



# The Charger

## CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

P.O. Box 5786, Cleveland, Ohio 44101

OCTOBER 1988

273RD MEETING

VOL 10 #2

DATE: Tuesday, October 11, 1988

PLACE: Dr. Kenneth Callahan's Home  
19101 South Park Blvd  
Shaker Heights, Ohio

SUBJECT: "The Burden Of Combat in the Civil War"

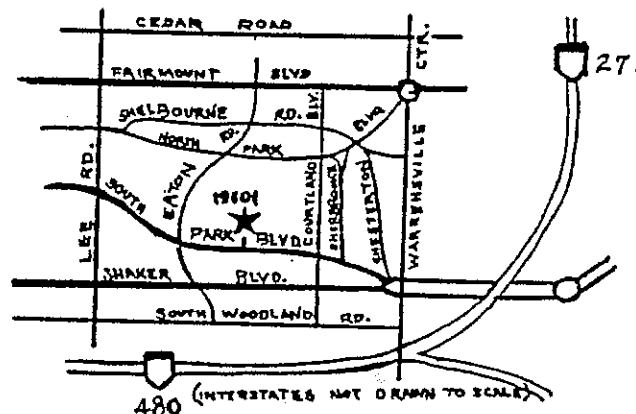
SPEAKER: Gerald F. Linderman; currently Professor of History at the University of Michigan. Born in Marchfield, Wisconsin he did his undergraduate studies at Yale and earned his M.A. and Ph.D. from Northwestern University. He spent 10 years in our country's Foreign Service. He is the author of Embattled Courage: The Experience of Combat in the American Civil War, the History Book Club's August 1987 main selection.

TIME: Cocktails 6 PM Dinner 7 PM

RESERVATIONS: Please call 283-0262 ASAP  
Reservations are a MUST!



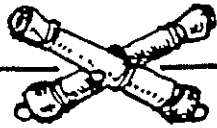
Newcomers may find the map below a help in locating the meeting places. We are looking forward to seeing as many of you as possible.



### HOW TO GET THERE

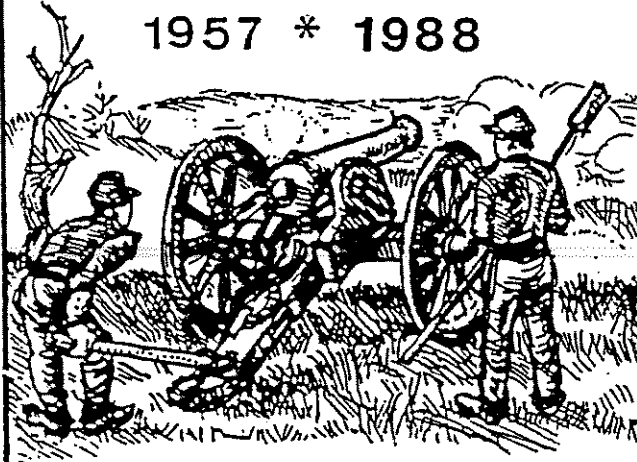
VALET PARKING WILL  
BE PROVIDED COURTESY  
KEN CALLAHAN





# CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

1957 \* 1988



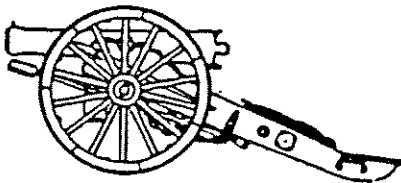
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PLEASE LET US KNOW  
AS SOON AS POSSIBLE  
YOUR NEW ADDRESS...



## Preserve Your Battlefields!

## Last Month's Meeting

It is said that people either like Jerry Russell or they don't. It had been 15 years since his last visit and it was apparent that those members in attendance liked him.

Mr. Russell's talk on Shiloh centered on the mistakes of the military leaders and their consequences. He emphasized the Confederate mistakes which deprived them of victory. He was highly critical of Beauregard and Bragg and his opinion of Albert Sidney Johnston's reputation he likened to that of Elvis Presley's - their deaths were good career moves.

Among the mistakes cited were (1) Johnston's appointing Beauregard 2nd in command with a free-hand in planning the offensive at Shiloh, (2) Beauregard's faulty re-organization of the army which allowed 1/3 of it to be under Bragg's control, (3) the issue of confusing marching orders, (4) the unpreparedness of the Union forces, (5) Beauregard's attack plan of the 4 Corps attacking in successive waves, and (6) Beauregard calling off the attack too soon and without getting his Corps commander's opinions of the feasibility of success in continuing the attack.

At the conclusion of his talk, Mr. Russell addressed a topic dear to his heart: Battlefield Preservation. He talked of the widespread threat to Civil War battle sites such as Antietam, Harpers Ferry, Cedar Creek, Brandy Station, and Manassas. He stated that progress is being made in the Senate concerning the defeat of the proposed mall on the Manassas site. He said an important vote is coming up and urged all members to write Senators Glenn and Metzenbaum c/o US Senate, Washington DC 20510 to voice our concern.



## Your Dues Are Due NOW

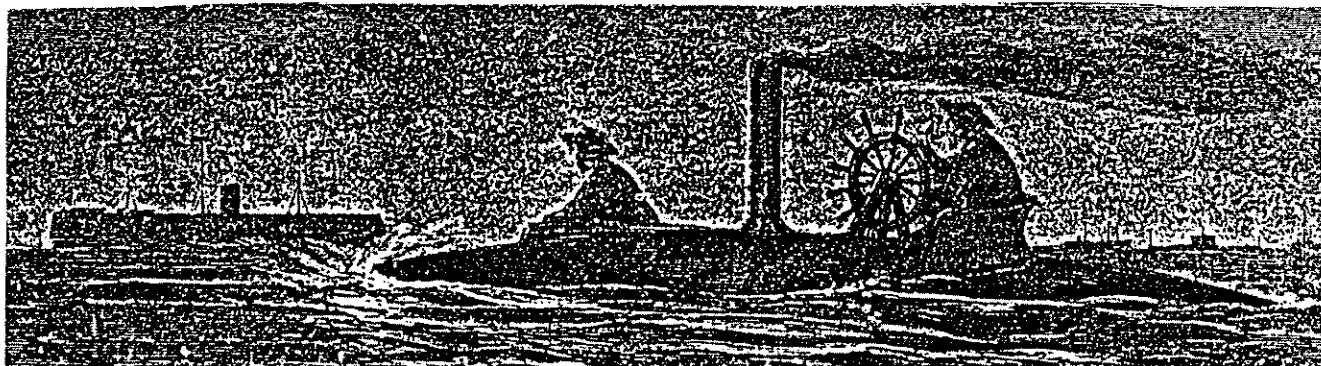
# Events of 125 Years Ago

OCTOBER 1863

- Oct 3            General N.P. Banks began his Bayou Teche Campaign in Louisiana.
- Oct 5            The Confederate torpedo boat David attacked the New Ironsides in Charleston Harbor.
- Oct 9            Lee's Army of Northern Virginia turned Meade's right flank to begin the Bristoe Campaign.
- Oct 10           President Jefferson Davis visited General Bragg's headquarters outside of Chattanooga.
- Oct 13           Ohio voters decisively defeated Clement L. Vallandigham's bid for governor.
- Oct 14           Engagement at Bristoe Station, Virginia.
- Oct 17           General Grant was given command of the Military Division of the Mississippi and relieved General Rosecrans from command at Chattanooga, replacing him with General George Thomas.
- Oct 19           Stuart routed Kilpatrick at Buckland Mills, Virginia.
- Oct 24           After arriving in Chattanooga the night before, Grant ordered the "cracker line" to be opened.
- Oct 27           The "cracker line" is opened-Chattanooga is relieved. Charleston bombardment is renewed.

## CSS *David* Attacks USS *New Ironsides*

1863-10/5



The David that attacked the *New Ironsides*, drawn by a *Harper's Weekly* artist from description.

# SCENES I'D LIKE TO HAVE SEEN



One of the most dreaded of Northern prisons was the enclosed camp at Elmira, New York. It's 24 percent death rate topped even that of the more publicized compound at Camp Sumter, Georgia.

The extant misery at Elmira notwithstanding, escape attempts were few in number. Indeed, the long distance from Southern homes, and the wretched condition of the vast majority of prisoners, limited efforts at freedom.

The most ingenious single escape from Elmira was that of a Georgia sergeant known to history only as "Buttons." He induced prisoners working in the "dead-house" to put him in a coffin and to tack the top lightly in place. A few hours later, the prison surgeon turned over the day's accumulation of bodies to Sexton Jones for interment in nearby Woodlawn Cemetary. (Jones, an escaped slave from Leesburg, Virginia, received forty-dollars per month to transport bodies from the prison to freshly dug graves.)

Soon the wagon bumped along the road. His face powdered with flour to give the white appearance of death, "Buttons" gingerly raised the lid of the coffin. Then to the Negro driver seated just in front of him, "Buttons" moaned in a sepulchral voice: "Come to judgement!"

The Negro warily turned his head. One look at the figure rising from the coffin was enough for Jones, who bolted pell-mell through the woods with the shout: "Ghosties! Ghosties!" The Confederate made good his escape; thenceforth, a Federal officer supervised all "preparing of the dead."

- "The Scounge of Elmira" James I. Robertson Jr.

- Civil War Prisons, ed. William B. Hesseltine  
pp 92-93

- "Confederate Veteran Magazine," XXXIV (1926)  
pp 380

Illustrated by Stu Cramer



Please Make Reservation BY THURSDAY, OCT.

283-0262

More Than You Ever Wanted To Know About

YOUNG

# DAVID GLASGOW FARRAGUT



"Damn the Torpedos! Full Speed Ahead!" Who has not heard those stirring words that pressed forward the Union Navy's attack on Mobile Bay on August 5, 1864? His statement and victory closing one of the two remaining Confederate ports thrilled the public. He was favorably compared to the British Admiral Nelson. In December 1864, the rank of Vice-Admiral was created, and he filled it. In July 1866, the rank of Admiral was created, and he filled it. He was considered by the Naval Leaders of the Union and Confederate Navies as the best Naval Officer of either side during the war.

James Glasgow Farragut was born on July 5, 1801, orphaned at age seven, and 'adopted' by David Porter. He was appointed a midshipman in the US Navy on December 17, 1810. This was also the day that James requested his first name be changed to David in honor of his guardian.

Farragut sailed with his father and was involved in the first enemy prize captured during the War of 1812. He subsequently foiled a mutiny by the prisoners.

When Captain Porter sailed the ESSEX around Capt Horn, Farragut was with him. Captain Porter's exploits in the Pacific are legendary. He single-handedly destroyed the British Pacific Whaling Industry. Captain Porter captured so many British ships that Farragut was placed in command of the ALEXANDER BARCLAY on his 12th birthday. He expertly sailed it to Valparaiso, Chile, and hurried to rejoin the ESSEX.

On March 28, 1814, two British ships, the CHERUB and the PHOEBE, attacked the crippled ESSEX in neutral Chilean waters. A fierce battle raged for over two hours. Ultimately with over 60% of his crew dead, mortally wounded, or blown overboard, Captain Porter surrendered the ESSEX. Captured as a prisoner of war, Porter, Farragut, and the surviving crew were paroled and returned to the United States. They arrived in New York on July 7, 1814. This is when Farragut again requested and was granted the first name change to David.

Thus by the time he was 13 years old, David Glasgow Farragut had been a Naval Officer for more than four years, sailed half-way around the world, fought in several naval battles, made captain of a ship, and became a prisoner of war. Not a bad apprenticeship for the Greatest Civil War Naval Officer.

Captains of the Old Steam Navy: Makers of the American Naval Tradition 1840-1880, "David Glasgow Farragut: The Union's Nelson", by William N. Still, Jr.

Command Under Sail: Makers of the American Naval Tradition 1775-1850,

"David Porter: Pacific Ocean Gadfly", by David F. Long

The Commodores, by Leonard F. Guttridge & Jay D. Smith

David Farragut, by Laura Long

Journal of a Cruise, by David Porter

"The Spirit of the Essex", by Col Richard L. Upchurch, USMC,  
Naval History, Volume 2, #1, Winter 1988

Submitted by Michael J. Dory

# Civil War Drama Under Way in France

By STEVEN GREENHOUSE

Special to The New York Times

CHERBOURG, France, June 24 — Mint juleps and Scarlett O'Hara do not jump to mind when people visit this gray, wind-swept port on the English Channel.

Nevertheless, Cherbourg hopes to become a magnet for Confederacy buffs thanks to the recent discovery of the wreck of the Alabama, one of the most noted ships of the Civil War. The Alabama, a much-feared Confederate privateer that plundered and sank 65 Union merchant ships, went down off Normandy on June 19, 1864, after a duel with the Union warship Kearsarge.

Cherbourg's 40,000 residents are eager to bring the Alabama to the surface and make it the centerpiece of a new museum, although some Southerners are already arguing that the vessel belongs somewhere below the Mason-Dixon line.

"It was by far the most important Confederate raider," said William N. Still, a maritime historian from East Carolina University in Greenville, N.C., who came to Cherbourg to help explore the wreck. "The two most famous Civil War battles were the Monitor and the Merrimac and the Alabamagastst the Kearsarge."

In October 1984, a French sonar ship discovered a hull that was thought might be that of the Alabama. But it was not until last November that Max Guérout, a marine archeologist, announced at a conference in Charleston, S.C., that French researchers had established that the wreck was indeed the Alabama.

Since mid-May, Mr. Guérout has headed a team of 20 divers and a submarine crew who have gone 150 feet down to map the site, study the condition of the Alabama and assess the prospects of bringing it to the surface. They have sketched and photographed the 16-foot smokestack, rusted cannons and pieces of china, as well as the decaying wooden hull, which is half-buried in the sand at a 30-degree angle seven miles offshore.

"The Alabama story is very prominent in local lore," Mr. Guérout said. "There aren't that many dramatic episodes in local history."

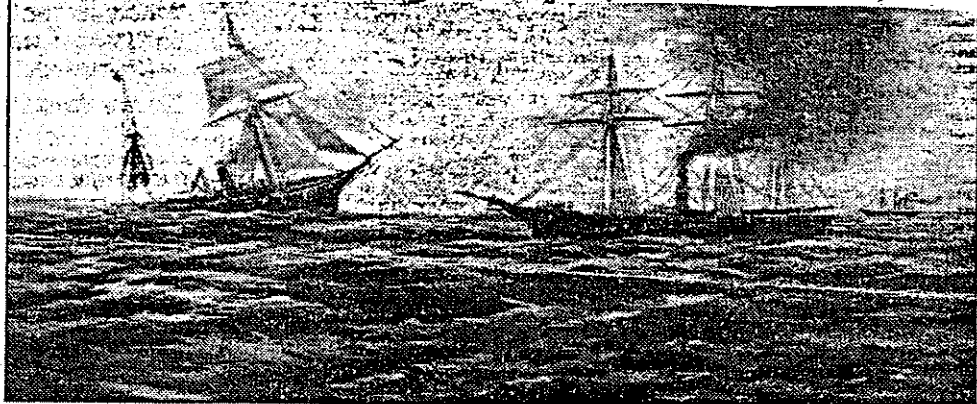
On the day the Alabama sank, thousands of townspeople and visiting Parisians, parasols in hand, lined the docks to watch the battle. Paris's beau monde had poured into Cherbourg that Sunday for the opening of the town's casino.

They watched as the Alabama and its more powerfully armed rival circled each other. Finally, the Alabama fired the first shot and for 70 minutes the cannons thundered. Eventually, the Alabama, its hull ripped open, tried to limp back to shore. The swifter Kearsarge cut off its path and the Alabama sank, with private yachts rescuing most of its crew.

Thus ended the two-year career of a vessel that terrorized Union trading ships from South Africa to Singapore and China. Because of the North's blockade, the Alabama never called at a Confederate port, even though Charleston was its official home base.



## French Hope to Raise Confederate Privateer



Battle of the Kearsarge and the Alabama off Cherbourg, France, as depicted by Xanthus Smith. The Alabama, a Confederate privateer, was sunk on June 19, 1864.

The Alabama was built in Birkenhead, England, near Liverpool, under the fiction that it was a merchant ship. Although the British sided more or less with the Confederacy, they sought to appear neutral, and as a result the Alabama was armed with cannon in the Azores.

"The people in Liverpool are almost as excited about the idea of recovering the Alabama as are the Americans," Mr. Guérout said.

But recovering the ship will not be easy. The Channel's powerful tides have eaten away large parts of the hull. According to some of the divers, the sands covering the hull shift as much as three feet up or down every two or three days. Another problem is that once a wreck is brought up, its wood quickly deteriorates from exposure to air unless painstaking conservation measures are taken.

In addition, it will likely cost more than \$1 million to raise the vessel, and that is more money than the town of Cherbourg can afford. The French Ministry of Culture is pitching in some money, American and French foundations have been set up to raise money and the French are hoping for some financial cooperation from Washington.

### Dispute on Ownership

The Alabama has already become a political football. Senator Howell Heflin, Democrat of Alabama, has introduced a bill declaring that the wreck belongs to the United States. The French claim the right to the Alabama under international law because it is within 12 miles of shore. The Alabama sank when international waters were defined as being more than three miles from shore.

Mr. Guérout is unsure about the prospects of raising the hull but says

he is confident that tens of thousands of objects will be retrieved. That, he said, would be enough to stock Alabama museums in France, the United States and England. "There should be enough to go around to make everyone happy," he said.

Still, Cherbourg officials are eager to bring the hull up to establish a major museum, much as Portsmouth, England, established a museum after the recovery of the 16th-century Mary Rose. A common complaint here is that many Americans visit the nearby D-day assault beaches in Normandy without coming to Cherbourg.

"If we have an Alabama museum, we should be able to attract more Americans," said Jean-Claude Mouchel, Cherbourg's deputy mayor.

### 'A Romantic Thing for Them'

"I'm delighted that the French are so interested in the Alabama," said William Wright, a retired executive living in Paris who is a great-grandson of the Alabama's commander, Raphael Semmes. "It's sort of a romantic thing for them. They must associate it with 'Gone with the Wind.'"

Captain Semmes had asked for permission from France, a neutral country, to stop in Cherbourg to free several dozen prisoners taken after the Alabama sank their vessels and to have repairs done.

After the Alabama received permission, a Union consul in France informed the commander of the Kearsarge, which was in the Netherlands. The Union ship rushed to Cherbourg.

Although the weaker Southern ship might have been able to sneak out of Cherbourg at night, its commander agreed to fight. "For Captain Semmes, it was a matter of honor to fight," said Paul Ingouf, a Cherbourg native who has written a book on the Alabama. "It was a beau geste."



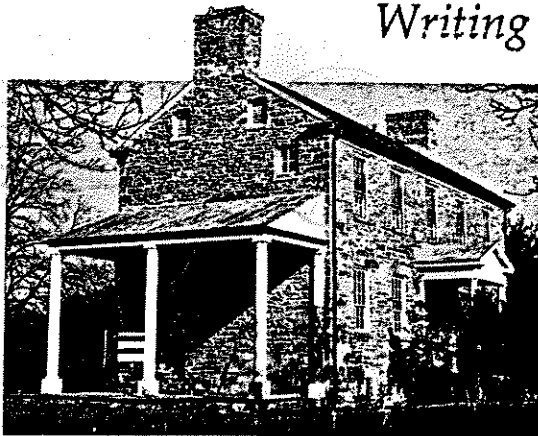
The first Black officer in the US Army was commissioned during the Civil War. He was Major M. R. Delany.

-Our Incredible Civil War by Burke Davis pp 9

Mail from home is always important to soldiers and the boys in blue and gray were no exception. On the Union side 45,000 letters were sent daily via Washington to members of the Eastern armies and an equal number went off from the soldiers to those at home. Ninety thousand more passed daily via Louisville for and from soldiers in the Western armies.

-Embattled Courage by Gerald Linderman pp 94

## Writing on the Wall



*Ben Lomond house, Manassas, Virginia*

Manassas, Virginia, residents who assumed that all their Civil War ghosts had been discovered were surprised when a local group uncovered still another piece of history. "Some workers started peeling off old wallpaper in the Ben Lomond house, and there it was—graffiti left by Union soldiers," explains Roger Myer, president of the Prince William Cultural Arts Federation. That initial discovery led to similar finds throughout the house, which served as a field hospital in both bat-

ties fought at Manassas (also called Bull Run), in 1861 and 1862.

"We suspected that the writing was genuine," says Myer, "because former residents of the house had found Union documents there." Two names, John M. Slater and Wallace Cranston, were positively identified by cross-referencing Civil War records, which showed that both had fought as Union soldiers in Manassas. Firemaster, a local company specializing in historical restoration, is now using a variety of methods to salvage what remains of the century-old message. So far, several names, regiment titles, and part of a will have been recovered.

When renovations are completed, the Ben Lomond house will provide office space and rentals to area groups. "We're going to frame the graffiti," says Myer, "then finish off the rest of the wall. It will be an unusual added attraction." And an excellent way for future generations to read messages from the past.

—Miriam Van Scott

8.

# From The President's Desk

The Cleveland Civil War Roundtable's 1988-1989 year is off to a fast start. Last month's meeting was most interesting and entertaining. I was especially gratified by the positive response from the membership in forming a battle-field preservation committee. Also, there was considerable interest in a possible field trip in the spring to the Winchester/Cedar Creek area. More information on both of these items will be appearing in future issues of the Charger.

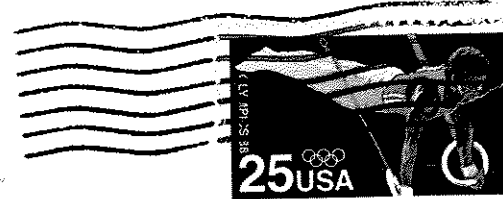
Dr. Callahan has once again invited the membership to his beautiful Shaker Heights home for the October meeting. This annual meeting has become one of the years highlights. October's meeting is special in another way since our speaker, who is not only extremely knowledgeable in the Civil War, has a Cleveland connection having grown up in Lakewood.

I look forward to seeing everyone on October 11. Remember, however; that since this is a catered affair we need your reservations as early as possible.

*Norton J. London*



THE CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE  
P.O. BOX 5786  
CLEVELAND, OHIO 44101



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Cleveland Hts., Ohio 44118