



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

# THE CHARGER

Vol. 19#5

357th Meeting

January, 1998

## *The Great Debate*

### **The Three Major causes of the American Civil War**

The Cleveland Civil War Roundtable in January will hold a debate between a good cross section of our membership. We have five members set to go head to head. A twenty year member, two first year members, and two members in the middle.

The subject of the debate is the causes of the American Civil War. An important topic for discussion even now 136 years later.

What caused Americans to kill each other in a war that killed more Americans than all our other wars combined?

Come join us in January for the **Great Debate**.



## *Tonight's Debaters*

Bill Doty  
Neil Evans  
John Howard  
John Peduzzi  
Ty Somersshield

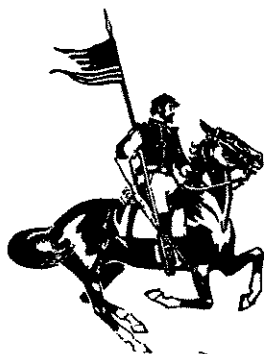
**Date: January 14, 1998**

**Place: The Hermit Club**

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

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

# CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE 1957-1998



*President:* **John Moore**  
*Vice President:* **Dick Crews**  
*Secretary:* **Bob Boyda**  
*Treasurer:* **Peter Holman**

Editor of the **THE CHARGER**  
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 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: call Dick Crews  
 (216) 752-9961 or (800) 800-8310

## Past Cleveland C.W.R.T. Presidents

1987	Don Zeiser	1978	Milton Holmes
1986	John Sutula	1975	Thomas Gretter
1985	Norton London	1974	Nolan Heidelbaugh
1984	Robert E. Battisti	1973	Arthur Jordan
1983	Kevin Callahan	1972	Bernard Drews
1982	Bob Baucher	1971	Kenneth Callahan
1981	Joe Tinpek	1970	Frank Schulte
1980	Ken Callahan Jr.	1969	Donald Heckaman
1989	Neil Gleason	1968	Frank Moran
1988	Martin Graham	1967	William Schleeinger
1987	George Vourlojanis	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 Spigle	1959	John Outten, Jr.
1979	William Bates	1958	George Ferr, Jr.
1978	Richard McCree	1957	Kenneth Grant

## Calendar of Events

JANUARY 14, 1998

### The Great Debate

"THE THREE MAJOR CAUSES OF THE CIVIL WAR"

February 11, 1998

### Lincoln

ROBERT E. BATTISTI

MARCH 11, 1998

### John Buford

BOB BAUCHER

APRIL 8, 1998

### The Last Naval Duel

WILLIAM F. B. VODREY

MAY 13, 1998

### Fort Sumter

DAVID R. RUTH

### Spring Field Trip

**May 9, 1998**

**Western Reserve  
Historical Society**

### Fall Field Trip

**Shenandoah Valley**

**September 24, 1998**

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

General William T. Sherman:



# Too Soft on the South ?

By Dick Crews

Civil War Union General William T. Sherman has been called every negative name in the English language by people of the former States of the Confederacy. However, one of Sherman's greatest set backs was when he was accused of being **soft** on the South. Sherman was accused of taking bribes from Confederate President Jefferson Davis and being disloyal to the Union cause by Army Chief of Staff Major General Halleck and Secretary of War William Stanton.

**What!** The man who burned Atlanta, tore up the states of Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina including destroying the Capital of South Carolina; was **soft** on the South?

It all started on April 12, 1865 when Sherman received a telegram that Robert E. Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia had surrendered. Two days later Sherman then in Raleigh, North Carolina received a note from Confederate General Joseph E. Johnston asking for a truce in North Carolina. The Generals met on April 17, to discuss terms to end cessation of hostilities. A treaty was signed the following day.

Rather than forcing a politically unconditional surrender as had Grant on Lee. Sherman made a treaty with Johnston that granted the South generous military and political terms. He even extended the terms to other Confederate Armies in other parts of the South. Ofcourse the War Department in Washington exploded with anger.

Washington at this time was in a state of confusion with the assassination of President Lincoln and the chase to catch John Wilkes Booth and Jefferson Davis. The President's cabinet which was kept in balance by Abraham Lincoln was now in an uproar with a Southerner, Andrew Johnson as President.

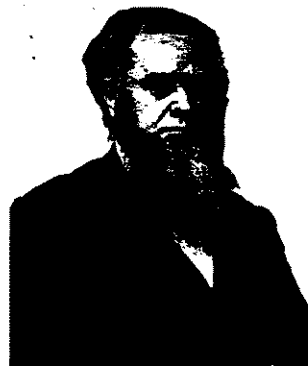
Secretary of War was no fool. To criticize a very popular General like William T. Sherman was politically risky. To cover himself he "*leaked*" the results of a cabinet meeting to the **New York Times**. So you thought *leaking* was a twenty century invention? He claimed in his letter to the **N.Y. Times** that the Cabinet had voted unanimously to condemn Sherman's actions. Records indicate a long Cabinet discussion, but no vote taken.

Secretary of War Stanton instructed Army chief Ulysses S. Grant to deal with General Sherman. Grant went to Raleigh, North Carolina to see his friend. They had last been together on April 1, with President Lincoln at City Point, Virginia on the side wheeler *River Queen*. Grant asked Sherman to renegotiate using the terms from Appomattox. Confederate General Johnston was very unhappy, but with his army deserting, he had little choice but to agree to the terms. Grant returned to Washington. The next day newspapers all over the country broke the story about Sherman giving in to the South. William T. Sherman was furious.

The first problem was Sherman's Army marching north through Richmond, Virginia. In Richmond the military governor was General Halleck. Sherman told Halleck to stay out of sight as one of his men might take revenge. For the four days it took for the Sherman's Army of 100,000 men to pass through Richmond, Halleck stayed inside surrounded by Union troops from the Army of the James.

The second problem came at the reviewing stand for Grand Parade in front of the Capital in Washington, D.C. Guests of honor for the victorious Union Army were General Grant, General Sherman, and ofcourse War Secretary William Stanton. General Grant asked Sherman to shake hands with Stanton. Would Sherman *make up* with Stanton?. **Ofcourse not, he hated the S.O.B. till the day he died.**

*Dick Crews*



**Edwin McMasters Stanton**



After being shot in the back of the head, the dying Booth is dragged from the barn.

## THE LINCOLN MURDER CONSPIRACIES

By Matt Slattery<sup>1</sup>

President Lincoln was shot by actor and southern adherent John Wilkes Booth in Ford's Theatre April 14, 1865. This fact is clear and uncontestable. Almost nothing else in connection with that event is. The uproar was immense. The excitement, fears, enmities engendered by four years of war were unleashed. Everybody suspected everybody else. President Johnson signed a warrant for the arrest (with \$100,000 reward) of Jefferson Davis and other Confederate leaders; but no faint evidence of their complicity ever surfaced and it was shelved.

What tangibly happened was that Booth was efficiently hunted down and shot on a Virginia farm ten days later. And eight people were quickly rounded up and put on trial as accomplices of Booth in the assassination. It was not a civil trial but a military tribunal and in its hasty actions its findings were laden with flaws, not the least of which was that none of the accused even knew of an assassination. They had been conniving with Booth in a scatter-brained scheme to kidnap the president and that plan had been abandoned. But four were hanged and four sent to prison in the Dry Tortugas (and reprieved a few years later).

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*Matt Slattery is retired and a member of the Cleveland CWRT since 1984*

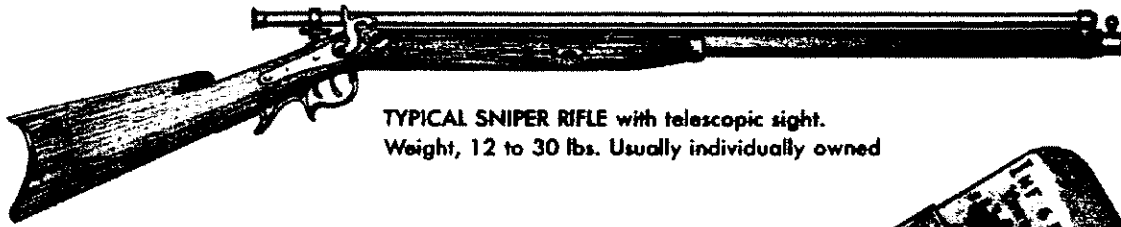


Boston Corbett, the sergeant who broke orders and shot Booth

The excitement dwindled but did not die. In the following decades books about a conspiracy were published, none of which contained anything evidentiary but were political and personal vagaries based on who allegedly said what to who. Until 1937! Otto Eisenschiml had been prowling through yellowed documents and came upon a fact. He drew a logical conclusion from this and proceeded to analyze other facts -- all logical, all reasonable. In stringing them together it implicated Secretary of War Stanton. But Eisenschiml himself admitted that they were not proof and that he could not make a charge.

In his "Lincoln Murder Conspiracies" William Hanchett meticulously analyzes each of Eisenschiml's theories and thoroughly negates them. But this took place in 1986. In the meanwhile an avalanche of Lincoln conspiracy books (Some of them best sellers) came on the market. The more acceptable of them rewrote and revised Eisenschiml's writings; the worst of them merely echoed the nineteenth century mania. Hatchett tediously though briefly reviews and discredits each one. We are left with only an assassinated Lincoln and a lone assassinator Booth. The fact was that General Grant had cancelled his theatre attendance an hour and a half before curtain; that he would not have done this without an order, and that order came from Stanton --which Eisenschiml confirmed. Fact is, as Hanchett found, that Stanton also tried to steer Lincoln from the performance. Thus the conspiracy was built by using only those facts which supported Eisenschiml's theory.

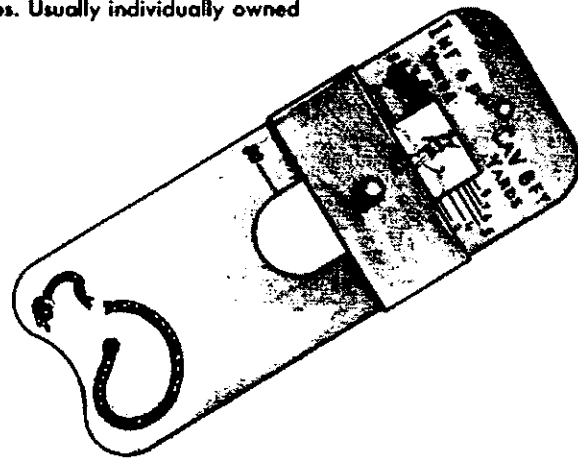
*Matt Slattery*



TYPICAL SNIPER RIFLE with telescopic sight.  
Weight, 12 to 30 lbs. Usually individually owned

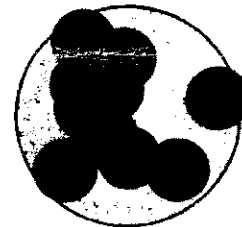
## THE SNIPER RIFLE

Marksmen were formed into sharpshooters regiments, or attached singly or in small groups to various commands. *Harper's Weekly* reported of Berdan's Sharpshooters: "The requirements are that no man is admitted to the regiment who does not shoot, at 600 feet distance, ten consecutive shots at an average of five inches from the bulls eye." With telescopic sights, and fired from a steady rest, these rifles were capable of great accuracy. These super-accurate, heavy-barreled rifles were usually provided with false muzzles and bullet starters. The false muzzle ensured the correct seating of the bullet which was, of course, of greater diameter than the bore measured over the lands (it was not usually quite as big as the groove diameter, as most such rifles took a thin paper patch). It also protected the true muzzle from wear and damage which might destroy the fine accuracy of the weapon. Before rifling, the end of the barrel was turned down slightly, cut off, and the cut-off portion was drilled for steel pins (see below). These pins exactly fitted corresponding holes in the end of the barrel. The false muzzle was then put in place and the gun rifled. The forward end of the false muzzle was reamed out very slightly to make starting the bullet easier. The bullet starter was a piston-like arrangement, the end of which was shaped to fit the nose of the bullet, and which fitted over the false muzzle when the bullet

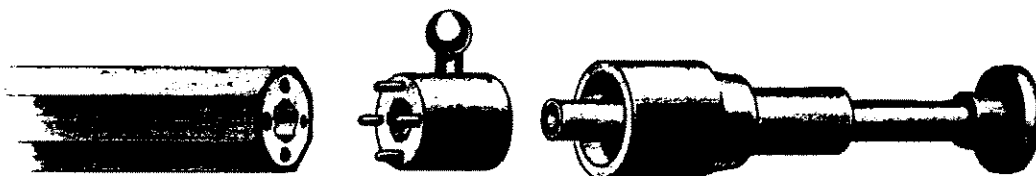


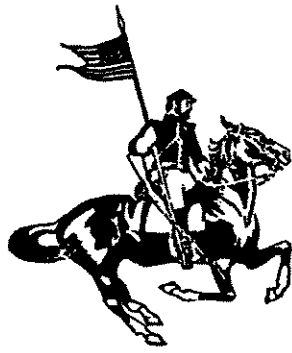
Stadium for estimating distances. Brass plate, with sliding bar. Figure of man or rider was enclosed by pushing up bar with right thumb. Distance was read off appropriate scale. 25-inch cord, held taut, gave correct distance from eye.

10-shot group  
shot in 1859  
at 220 yards.  
Actual size



was in place. A smart blow with the palm of the hand drove the bullet into the barrel and engaged it in the rifling. The starter was then withdrawn and the bullet pushed down onto the powder with a wooden ramrod. The metal pin on the false muzzle blocked the sight, to make sure the shooter removed the false muzzle before firing. Careful marksmen often inserted a brass or copper tube down the barrel and poured the powder down that, to ensure the full charge reaching the chamber. Bullets were carefully molded, sized, and checked for weight.





## **Cleveland Civil War Round-Table Summary of 40 years of Programs 352 programs from 1957 to 1997**

<u>Types of Speakers</u>	<u>1987 to 1997</u>	<u>40 year total</u>
1. Members:	23	106
2. Non-Members:	54	202
3. Panels:	14	26
4. Movies:	1	14

### Breakdown of Non Member Speakers

1. Authors:	11	63
2. From other Round-Tables	5	37
3. Historians	12	43
4. Educators	11	34
5. Park Historians	12	23
6. Others	2	53

### Authors as Speakers (new Category since 1987)

Stanchak, Nolan, Downes, Graham. Skock, Ramage, Ogden, Greene, Tidwell, Sommers, Reeves, Whitehouse, Wert, Grimsley, & Taylor.



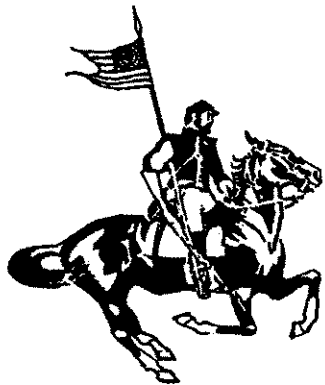
	<u>1987-1997</u>	<u>40 Years</u>
<u>Categories of Programs</u>		

1. Battles, Tactics, & Strategy	26	72
2. Personalities	29	109
3. Political & Social	5	34
4. Ohio & the Civil War	5	19
5. Logistics	0	12
6. Reconstruction	1	4
7. Misc.	24	99

Breakdown of Topics:

	<b>Union</b>		<b>Confederate</b>	
	<u>1987-1997</u>	<u>40 Years</u>	<u>1987- 1997</u>	<u>40 years</u>
1. Generals	9	39	10	38
2. Politicians	6	27	1	7
3. Personalities	5	21	5	11
4. Private Soldiers	6	10	3	5
5. Cavalry	4	10	1	4
6. Navy	2	7	1	3
7. Artillery	0	1	0	2
8. Misc.	13	49	5	19

Subjects that defy a Category:	<u>1987-1997</u>	<u>40 years</u>
	30	103



**THE CLEVELAND  
CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE  
P.O. BOX 18900  
CLEVELAND, OHIO 44118**

John W. Moore  
6967 Gates Road  
Gates Mills, OH 44040



**Robert E. Lee**

Born January 19, 1807

In Next month's, February Charger

**ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S FUNERAL AND  
THE LONG RIDE HOME  
INCLUDING HIS STOP IN CLEVELAND**