

Vol. 18 #2

OCTOBER, 1996

***by***

She is the author of almost ninety essays and chapters in books as well as over forty book reviews in various journals. She serves as editor of the *SCWH Newsletter*, a quarterly publication of the Society of Civil War Historians, and as book review editor for *Civil War History: A Journal of the Middle Period*. She is co-editor of the "Great Campaigns of the Civil War," a sixteen volume series to be published by the University of Nebraska Press, and will write the volume on the Georgia-Tennessee campaigns in the Autumn of 1864. Dr. Bailey teaches in the Department of History at the University of Arkansas.

Date: October 9, 1996

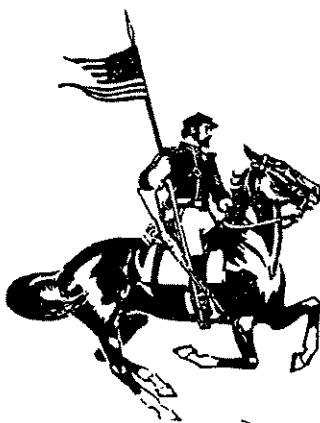
Place: The Hermit Club

Time: Drinks 6 PM
Dinner 7 PM

**Reservations: Please call
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RESERVATIONS ARE A MUST!

**Cleveland
Civil War Round-Table
1957 * 1996**



President: Dan Zeiser
Vice President: John Moore
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 Dick Crews
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 Shaker Heights, Ohio 44122
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 John & Anne Caputo

Long time Cleveland Civil War Round-Table member, Past President and good friend William "Bill" Schlesinger passed away in mid-September. Bill was a valuable member for many years and we will miss him.

Past Cleveland C.W.R.T. Presidents

1996	John Sutula	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 Vourlojanis	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 Spiegle	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

October 9, 1996

Dr. Anne Bailey
University of Arkansas
"Texans in the Confederate Cavalry"

November 13, 1996

General William A. Tidwell
"Confederate Covert Action"

December 11, 1996

Professor Mark Grimsley
Ohio State University
"The Hard Hand of War"

January 8, 1997

Quiz or Debate

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"



E. Kirby Smith

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

*Jeffry D. Wert was our speaker at our April, 1996 meeting. His book on George Armstrong Custer, which he discussed, was selected as *THE EDITORS* choice of the History Book Club.

THE CONTROVERSIAL LIFE OF GEORGE ARMSTRONG CUSTER

by Jeffry D. Wert*

An excerpt from *Custer*:

"Combat fitted Custer as well as his distinctive uniform. Universally, the rank and file under him testified to his bravery, aggressiveness, calm demeanor, and instinctiveness in the fluid conditions of a battle. He learned early at Hunterstown the value of deliberateness, of reconnaissance, of preparation before an attack, and those attributes marked his generalship on most fields. But when the right time came to strike, Custer seized it, or as Jacob Greene, who rode beside him many times, perceptively noted, 'When he set out to destroy an enemy, he laid hand on him as soon as possible, and never took it off. He knew the whole art of war.'

"In Custer, the warrior magnified the man. His zest for life, his flamboyance, his affinity for gallantry and pageantry, his ambition, and his fearlessness were not only elements of the man but of the soldier. He was perhaps the war's last knight. 'If there ever was any poetry or romance in war,' Sheridan contended about Custer, 'he could develop it.' A soldier's duty merged with a personal quest for glory that made Custer a superb cavalry commander and a dashing, unmistakable hero. He accepted battle's terribleness because it was always, to him, a clarion call. When he shouted at Gettysburg, 'Come on, you Wolverines,' it was not an order, but an answer to a summons."



WERT GETS BEHIND THE CUSTER LEGEND

Custer: The Controversial Life of George Armstrong Custer by Jeffry Wert. Illustrated, maps, index, endnotes, bibliography, 462 pp., 1996. Simon and Schuster, 1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020, \$27.50 plus shipping.

A significant problem with recent Civil War scholarship seems to be the rehashing of the same, tired material. All too often historians and biographers rely on standard sources in an attempt to put a new spin on their subject, whether it be an event or a person. These criticisms, while often justified cannot be made of Jeffry D. Wert's latest biography of George Armstrong Custer.

Wert is not new to biography, or to tackling subjects which have been examined in detail. His first work of this nature, *General James Longstreet: The Confederacy's Most Controversial Soldier*, was fresh and new perspective into the controversial Confederate leader. Wert has approached Custer with the same determination and achieved the same success.

George Armstrong Custer is so steeped in legend that at first glance it would seem almost impossible to get to the "real" subject of the work. One is reminded of the line from the John Wayne film *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*: "When fact becomes legend, print the legend."

Too many historians have taken the easy road in their study of Custer and his military career, particularly the years after the Civil War. Wert, however, has carefully dissected the fact from legend by using the most up-to-date scholarship to present us with the first detailed biography of "the Boy General" in 30 years (One will note that *Son of the Morning Star*, by Evan S.

Connell, book is naturally compared with, is not an examination of the General's or Indian War experience, Wert's approach is fresh and we see how the man was a product of his time. Wert's Custer is complete.

Fortunately, Wert's biography of Custer is almost as controversial as the subject of his work. Reviews of the book have unfairly

criticized it as "reams of undigested facts and dry recitations of battle strategies." Or say that "Custer's temperament and actions amount to little more than meaningless clichés." (See The New York Times review by Michiko Kakutani, May 28, 1996.)

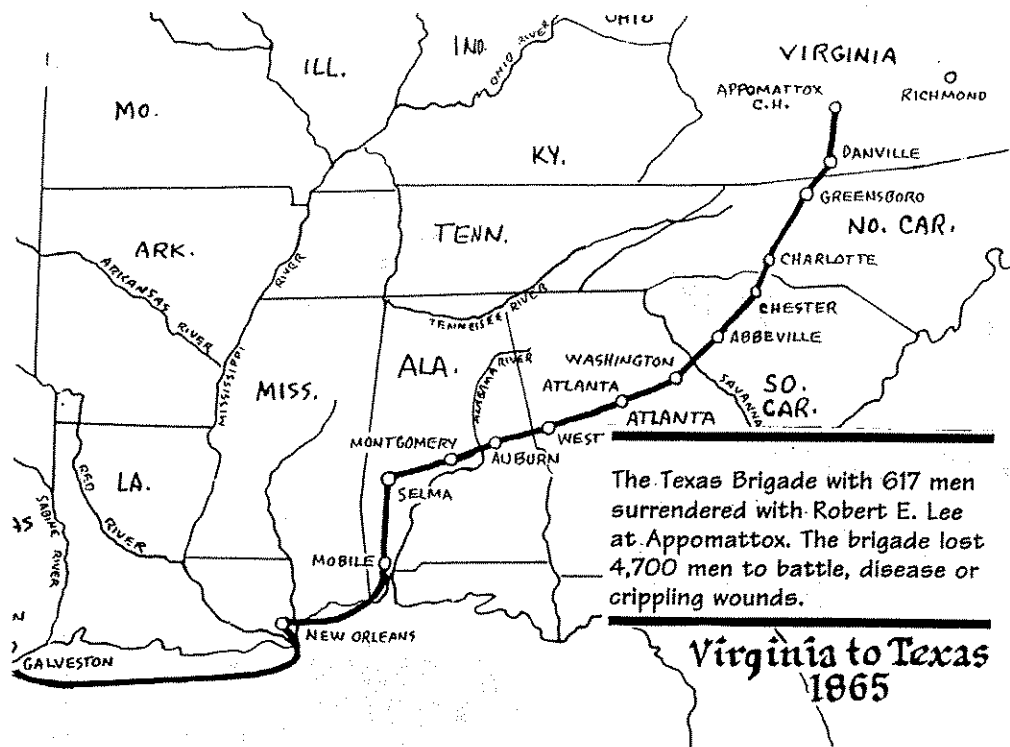


George Custer, West Point 1860

This is an extremely well-researched and detailed biography of one of the most significant military personalities of the mid-19th century. As with all of Wert's writing, the reader is captured from the beginning and taken on a journey of a fascinating and tragic life. This book deserves very close attention from anyone interested in the Civil War or Indian Wars, as it is likely to be the hallmark from which all other Custer biographies are compared for a long time to come.

Steven J. Wright

Steven Wright received his B.A. and M.A. in American history from St. John's University, Minnesota, and University of Minnesota, respectively. Formerly a park ranger at Gettysburg, he is secretary of Old Baldy Civil War Round Table and curator at the Civil War Library and Museum in Philadelphia.



HOOD'S TEXAS BRIGADE:

LEE'S GRENADEER GUARD

By Colonel Harold B. Simpson*

Hood's Texas Brigade was to Robert E. Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia what the Old Guard was to Napoleon and the Imperial Army of France—first in the advance—shock troops in battle—the rear guard in retreat. In the annals of American military history few men have fought so long and so well with so little and under such hardships as did the members of Hood's Texas Brigade. At Appomattox Court House, only 473 (twelve per cent) of the estimated 4,000 men who had enlisted in the three Texas regiments of the Brigade were left to lay down their well-used Enfields and stack their tattered battle flags.

The war record of this famous fighting unit was a gallant and glorious one. It was a record written in blood, battle smoke and bandages from the swamps of Chickamauga Creek in northern Georgia to the rock strewn hills of southern Pennsylvania.

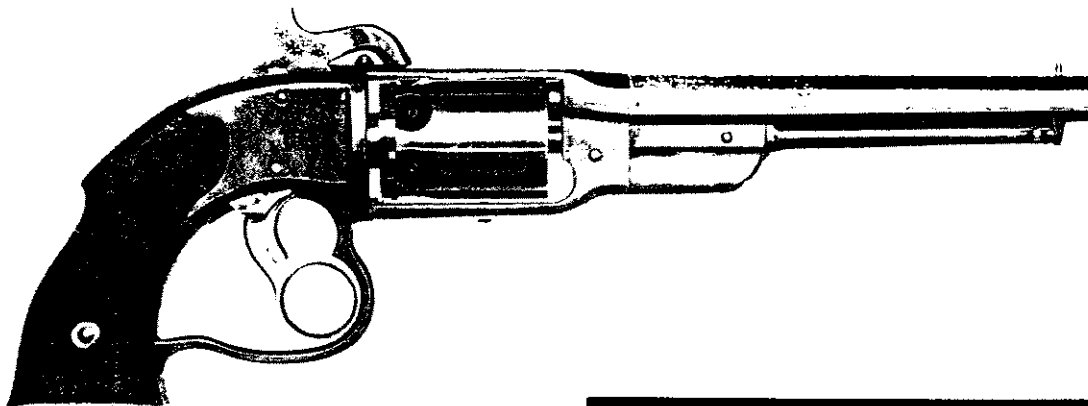
The Texas Brigade fought in all of the battles engaged in by the Army of Northern Virginia except Chancellorsville and it more than made up for missing this battle by fighting with the Army of Tennessee at Chickamauga and Knoxville and with Longstreet at Suffolk.

The Texans with Lee's Army participated in 38 engagements including six of the greatest battles of the war—Gaines' Mill, Second Manassas, Antietam, Gettysburg, Chickamauga and the Wilderness. At Antietam the first Texas Infantry suffered the greatest casualty rate of any regiment, North or South, during the war—82.3%. The Brigade itself at the same battle, had a loss percentage of 64.1, the third highest for any brigade, North or South, during the conflict.

From Gaines' Mill to Appomattox, the Texas Brigade were ragged, barefooted, half-starved soldiers that Lee referred to as "My Texans."

*Retired Air Force Colonel Harold B. Simpson is the author of *Hood's Texas Brigade*. Colonel Simpson is Director of the Confederate Research Center at Hill Junior College, Hillsboro, Texas.

Savage Navy Revolver



Specifications

Length: 14.25"

Weight: 3 lbs., 7 oz.

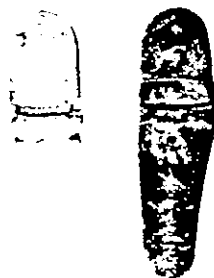
Caliber: .36

◆ SIDE ARMS ◆ of the Civil War

The Savage "Navy" revolver was one of the most distinctive looking revolvers to see service in the war. Its appearance was dominated by an unusually large trigger guard containing two "triggers." One trigger terminated in a finger-sized ring. This was actually a lever which, when pulled, both rotated the cylinder and cocked the hammer.

About 12,000 Savage revolvers were purchased by the Federal government during the war. The majority of these were issued to cavalry in the western theater of the war. Many Savage revolvers were privately purchased and smuggled south. The arm was often seen in the hands of Confederate cavalry serving east of the Allegheny mountains.

The Savage "Navy" was a single-action, six-shot, percussion revolver. Because of its odd construction the arm was not well balanced and was therefore difficult to aim. A few Savage revolvers were purchased by Union officers, but they were not a popular weapon.



Pay of African American Soldiers in the Civil War

*Michael J. Dory**

There is so much misunderstanding, misrepresentation and downright lies regarding the pay issue in the Union Army during the Civil War that it would take a miracle to ever straighten it out. Politicians, authors and Hollywood have so muddled the waters that when the truth is spoken, most people already have their minds made up and dismiss it out of hand. Having said that, I will attempt to clear the air and present the facts in the case. The best discussion of the subject I have found so far is contained in Chapter 10 of Dudley Taylor Cornish's book *THE SABLE ARM: BLACK TROOPS IN THE UNION ARMY, 1861-1865*. The quotes that I will be citing will be from that book.

Article I, Section 8, paragraph 11 of the Treaty of 1787, also known as the Constitution of the United States, grants THE CONGRESS the right "To raise and support Armies, but no Appropriation of Money to that Use shall be for a longer Term than two Years". This is important to understand because part of the argument over pay comes from a quote from the Secretary of War Stanton. Secretary of War Stanton "had promised Negro soldiers standard army pay in his original authorization to General Rufus Saxton, the first definite War Department authorization for the enrollment of Negroes as soldiers." (page 184). To quote exactly the third paragraph of Stanton's orders of August 25, 1862, "Saxton is directed to raise five thousand 'volunteers of African descent.' These volunteers and their officers were 'to be entitled to and receive the same pay and rations as are allowed by law to volunteers in the service.'" (page 184). For those lawyers present you know that the Department of War and its Secretary are members of the Executive branch of the Federal Government. Therefore, Stanton does not have the AUTHORITY to grant any pay to anyone. "The only law applicable to the Negro regiments that Saxton was empowered to raise was the Militia Act of July 17, 1862, Section 15 of which provided that colored recruits would be paid 'ten dollars per month and one ration, three dollars of which monthly pay may be in clothing.' It was on the basis of this legislation that Negro troops were paid." (page 185).



From the 1863 recruiting poster

"Come and Join us, Brothers"

*Michael J. Dory is Associate Professor of History at Lorain Community College, Lorain, Ohio and a member of the Cleveland CWRT

Why? Why would the Congress pay the Negro troops less than white troops? There are several reasons. The first and most important was that Negroes were not intended to fight as soldiers. There are several reasons for this. The first deals with the morale of the Union Army in 1862.

If you recruited Negroes into the Union Army, you would be admitting that "white soldiers had been unable to bring the South to her knees without calling on the Negro for help on the field of battle." (page 186). The second again deals with morale. "Anti-Negro sentiment in and out of the army added to the strength of that reasoning. The prejudices against Negro soldiers clearly evident among the white troops in the Department of the South during the summer of 1862 could not be overlooked or lightly considered." (page 186). The third dealt with economics and prejudice. "Equal pay to Negro soldiers would in effect place former slaves on the same level with freeborn Northern whites, and this idea could hardly be tolerated by large segments of the Northern population, particularly in the lower economic strata where competition with cheap Negro labor was both feared and hated." (page 186).

The Bureau of Colored Troops was established in May, 1863. Secretary Stanton asked the solicitor of the War Department, William Whiting of Boston, for an opinion as to what pay those troops should receive. Whiting, a patent lawyer and moderate Republican, after studying the Militia Act of 1862, concluded that the Negro should be paid as a laborer and not as a soldier." (page 185). This then is the second reason why African American soldiers were not paid as soldiers. They were never intended to be soldiers. They were to replace white soldiers in non-combat jobs thus freeing more soldiers for the battle. "When Negro troops had been first proposed and recruited, it was pretty widely understood that they would be used as labor battalions, as service and garrison troops, that they would not be used in the full capacity of soldiers but only as auxiliary forces. The fighting troops, it was fairly thought, should naturally draw higher pay than garrison and service troops." (page 185). Today we call this differential combat pay.

There was an additional reason. Negroes were doubtful as soldiers and it was believed that they could not learn to become soldiers. They were untrusted both in their ability to do a soldier's job and in their willingness to do that job. Therefore, they would be assigned to constructing "fortifications in the South and manning artillery in captured Confederate forts." (page 186).

But pay was not the only thing denied African American soldiers. No bounties were paid to them and they or their widows were not authorized pensions. Again it was argued that they were laborers and not soldiers.

In June 1864, a bill passed Congress granting "equal pay to Negro soldiers-retroactive to January 1, 1864. Stubbornly refusing to solve the problem of arrears in pay, Congress provided that 'all persons of color who were free on the 19th day of April, 1861, and who have been enlisted and mustered into the military service of the United States, shall from the time of their enlistments be entitled to receive the pay, bounty, and clothing allowed to such persons by the laws existing at the time of their enlistment' --providing the attorney general approved!" (page 192).

This still caused a problem in that the overwhelming majority of African Americans in the Union Army had NOT been free on April 19, 1861. What should be done with them? "Section 5 of the Enrollment Act of March 3, 1865, finally brought belated justice to the South Carolina and other Negro regiments recruited in the South before January 1, 1864, in the shape of a provision for their full payment from the date of their original enlistment. The war was over by the time the colored soldiers in this category finally drew their arrears in pay." (page 195).



Michael J. Dory

July 31, 1996.

CONFEDERATE GUERRILLA

In April 1862 the Southern Congress authorized the official formation of partisan ranger companies, which were to be enrolled as units of the Confederate army. Mosby's rangers were the most famous of these companies. Mosby's exploits (which included the capture of a Union general in his bed only ten miles from Washington) became legendary, earning him the praise of J. E. B. Stuart and Robert E. Lee. Unlike some other guerrilla outfits, Mosby's men usually wore Confederate uniforms, though they frequently concealed them under captured Union overcoats that enabled them to get through Yankee lines at will. Despite the apparent success of ranger companies, several Confederate leaders by 1863 began to question their value. Many potential army recruits preferred to join these companies with their easy discipline, adventurous life, and prospects for loot. A good many guerrilla units were no better than "bushwhackers" (the Federals' term for them) who, in the words of a Union officer, "kill for the sake of killing and plunder for the love of gain." Most notorious of the bushwhackers was Quantrill, who held a commission as captain in the Confederate army. In August 1863 he led his men on a raid into Lawrence, Kansas, the old Free Soil stronghold. He burned the defenseless town and murdered 183 male civilians in cold blood. This and other infamous raids by Missouri partisans gave all guerrillas a bushwhacker image. In January 1864, the Confederate Congress repealed the law authorizing partisan units and ordered their merger with regular commands. But this was a paper change only, for most ranger units continued to function.



JOHN SINGLETON MOSBY AND HIS PARISIAN BAND.
Mosby is the beardless, hatless man standing near the center

The question of how to treat captured guerrillas vexed the Union government. Early in the war several generals threatened to execute them, but this only produced retaliatory threats of an eye-for-an-eye execution of captured Yankees. In 1862 the Union War Department decided to treat partisans as ordinary prisoners of war so long as they were officially authorized by the Confederacy. But as the guerrillas escalated their violence and as more of them operated without uniforms or official sanction, Union commanders sometimes had them shot when captured. In July 1864 the Northern Congress approved this practice. When Philip Sheridan took command of Union forces in the Shenandoah Valley in August 1864, Grant told him: "Where any of Mosby's men are caught hang them without trial."¹⁹ One of Sheridan's cavalry commanders, George A. Custer, executed six guerrillas, whereupon Mosby had six captured troops from Custer's brigade draw lots and go before a firing squad. In Missouri the war of ambush and massacre escalated beyond imagination, killing innocent civilians as well as bushwhackers and jayhawkers.

Probably no more than 10,000 men (not including official cavalry units) functioned as guerrillas in the Confederacy. It can be plausibly argued that they did more damage to the Union war effort than an equal number of front-line soldiers. In the fashion of guerrillas in other wars, they tied down several times their number of regular soldiers in guard duty or search-and-destroy missions. But whatever their military value, it is certain that guerrilla raids and Union reprisals increased the hatred and violence that made the Civil War a total war—a war of peoples as well as of armies.

Daniel G. Zeiser
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This publication has been laudered to eliminate
all articles on William T. Sherman.

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



IN NEXT MONTH'S NOVEMBER, 1996 CHARGER

THREE DAYS AT GETTYSBURG
WITH BOB BAUCHER

SHARPS RIFLE

"OHIO'S KIDNAPPED GENERAL." GEORGE CROOK

THE MOST WANTED MAN IN OHIO

JOHN HUNT MORGAN

