. Lee myth, he had chaired a meeting of the Vestry of his church that afternoon before his illness discussing the maintenance of the Church and the Rector's salary.

General Lee's physicians attributed his death in great measure to moral causes. The strain of his campaigns, the bitterness of defeat aggravated by the bad faith and insolence of the victor, sympathy with the subsequent sufferings of the Southern people and the effort at calmness under these accumulated sorrows, seemed the sufficient and the real causes that slowly but steadily undermined his health and led to his death.

Such talk was simply dribble to cover the doctor's lack of knowledge. The attorneys in our *Cleveland Round-Table* would nail these doctors for malpractice, **big time**. Surprisingly, the doctors had a pretty good idea what was wrong with Lee, but didn't have a clue what to do about it.

It also wasn't that Lee did not like to go to Doctors. Lee went to the best doctors in Western Virginia, Richmond, Alexandria, Baltimore, and Charlotte, North Carolina. One examination lasted for six hours! With no equipment, what could they have done for six hours?

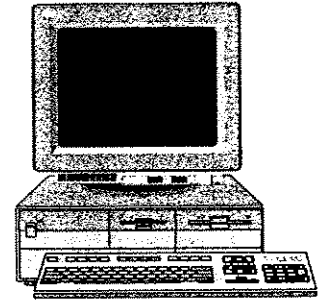
Historians tend to overlook Lee's preoccupation with his health. Historians claim Lee took the job as President of Washington College because he wanted to continue to develop young men. Well partly, however he spent almost all of his free time at the health resorts of White Sulfur Springs and Hot Springs which are very close to Washington College.

Robert E. Lee spent the last five years of his life very concerned about his health. Given the Doctoring he was receiving it is surprising that he lived for another five years after the Civil War.

Dick Crews

THE CIVIL WAR ON THE INTERNET

by Hans C. Kuenzi¹



A study of the Civil War may at first seem out of place in places like "*cyberspace*" and "*the information super highway*." Indeed, the war invokes thoughts of simpler and plain-spoken days. Days in which the value of a man's life were measured in terms of courage, endurance and a good bit of luck. Intelligence was not generally regarded as much as one's devotion to the cause to which he was drawn. Never the less, even a casual study of the Civil War can now be enhanced by research on the Net. As the world's largest encyclopedia, the Internet contains a vast amount of information about the Civil War. Unfortunately, it lacks an index, thus making the real challenge for any user the ability to find what you need.

The key to getting started is learning to use search engines. Search engines are designed to assist you in finding information on the Worldwide Web, the ever expanding universe of computer "web sites" containing information on everything from **aardvarks to zymurgy**. Search engines have indexed the Web and allow you to locate information by searching their indices and then easily accessing that information. Some of the best search engines are:

Yahoo	- http://www.yahoo.com
Lycos	- http://www.lycos.com
McKinley	- http://www.mckinley.com
Altavista	- http://www.altavista.digital.acorn

Because these search engines use different indexing methods, you may get different results depending on which search engine is employed. Consequently, when starting research on a new topic, you may want to use more than one search engine. I prefer Altavista because it allows the user to research through the use of key words. Often, a search will lead you to a web site which is nothing more than a list of other web sites classified by topic or subject matter. The advantage of these sites is that the research has already been done for you, thus allowing you to quickly move to a web site which contains the specific information you seek.

My research of the Civil War on the Internet began at Altavista. An initial inquiry disclosed that there presently exists several hundred thousand web sites offering information on the Civil War. The scope of available information is staggering. The information ranges from those offering the lyrics to Calvary battle songs to a study of Civil War genealogy to a computer-generated "fly-by" of the Bull Run area from the 1860s using geological survey data and scans of old maps. Software allowing you to download video images is required to view this last web site.

¹Hans C. Kuenzi is an attorney and a member of the Cleveland CWRT since 1995

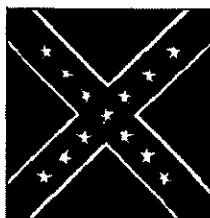
Of local interest, I found a web site containing articles from Cleveland newspapers from 1861 to 1865 describing events of the Civil War, as well as another web site listing the name of every soldier from the Northern Ohio counties who served in the War. Unfortunately, the accuracy of some data cannot be guaranteed. A web site listing every Civil War Round Table in Ohio named Brian Kowell as our President. Mr. Kowell served as President of our organization in 1985. Dan Zeiser may wish to request that the record be corrected.

I found two comprehensive web sites for civil War research. The first is the web site launched by the newly formed United States Civil War Center located at Louisiana State University (<http://www.cwc.lsu.edu/civlink.htm>). This web site contains an index of Civil War information available at over 1,400 web sites. Although, I did not have opportunity to view more than a dozen of these web sites, I found the information well organized and quite scholarly. The second location to begin your research of the Civil War can be found at the American Civil War Home Page (<http://funnelweb.utcc.utk.edu/~hoemann/warweb.html>). This web site was created and is maintained by several educators and is updated regularly. Its index includes broad topics such as graphic images, documentary records, state and local studies, specific battles, rosters of combatants and regimental histories, Civil War reenactment units and links to other information sites.

Civil War information available on the Internet could keep you busy for years to come. Obscure data which you could spend days seeking in the Library of Congress can easily be found in under an hour. Any casual or serious fan of the Civil War would be well served by a surf on the Internet.

Hans Kuonzi

Below is part of the web site of the 11th Mississippi Infantry



11th Mississippi Infantry

The 11th Mississippi Infantry was one of the best and most famous regiments in the Army of Northern Virginia. Its heart was the University Greys, a company comprised mainly of students from the University of Mississippi. The University Greys is well known for having suffered 100% casualties during Pickett's/Pettigrew's Charge at Gettysburg. But the 11th Mississippi fought on many other battlefields from First Manassas to Petersburg. It broke the Union line at Gaines' Mill, charged again at Second Manassas, and held the Bloody Cornfield at Sharpsburg. The men of the 11th held against all odds at the Wilderness, repelled a flanking attack at Spotsylvania, and routed three lines of defenders at Globe Tavern. As much in awe as in respect, this page is dedicated to their memory.

Daniel G. Zeiser
5877 Williamsburg Drive
Cleveland, OH 44143

The Cleveland
Civil War Round-Table
PO Box 18900
Cleveland, Ohio 44118



IN NEXT MONTH'S
FEBRUARY, 1997 CHARGER

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

PSYCHOANALYSIS OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN
BY ROBERT E. BATTISTI

THE 10 BEST BOOKS ABOUT LINCOLN

LINCOLN AT GETTYSBURG

THE MEETING AT CITY POINT: WILLIAM T. SHERMAN, ULYSSES
GRANT, AND ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

