

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

THE CHARGER

Vol. 19#3

355th Meeting

November, 1997

Tonight's speaker

STEVEN J. WRIGHT

Steven J. Wright is Curator for *The Civil War Library and Museum* and a free-lance writer and research historian. He has written more than 200 articles and reviews on subjects ranging from the Civil and Indian Wars to Lake Superior shipwrecks. He has written for *The Gettysburg magazine*, *The Civil War Library and Museum*, The Franklin Mint, The Custer Battlefield Historical and Museum Association, *Civil War News* and *The Courier*. His book, *The Irish brigade* was released in 1992, and *Bronzed Valor: Black Soldiers in the Union Army* will be released in 1997.

Wright was born in Green Bay, Wisconsin and grew up in Silver Bay, Minnesota. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from St. John's University (Minnesota), and a Master of Arts degree in American History and American Indian Studies from the University of Minnesota-Duluth. For more than twenty years he has worked for local historical societies, private museums, and the National Park Service; including four years as a seasonal ranger at Gettysburg National Military Park. He is a member of The Company of Military Historians, which he serves as Vice President of Publications and a member of the Board of Governors; and is former President of *Old Baldy Civil War Round Table of Philadelphia*.

Tonight's Topic

The Irish Brigade

Tonight is a very timely discussion of a famous Civil War union brigade, the **Irish Brigade**.

The new Irish Brigade monument on *bloody Lane* at the Antietam National Park has produced many newspaper articles as a belated tribute to one of the most storied units in American history.

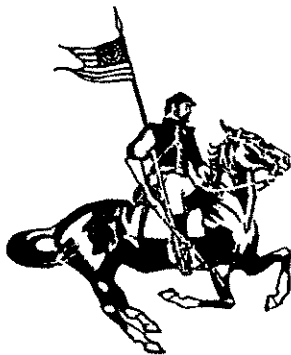
Date: November 12, 1997

Place: The Hermit Club

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

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

THE CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE 1957 - 1997



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

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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 call Dick Crews (216) 752-9961 or (800) 800-8310

Past Cleveland C.W.R.T. Presidents

1997	Den Zeiber	1977	James Chapman
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 Trpak	1971	Kenneth Callahan
1990	Ken Callahan Jr.	1970	Frank Schulte
1989	Neil Gleser	1969	Donald Hackeman
1988	Martin Graham	1968	Frank Moran
1987	George Vourlojianis	1967	William Schlessinger
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	John Harkness	1962	Edward Downer
1981	Thomas Geachke	1961	Charles Clarke
1980	Charles Spiegle	1960	Howard Preston
1979	William Bates	1959	John Cullen, Jr.
1978	Richard McCree	1958	George Farr, Jr.
		1957	Kenneth Grant

Calendar of Events

NOVEMBER 12, 1997

THE IRISH BRIGADE
STEVEN J. WRIGHT

DECEMBER 10, 1997

BEDFORD FORREST
BOB BOYDA

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

Mathew Brady covers the War.



*Could you hold the glass
in the other hand,
General Grant?*

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

President Rutherford B. Hayes at South Mountain

by Michael L. Hardy



The 19th President of the United States, Rutherford B. Hayes, was a Civil War hero before he embarked on his political career. During his Civil War tours of duties, he was wounded four times, and four horses were shot out from under him. He resigned after the war as Brevet Major General on June 6, 1865.

Perhaps one of the most famous incidences involving the soldier Hayes took place during the South Mountain campaign, on the way to Antietam. In September, 1862, Hayes was a Lieutenant Colonel who commanded the 23rd Ohio Volunteer Infantry regiment, of the First Brigade, of the Kanawha Division (Brig. General Jacob Cox) of the IX corps

(Reno). Another future president, Sergeant William McKinley, served in that regiment as well.

On the evening of September 10, 1862, Corps commander Reno came upon the 23rd Ohio when it was stealing a local farmer's straw, while Colonel Hayes watched without objection. Outraged, General Reno lashed into the Ohioans, stating "You damned son-of-a-bitches. Who is your colonel?" Hayes boldly stepped forward. After Reno reminded Hayes that they were in a loyal state and there was to be no looting, Hayes, not showing much respect for Reno's Regular Army attitude, said, "Well, I trust our generals will exhibit the same energy in dealing with our foes that they do in the treatment of their friends." "What did Hayes mean by that remark?" asked Reno. "Nothing," Hayes retorted. Reno then left to the sound of cheers from the 23rd for their colonel echoing off his back.

On September 14, 1862, the regiment was deployed at Fox's Gap at South Mountain. At 7:00 a.m., Hayes was ordered to march along the left flank to the south of the mountain road and to flank and overrun the confederate artillery to the front. The Ohioans initially got lost in the rugged topography that consisted of a high knoll, and dense woods and rock out cropping and steep hills, but by 9:00 a.m., the regiment found its way, and encountered Confederate pickets.

Hayes cheered on his men as follows:

"Now boys, remember you are the 23rd, and give them hell. In these woods, the rebels don't know, but we are 10,000; and. . . we are as good as 10,000 by God!"

The 23rd charged the 5th North Carolina which, after initially scattering, regrouped and fought hard. Then, Lieutenant Colonel Hayes "felt a stunning blow." A musket ball fractured his left arm above the elbow. After tying his handkerchief around the wound, he rallied his men. Although seriously injured, he refused to relinquish command. When a sergeant wandered past him and said, "I am played out, please sir, let me leave," Hayes used his sword as a prop, pointed to his wound and said "Look at this, don't talk about being played out. There is your place in the line." The sergeant then returned to his position, but Hayes eventually weakened, and laid down 20 feet behind his men. "Balls passed near my face and hit the ground all around me." Despite his wounds he gave occasional commands.

Hayes had laid down next to a rebel soldier and said, "You came a good ways to fight us." The rebel soldier asked where Hayes was from, and he said "Ohio" whereupon, the rebel said, "Well, you came a good ways to fight us."

When the Confederates tried to turn the left flank of the 23rd Ohio, whereupon the regiment gave way and Hayes laid semi-conscious on the ground between the combatants' two lines. After 20 minutes, he regained consciousness and shouted, "Hello, 23rd men! Are you going to leave your colonel for the enemy?" At first, six volunteers tried to rescue Hayes, but attracted too much fire. Then lieutenant Benjamin W. Jackson scrambled through a clearing and dragged Hayes to the woods and placed him behind a log for safety.

Soon thereafter, Colonel Hayes was evacuated to Middletown, Maryland approximately 3½ miles away, where he convalesced at the home of a local merchant, Jacob Rudy. 130 of Hayes' men, were killed or wounded that day. After the battle, the commanding officer's report praised Hayes for gallantry and skill. He missed Antietam, but he arrived back at his unit on November 30, 1862.

Michael L. Hardy



THE NAVAL WAR IN THE WEST

by William F.B. Vodrey

The Civil War in the West is finally getting the attention it has long been due. Gettysburg, Antietam, Chancellorsville and Fredericksburg were important battles, to be sure, but in many ways it was on and near the brown water of the Mississippi and a dozen smaller western rivers that the Civil War was truly won. It was there that generals like Ulysses S. Grant and William T. Sherman learned their grim craft, later to apply those lessons with particular effectiveness in the East. And it was there that the United States Navy split the Confederacy asunder.

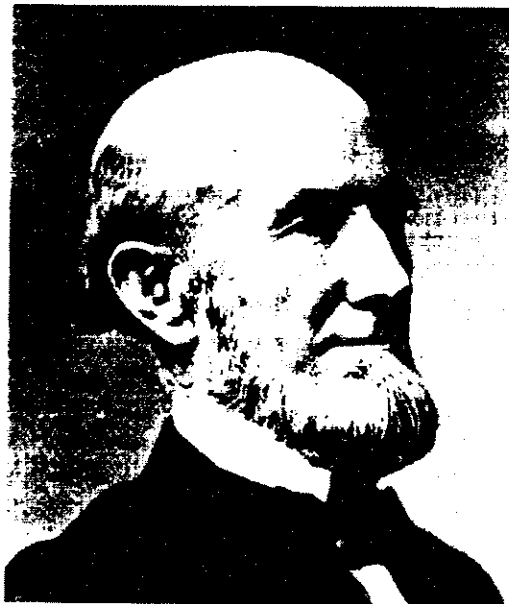
As J.T. Scharf wrote in his groundbreaking 1887 History of the Confederate States Navy. "It is no exaggeration of the services rendered in the late war by the navy of the United States, to say that without its aid the armies of the Union would not have been successful; that if the United States had been as destitute of a navy and of naval resources as the Southern Confederacy was, that the Union would have been dissolved; that without [naval officers such as] Farragut and Foote, Grant and Sherman would occupy in history the same plane [as] McDowell and Banks."

You might wish to take a look at two recent books focusing on the war on Western waters. Jack D. Coombe's Thunder Along the Mississippi: The River Battles that Split the Confederacy (Sarpedon, N.Y. 1996) is a fine overview. Coombe makes it clear that, from the outset, both the U.S. and C.S. commanders in the Mississippi region were similarly hampered by the relative lack of emphasis placed on the Western theater by their respective governments, concerned as they were with the defense of the capitals, Richmond and Washington, D.C. Operations in the East got the lion's share of money, troops, resources, and matériel.

None of this would stop James B. Eads, a rags-to-riches St. Louis businessman with a knack for practical engineering. He'd made his first fortune salvaging sunken river steamboats, lost it all investing in a glass factory, and then returned to river salvage. When war broke out, he saw at once the strategic significance of the West, and the need for a Union river fleet of steam-powered ironclads strong enough to defeat the Rebels. He wrote to his friend Edward Bates, Lincoln's Attorney General, with suggestions on taking control of the Mississippi River. Within weeks, he was speaking to the Cabinet on that very subject.

Eads' bid was for between four and sixteen ironclads costing \$89,600 each (compare this to a modern Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer; we're now building about three a year at almost \$1 billion apiece). Despite sabotage, labor strife and cash-flow problems,

MISSOURI HISTORICAL SOCIETY

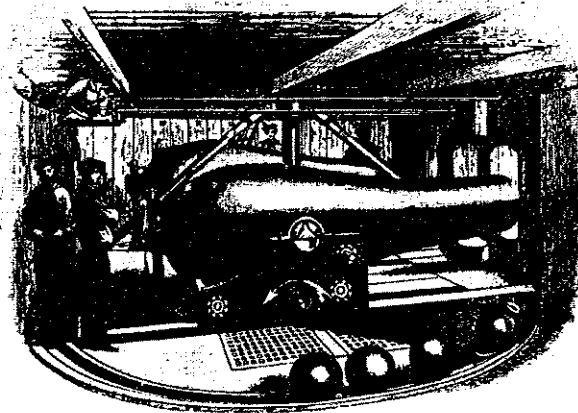


James B. Eads

Eads completed the gunboats just 45 days after signing the contract. However, he was paid - in government bonds, not cash - only *after* the gunboats had already been under heavy enemy fire at Fts. Henry and Donelson.

Since ownership hadn't yet been formally transferred to the government, Eads probably would have been stuck with the construction costs and financially ruined had any been sunk (being a government contractor is not without its risks, then or now). The Eads ironclads, also known as "Pook's turtles" after their principal designer, helped the Union win the war, and Coombe's very readable and interesting book shows us how.

More narrowly focused in scope, and not quite as well written, is Larry J. Daniel and Lynn N. Bock's Island No. 10: Struggle for the Mississippi Valley (University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa 1996). Island No. 10 no longer exists; the shifting course of the Mississippi River long ago erased the island from where it once was, just upstream of New Madrid, Mo. and 59 miles below Cairo, Ill. The Confederates thought they had an impregnable chokepoint on the river, but Daniel and Bock show just how slap-dash was the fortification of the island. However, Union Flag Officer Andrew H. Foote, reluctant to risk any of his ironclads, dithered for months before agreeing to a daring dash past the Rebel works. In one of the most dramatic naval adventures of the war, the USS Carondelet successfully ran past Island No.10 on the proverbial "dark and stormy night." Commander Walke of the Carondelet had strengthened his ironclad with cordwood piled around the boilers, extra deck planking, and anchor chain. The Union gunboat made it past the island under cover of a heavy storm on April 4, 1862, despite the ferocious barrage of Confederate batteries after her presence was betrayed by sparks flying out of the smokestacks. Alfred Thayer Mahan, the great theorist of naval power, later wrote, "The passage of the Carondelet was not only one of the most daring and dramatic events of the war; it was also the death blow to the Confederate defense of this position.



Gun Turret on an Ironclad

With the support of the Carondelet and the Pittsburg which made the run on April 7, U.S. troops were able to cross the river safely, and eventually take the Confederate defenses from the rear. The Rebel garrison surrendered on April 8, 1862. The fall of Island No. 10 made a name for the Union land commander, Gen. John Pope (who was not above exaggerating the number of Confederate prisoners he captured) and led to his quick promotion to no avail, however, as Robert E. Lee trounced him at the Second Battle of Manassas, and he spent the rest of the war fighting the rebellious Sioux in Minnesota.

If you're interested in the naval war on the Mississippi and other western rivers, and tales of heroism and desperation on the brown tides of the inland waterways, take the time to read these two books.

William F.B. Vodrey

WHY GEN. ROBERT E. LEE FAILED TO RECEIVE THE RATIONS SHIPPED FROM DANVILLE, VIRGINIA

There has long been a mystery about the supply train that was supposed to have departed from Danville, Virginia, with rations bound for Gen. Robert E. Lee's starving troops assembling at Amelia Court House following the evacuation of Petersburg.. Lynwood J. Yarbrough of Danville, while doing research on his grandfathers's war time activities, accidentally uncovered some facts that reveal the reason the desperately needed rations never reached Lee's hungry army.

An eye witness account of events pertaining to the matter is to be found in the state of North Carolina's publication, Histories of the Regiments in the Great War 1861-1865 edited by Col. Walter Clark in 1901. In it, Col. W H. Clark of 9th North Carolina infantry, Henderson, North Carolina, states that on April 5, 1865, he was captured at Jetersville by Yankee scouts of Sheridan's Cavalry disguised in Confederate uniforms. Major Young was in command of these men. Col. Clark states as follows:

He told me a circumstance that explains a piece of history which no historian of the closing days of the war has explained that I have seen. It has been an unexplained mystery why the seventy-five thousand rations which General Lee had ordered from Danville to be sent to Amelia Court House were not there upon the arrival of his army. Some say it was the fault of the Superintendent of the Richmond & Danville Railroad; others put the blame on the commissary at Danville, and there are some who say it was the fault of

President Davis. I suppose that I am the only person in the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia at that time who knew the true reason, and I got my information direct from first hands. The lack of these rations was a most disastrous blow to General Lee's plans. For want of them, he lost one day at Amelia Court House in the vain effort to impress food from the



surrounding country to feed his famished army. During this day, Sheridan with ten thousand cavalry and two corps of infantry troops, was pushing rapidly forward to get between him and Danville and thereby prevent his junction with the army of General Johnston in North Carolina. Now, when Petersburg was evacuated, General Lee had to move across the country, away from railroad and telegraph lines. To send a telegram, he must forward it by a mounted courier through the country to a telegraph office. This message to the commissary at Danville was thus sent. Major Young told me that it had not left General Lee's headquarters two hours before he had it in his vest picket, and it was promptly forwarded to General Grant instead of to Danville. So, neither the commissary at Danville, nor the superintendent of the railroad, nor President Davis, was to blame for this disaster, so fatal to our army.



Sheridan's scouts controlled the roads south of Petersburg



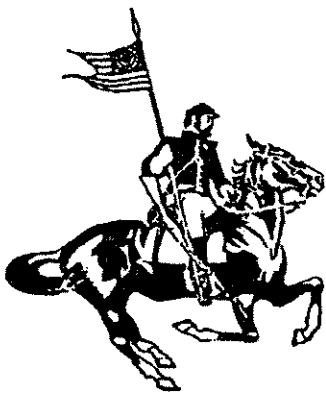
Thanksgiving is just around the corner and November also brings another great program to the C.C.W.R.T. The speaker Will be Steven J. Wright, curator of Philadelphia's Civil War Library and Museum. He is also a freelance writer and research historian. His topic will be "The Irish Brigade." More details from his vita are included in this edition of The Charger.

Many thanks are due to several of our members who have been busy making things happen for the club: First, Frank Yannucci, who led a party twenty- three to Gettysburg. Frank did an excellent job with all the details, thus assuring that we learned a lot and had a great time. Second, Dale Thomas, who presented the October program. Despite an overhead projector that was "acting out", Dale related a captivating story which has been handed down through his wife's family. Third, Dick Crews and William F.B.Vodrey, who wrote articles for the October Charger. They were appreciated.

Thanks to everyone for calling in your reservations last month. Peter Holman said the count came out just right. Please call again soon for November. **J.A.C.Business Communications at 861-5588. I look forward to seeing you.**

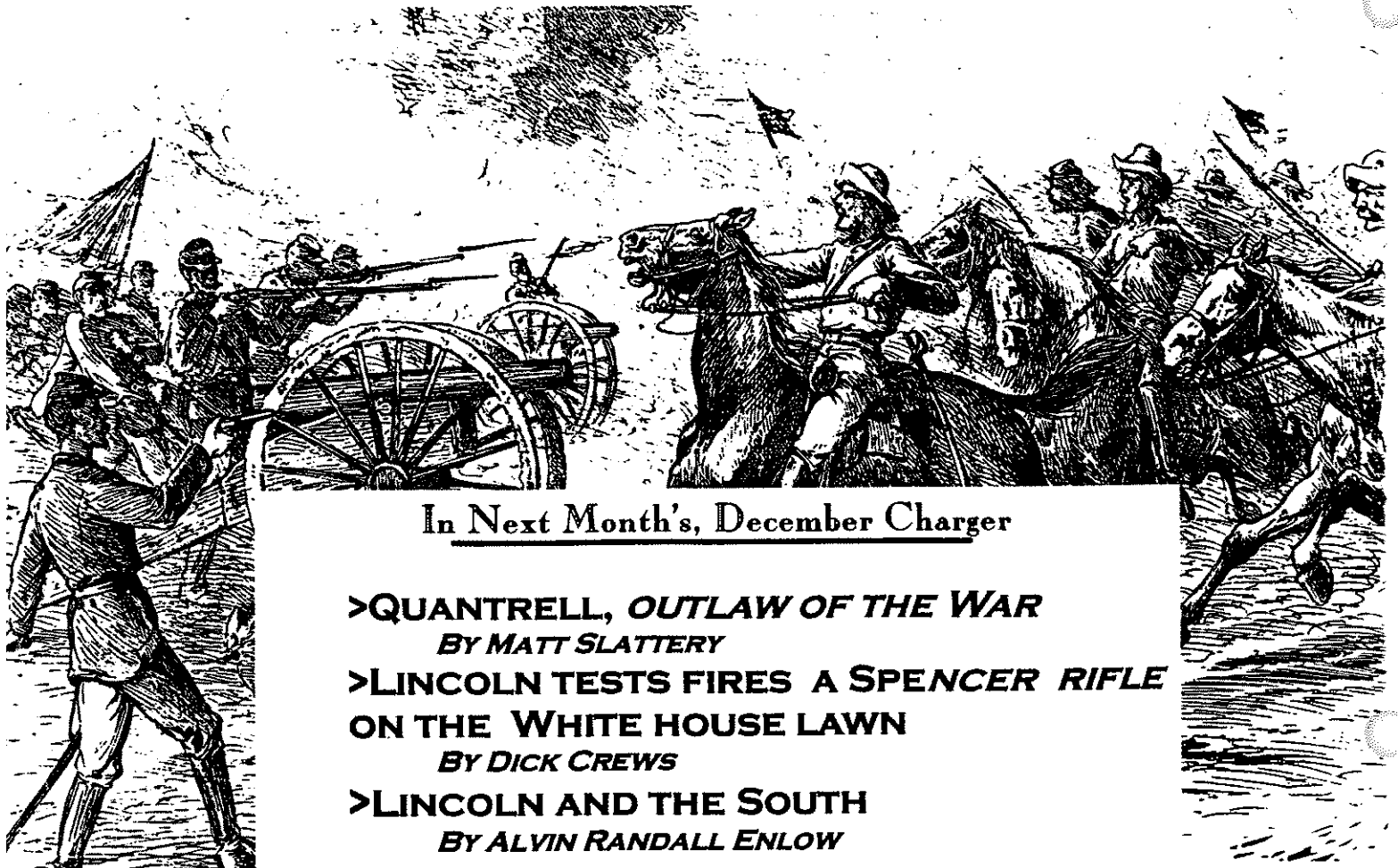
John W. Moore

President's Message



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CLEVELAND, OHIO 44118**

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Gates Mills, OH 44040



In Next Month's, December Charger

**>QUANTRELL, OUTLAW OF THE WAR
BY MATT SLATTERY**

**>LINCOLN TESTS FIRES A SPENCER RIFLE
ON THE WHITE HOUSE LAWN
BY DICK CREWS**

**>LINCOLN AND THE SOUTH
BY ALVIN RANDALL ENLOW**