

THE CHARGER



The Cleveland Civil War Roundtable

November 2024

CCWRT Founded 1956

Vol. 49, No. 3

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MEETING – November 13, 2024

PROGRAM – “A Thousand May Fall—An Immigrant Regiment’s Civil War: Life, Death, and Survival in the Union Army”



SPEAKER – Dr. Brian Matthew Jordan, author, associate professor and chair of the Department of History at Sam Houston State University, where he teaches courses on the Civil War and

Reconstruction, American military history, and the U.S. history survey.

LOCATION: The Holiday Inn Independence at 6001 Rockside Road, Independence, Ohio 44131, off US Interstate 77

TIME: Social Hour at 6:00 PM and Presentation at 7:00 PM

For reservations email: ccwrtreserve@gmail.com. To ensure a dinner is reserved for you, the reservation must be made by Tuesday, November 5, 2024

Website: <http://www.clevelandcivilwarroundtable.com>

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President's Message

Fellow Roundtable Members:

As the leaves continue to fall and the days grow even shorter, we embrace November with open arms. This month, nature gifts us a stunning display of reds, oranges, and golds, encouraging us to pause and appreciate our surroundings. It is the perfect time for sweaters or flannels (sport your “Inner Francis Barlow”), warm drinks, and gatherings with loved ones. I hope everyone had a spooktacular Halloween filled with more treats than tricks!

Now that we are officially in November, this season serves as a reminder of the beauty found in change and the importance of connection. I encourage you to take a moment to appreciate the richness this time of year offers—it's the perfect opportunity for reflection before the hustle and bustle of the upcoming holidays.

First and foremost, as we approach Veterans Day, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to the veterans in our community. Your service and dedication are vital in safeguarding our freedoms, and we are honored to recognize and celebrate your contributions. In the spirit of gratitude and civic responsibility, I also encourage everyone to engage in the upcoming election. Your voice matters, and exercising your right to vote is essential for shaping the future we envision. Let us honor our freedoms by actively participating in our democracy.

Even though our recent Gettysburg Field Trip is in the books, there is a very fitting event coming up that will keep your “battlefield fever” going. November 19th, or Dedication Day, commemorates the dedication of the Soldiers' National Cemetery in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. This site is famous for President Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, delivered during the dedication four and a half months after the battle. The weekend closest to November 19th has evolved into a cherished tradition known as Remembrance Day. Thousands flock to Gettysburg for events including the Remembrance Day Parade and Illumination. If you are unable to return to Gettysburg, I recommend tuning in for the annual coverage by the American Battlefield Trust. What better way to remember the very grounds that played a pivotal role in our history? It's a profound reminder of the legacy we carry forward and the importance of preserving these moments of our past.

In October, we gathered for our second group meeting, where Past-President Steve Pettyjohn delivered an enlightening presentation on three remarkable leaders: George Washington, Ulysses S. Grant, and Dwight D. Eisenhower. Steve highlighted that these men are the only Americans to have held supreme military command during critical wars and later served as president. He began by emphasizing the importance of domestic tranquility, showcasing the supportive roles of their spouses—Martha Washington, Julia Grant, and Mamie Eisenhower—who helped each leader navigate the challenges of their careers. Steve noted that all three “learned their business,” utilized spies, and demonstrated various forms of courage. He discussed the value of early experience, citing Washington's military service, Grant's role

in the Mexican-American War, and Eisenhower's learning during World War I. Another significant trait he explored was their ability to manage difficult personalities. Each leader dealt with complex relationships: Washington faced challenges from figures like Hamilton and Lee, Grant navigated tensions with Halleck and Lincoln, and Eisenhower collaborated with leaders such as Montgomery and Churchill. Each crafted strategies that led to victory and shaped the nation's trajectory. Steve pointed to specific military operations, including Washington's successful Yorktown Campaign, Grant's Vicksburg Campaign, and Eisenhower's Operation Overlord, illustrating how each leader applied their skills to overcome challenges. He also shared how the public perceptions of these leaders have evolved over time. Overall, Steve's presentation offered valuable perspectives on the leadership qualities of these pivotal figures in American history, all while keeping the atmosphere light and fun, resulting in an engaging and informative evening.

Looking ahead, we are thrilled to announce that Dr. Brian Matthew Jordan will be traveling from Texas for our November meeting. His presentation, "A Thousand May Fall – An Immigrant Regiment's Civil War: Life, Death, and Survival in the Union Army," promises to be an eye-opening exploration of the contributions of immigrant soldiers during the Civil War. Dr. Jordan, a Pulitzer Prize finalist, will delve into the experiences of the 107th Ohio Volunteer Infantry, shedding light on the challenges they faced and the valor they displayed. As he discusses the significance of this regiment, we will gain a deeper understanding of the diverse backgrounds that shaped the Union Army and the complexities of their loyalty during a time of great national strife.

Now that we are a few weeks from Thanksgiving, I want to take a moment to express my gratitude to each of you—our dedicated members and friends—who contribute to the vibrancy of our organization. Your passion for history and commitment to our mission enriches our discussions and strengthens our community.

You all are probably familiar with President Abraham Lincoln's Thanksgiving Proclamation from October 3rd, 1863, which established the last Thursday of November as a national holiday. Mel Mauer, I hope you are enjoying not one, but two Lincoln shout-outs! Let us be mindful of President Lincoln's words from his Thanksgiving Day Proclamation the following October in 1864: "...I do further recommend to my fellow-citizens aforesaid that on that occasion they... offer up penitent and fervent prayers and supplications to the Great Disposer of Events for a return of the inestimable blessings of peace, union, and harmony throughout the land which it has pleased Him to assign as a dwelling place for ourselves and for our posterity throughout all generations."

Let us embrace this spirit of gratitude and unity as we come together to celebrate our blessings. May your Thanksgiving be filled with joy, warmth, and cherished moments with family and friends.

I look forward to seeing many of you at our upcoming meeting.

Your obedient servant,

Gene Claridge

The Editor's Desk



Much has been written about the history of the 54th Massachusetts Infantry, and the brave men of that regiment were celebrated in the movie, "Glory." There were, however, thousands of more Black soldiers in Mr. Lincoln's army, most serving in a segregated branch of the U.S. Army designated as the United States Colored Troops (USCT).

Emanuel Patterson, a mulatto child from southwestern Pennsylvania, was nine years old when the census was taken in Wayne Township, Greene County, Pennsylvania, in 1850. At that time, the boy lived with his parents, Joseph and Mary Patterson, his younger brother, Taylor, and a seventy-six-year-old woman named Nancy Perrill. It is not clear who Nancy was; but in 1858 Emanuel married an Elizabeth Perrill. The young couple had one child, Nancy Patterson, born five years later, June 3, 1863. That same summer, Emanuel Patterson was drafted into the army and reported to New Brighton, Pennsylvania, to be mustered into service. The U.S. Provost

Marshal for the 24th District of the state, Captain John Cuthbertson, performed the formalities. Patterson then became a soldier, about six weeks after his daughter's birth, on July 16, 1863. He was enlisted for service in Company D, 6th USCT and sent to Camp William Penn near Philadelphia to join the regiment for organization and training.

At Camp William Penn, the newly minted Private Patterson met his captain, John McMurray, a White officer formerly a member of the 135th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry. As the men became acquainted with each other in Company D that summer, no one could predict that the infantrymen in the unit would see hard service in 1864 and, one day in late September that year, suffer 87% casualties.

The 6th USCT was transferred to Fort Monroe, Virginia, in the Fall of 1863. That winter they participated in raids into northeastern North Carolina. As Spring arrived, the 6th USCT served on raids into eastern Virginia, gathering supplies and fleeing slaves along the march. As part of General Ben Butler's Army of the James, the regiment helped capture City Point, Virginia. As part of General Edward Hink's Black infantry division, Patterson and the 6th USCT faced a most difficult task, June 15, 1864, as part of the first assault against Petersburg, Virginia. The division suffered heavy casualties while capturing five forts and several artillery pieces at Baylor's farm and along the Dimmick Line. Patterson made the assaults that day with his Company and apparently escaped unharmed.

In August and most of September, Patterson and the 6th USCT were on labor duty building General Butler's Dutch Gap Canal

to try to bypass Confederate gun emplacements. On September 28, 1864, the regiment received orders to join an expedition against Confederate defensive works along New Market Road, just north of the Union occupied Deep Bottom Landing on the James River. Captain McMurray, commanding Company D, remembered that on September 29th, the regiment was on the march before sunrise headed for New Market Heights, Virginia.

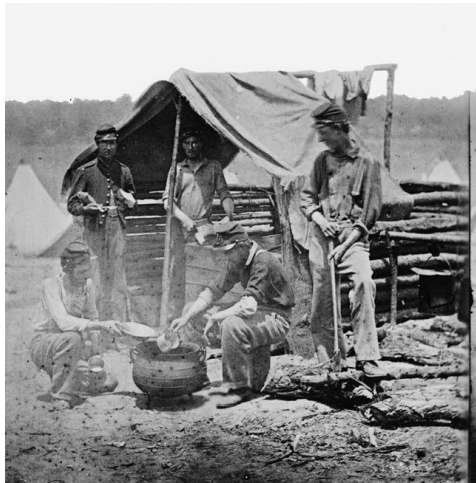
In his memoir of the battle, Captain McMurray remembered that on September 28, 1864, while the men were still at Dutch Gap, Patterson told him he was sick and asked to be relieved from duty. The next day, Patterson again approached McMurray and complained of illness. When Captain McMurray took Patterson to the regimental surgeon to have him excused from duty, however, the surgeon declared him fit. Patterson joined the ranks and marched toward the Confederate works. McMurray next saw Patterson in the thick of the fighting at New Market Heights.

Fifty years later, Captain McMurray vividly remembered that as he was passing through the slashing of the entrenchments, he saw Patterson. He had been shot in the abdomen, and his bowels were all gushing out, “forming a mass larger than my hat.” The poor wounded man was clasping at his intestines, trying to keep them from spilling on the ground at his feet. “Then and a hundred times since,” wrote McMurray, “I wish I had taken the responsibility of saying to him that he could remain in the rear.”

The assault was eventually successful, forcing the Confederates to abandon their earthworks. Dead and wounded Black soldiers, though, littered the field. The 6th USCT was decimated. Of thirty men who made the assault in Company D, Captain McMurray only counted himself and three other men as the only ones not killed, wounded, or missing. The Company, in less than three hours, had suffered an 87% casualty rate. Eleven men, including Emanuel Patterson, were dead, representing a third of Company D’s strength at the beginning of the assault.

Emanuel Patterson and his little family seemingly disappeared from the records after the war. Elizabeth Patterson remarried, but a few years later her daughter, Nancy, was collecting a war orphan’s pension while residing with a different family. Nancy also then disappears from the records. As Veterans’ Day approaches, please take a few minutes to think about Emanuel Patterson, Company D, 6th USCT, and the countless other men like him who gave their lives for the United States of America and have no known descendants to remember them.





ANNUAL DICK CREWS MEMORIAL DEBATE

DEBATERS WELCOME!

Volunteer to take part in the Annual Dick Crews Memorial Debate on Jan. 8! Our topic this year: “The Table Is Set, So Who Are You Bringing Along?”

Which individual from the Civil War would be the most interesting to sit down and speak with over dinner or a tasty beverage? You may discuss not only the individual and his or her unique characteristics, but also about what topic you'd want to chat (e.g., Robert Gould Shaw and the training of the 54th Massachusetts, Patrick Cleburne's thoughts before the assault at Franklin, Mary Todd Lincoln on life in the White House, etc.) and what beverage you'd enjoy together.

Each debater will prepare a five-minute argument, be prepared to take questions from the audience and then participate in a general discussion/rebuttal opportunity with the other debaters. Those in attendance will vote for the “best Civil War guest.” The winning debater will, of course, receive fabulous prizes.

The annual debate is a lot of fun, and no particular expertise is either required or expected. Younger and newer members of the Roundtable are particularly encouraged to take part.

If you'd like to be one of our debaters, please let moderator William Vodrey know (being sure to name the person you've selected, civilian or military) by noon on Mon. Dec. 2 at wfbvodrey@aol.com.

Thanks, and cheers!



Cleveland Medal of Honor Awardees from the Vicksburg assault, May 22, 1863

By Dennis Keating

On May 22, 1863, Ulysses Grant ordered the second of two assaults on the Confederate defense of Vicksburg. It was comprised of regiments from Frank Blair's division of W. T. Sherman's corps. It was aimed at the Stockade Redan. The attack was preceded by 150 volunteers carrying lumber to cross the ditch fronting the stockade. They became known as "the Forlorn Hope." The 30th Ohio led the assault, followed by the 37th Ohio, a primarily German-American regiment with 152 Clevelanders serving in it.

The Forlorn Hope suffered 19 killed, 34 wounded. Later, 78 survivors, including seven from the 37th Ohio who served in the storming party, received the Medal of Honor in 1894, including two foreign-born Clevelanders. Franz Frey was born in Zurich, Switzerland and emigrated to Cleveland. He survived the war and is buried in Lakeview Cemetery. Frederick Rock was born

in Meisenheim, Hessen-Darmstadt, Germany, and emigrated to Cleveland. Frey remained in Cleveland after the war. Rock later moved to Tampa, Florida.



Franz Frey and a photo of Frederick Rock's grave in Woodlawn Cemetery, Tampa, FL

However, the 37th Ohio did not likewise distinguish itself in the failed attack. According to Beyer and Keydel:

“The Thirty-seventh Ohio Volunteers, who were advancing to the support, became panic-stricken and broke. The men lay down in the road and sought shelter behind rocks and inequalities of the ground. They refused to either advance or retire, and lay there for hours, blocking the way of the regiments which were coming up behind, compelling them to make a long detour, and deliver their attack on the left of the enemy's position” (p. 191)

The 37th Ohio later served in Sherman's attack on Missionary Ridge in 1863, his 1864 Atlanta campaign and March to the Sea, and his 1865 Carolinas campaign. Its wartime casualties: 9 officers and 102 enlisted men were casualties and 1 officer and 94 enlisted men died of disease.

References:

W. F. Beyer and O. F. Keydel. *Deeds of Valor: How America's Civil War Heroes Won the Congressional Medal Honor* [The 'Forlorn Hope' at Vicksburg, pp. 191-197] (Smithmark Publishers, 2000)

Earl J. Hess. *Storming Vicksburg: Grant, Pemberton, and the Battles of May 19-22, 1863*. University of North Carolina Press, August, 2024)

Chris Maskowski. *The Forlorn Hope at Vicksburg*. Emerging Civil War (December 18, 2020)

Meghan Schill. *37th Ohio Volunteer Infantry Regiment*. Encyclopedia of Cleveland History [and individual profiles of Frey and Rock.]

MORE ON THE GREAT DEBATE

By John C. Fazio

[EDITOR'S NOTE: In this article, John C. Fazio, gives us his views on the issue of slavery as the cause of the Civil War. This seems to have been a topic for one of our annual debates. As you know, before he died, John sent several articles to "The Charger" to share with his friends.]

The great debate was great. The negative won (i.e. slavery was *not* the cause of the war). The vote was 39 to 17. Whether this reflected the cogency of the arguments or the persuasiveness of the debaters, I'm not sure. I think the result disturbed a few members, maybe more than a few, because the conventional wisdom that slavery caused the war is very strongly believed by most scholars, students, enthusiasts, etc. Indeed, one member told me that he absented himself intentionally because he felt so strongly that slavery was the cause of the war that just listening to the negative on the issue would cause his blood pressure to go up to a dangerous level.

Anyway, I would like to throw in my two cents, even though nobody asked for it. Do I think slavery caused the war? Well, yes, but with a qualifier, which I'll get to in a few minutes. First let us nail slavery down.

Slavery was an issue that divided the states even in the Constitutional Convention of 1787. Though the Constitution sanctioned it and this fact was clearly understood by all the states (some said they wouldn't ratify the Constitution if it didn't sanction slavery), the Founding Fathers appear to have contemplated its extinction by providing for the termination of the slave trade

after 1807. Significantly, however, provisions for the return of fugitive slaves, and for counting slaves for purposes of apportioning Congressional representatives (i.e. a slave equals 3/5 of a person), were written right into the highest law in the land and stayed there until the 13th Amendment made them moot. References to slaves and slavery, however, were made euphemistically, which is further evidence that most of the Founding Fathers viewed the institution as an evil, though perhaps a necessary one.

From 1787 right up to the eve of war, Senators and Congressmen never stopped debating the issue. When the debate reached crisis proportions, they compromised. The first major compromise, known as the Missouri Compromise, was made in 1820. It prohibited slavery north of a certain point, following the example of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, but permitted it in Missouri and the Arkansas Territory. This cooled things off for a while, but it wasn't long before they were at each other's throats again. The squabbling grew red hot on the issue of whether slavery would be permitted in the territories acquired from Mexico after the war of 1846-1847, so they compromised again. This was the Compromise of 1850. Again, there was a breather, but again it was followed by more invective, more insults and more threats over everything and anything relating to the peculiar institution and particularly its extension or nonextension into the territories, including the Wilmot Proviso (1846), the Ostend Manifesto (Cuba - 1854); the Kansas-Nebraska Act ("Bleeding Kansas" - 1854); the Topeka Constitution (Kansas - 1855); the sack of Lawrence (Kansas - 1856); John Brown's depredations at Pottawatomie Creek (Kansas - 1856); the Lecompton Constitution (Kansas - 1857); the Dred Scott decision (1857); John Brown's depredations at Harper's Ferry (1859); and the election of 1860. Rhetoric reached such a fever's pitch that on May 22, 1856, Rep. Preston S. Brooks of South Carolina took a cane and beat Massachusetts Sen. Charles Sumner with it, mercilessly, in the Senate Chamber, because of a speech by the latter opposing slavery in Kansas and insulting one of Brooks's relatives.

O.K. So if the elected representatives of the people, or at least of some of the people, fought each other viciously over the issue of slavery for 73 years (1787 to 1860), which struggle culminated in the rupture of the Union, a civil war, 620,000 dead, the end of slavery, the 13th Amendment and the assassination of the savior of the Union and the Great Emancipator, then what more needs to be said? What about that qualifier?

The qualifier is simply this: To say that slavery caused the war is a little bit like saying we work for money. It's perfectly obvious, isn't it? Or is it? Do we really work for money? Or do we work for the things that money will give us, namely power and comfort and sometimes independence. If we could have power, comfort and independence from some means other than money, would we care about money? If one of us were the last person on earth and there was no one else to give us a product or service, would money have any meaning for us? When we are at death's door, will money mean anything to us, or will we gladly give every last dime we have to be restored to good health? St. Paul said that the love of money is the root of all evil, and we do

carry some sense of this into our daily pursuit of the stuff, which finds expression in such terms as "filthy lucre." Nevertheless, we pursue it because it will give us power and comfort and sometimes independence, which will improve our chances of survival, which, after all is said and done, in the final analysis, is what really motivates everybody all the time. In the same way, it was not slavery as such that caused the war, but slavery as the engine that drove the southern economy, slavery as a means to ends for slaveholders and for nonslaveholders who benefited from the institution. What were the ends? Power and comfort and sometimes independence. So what, ultimately, caused the war? The love of power, comfort and independence. And what is that if it is not economics? About this time I can almost hear the cries of "Sophistry! What difference does it make if slavery was an end in itself or a means to an end? It's still slavery and without it the war wouldn't have been fought. If the Founding Fathers had prohibited it in the Constitution, there would have been no Civil War." True. And if a fog hadn't moved in at night to conceal Washington's retreat from Brooklyn across the East River to Manhattan, in 1776, thereby saving his army and the revolution, there would have been no United States! The point is that the Founding Fathers didn't prohibit slavery in the Constitution, but actually preserved and protected it, and that is the fact that we have to live with, not what might have been, but what was. So it isn't sophistry.

The fact is that slavery was guaranteed by the Constitution in the states where it already existed. Northern fire-eaters and abolitionists could rail against it as much as they wanted to, but those who knew anything about the Constitution knew that the institution was untouchable in those states. Lincoln himself said, on the stump and in his First Inaugural, that he had no intention of interfering with the institution in those states where it already existed (15) because, he said, he did not believe that he had the Constitutional authority to do so. And he was quite right about that; he didn't. Even his Emancipation Proclamation was on shaky legal ground, because it was passed as a war measure (Taney was still on the bench!), which is why he pushed so hard for the 13th Amendment. So why did the South secede? Because Lincoln's record was perfectly clear to Southern leadership, even if it wasn't quite so clear to abolitionists and members of his own party and even if it isn't quite so clear to some students of the war today. Southern leadership knew that a Republican administration meant that they would no longer control things in Washington as they had done under Fillmore, Pierce and Buchanan. Indeed, virtually every President of the United States from Jackson through Buchanan was a Southerner or a Southern sympathizer and therefore catered to Southern interests. Southern leadership knew that though Lincoln would not, because he could not, disturb slavery where it existed, he would draw the line on its extension into the territories. The territories would then be settled by free, white labor and the entire country, from sea to sea and from Canada to Mexico, would be free, except for the southeast, which would be slave. They foresaw increasing isolation and a pariah status in such a Union, difficulty in getting their runaway slaves back, and the possibility, always, of slave insurrections such as had occurred in Santo Domingo, where, between 1791 and 1804, a series of insurrections had resulted in the annihilation of virtually the entire white population and frightful atrocities. So they left because they felt that their chances of survival were better out of the Union than in it.

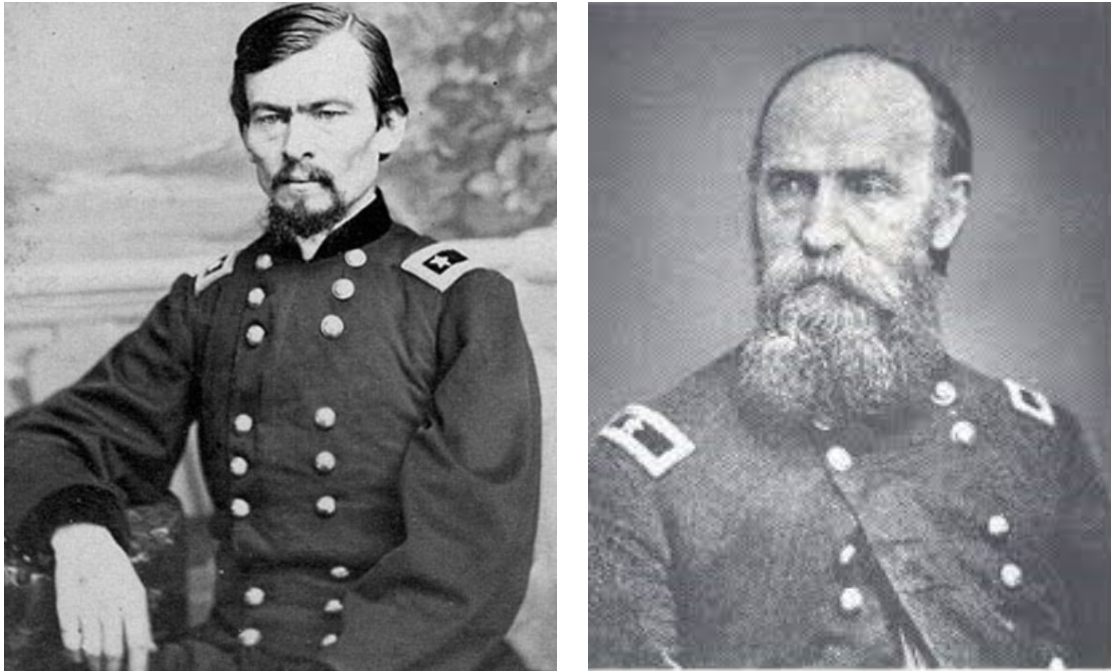
So much for the South. What about the North? Approximately what percentage of Northerners were opposed to slavery for ideological reasons that had nothing to do with economics, i.e. abolitionists like William Lloyd Garrison, John Brown, Wendell Phillips, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Henry David Thoreau, John Greenleaf Whittier, Susan B. Anthony, et al., and their supporters, and how many felt, as one Army of the Potomac officer put it: "We'll take care of the secessionists first and worry about the niggers later." I maintain that the latter were in the majority at least for most of the war. The evidence is strong that abolitionists were not particularly popular in the North and were positively anathema in the South. They were frequently spat upon, shouted down and otherwise abused when speaking to Northern audiences. They didn't even try to speak to Southern audiences: They would have been torn limb from limb. Anti-slavery newspapers were sometimes burned or trashed, as in Cincinnati. In New York, even as late as July, 1863, i.e. seven months after the Emancipation Proclamation, there were major riots that targeted blacks, even to torching a black orphanage, which of course resulted in the murder of many of them, including the orphans. Even Lincoln, though in my judgment there is no question that he loathed slavery, had to tread lightly on the subject and frequently make statements in his addresses that were politically expedient but inconsistent with abolitionist sentiment. He countermanded General Fremont's and General Hunter's orders liberating the slaves in their departments because he was advised that if he did not do so, many soldiers in his armies would lay down their arms and refuse to fight because they said they were not fighting to free slaves, but to save the Union. David Wilmot, author of the famous Proviso that would have prohibited slavery in the territories acquired from Mexico (which did not pass), announced that he had no higher motive than to open the territories for settlement by free, white labor and that he had no sympathy for slaves. Staring secession in the face, the Northern-dominated Congress caved. On February 28, 1861, the House approved the Corwin Amendment to the Constitution, which, incredibly, prohibited any future amendment of the Constitution that would abolish or interfere with slavery in the states where it existed, which is to say that it guaranteed slavery in those states in perpetuity! On March 2, 1861, the Senate approved it. It is to be noted that 45 Republicans accepted this concession because they knew that it was acceptable to Lincoln.

The Northern fire-eaters and the Southern fire-eaters hated each other's guts because they were polarized by economics. The Northerners wanted, inter alia, their protective tariffs, a northern route for the Pacific railroad, money for internal improvements and settlement of the territories by free, white labor, all of which enhanced them economically. The Southerners wanted their bucolic fairyland, their Camelot, with lots of money from domestic and foreign sales of King Cotton, a lifestyle that Margaret Mitchell said went with the wind and is to be found now only in books. The Northern industrialists and merchants hated the Planter aristocracy more than they loved slaves. They, for the most part --with some notable exceptions, like Thad Stevens--opposed slavery not so much out of any great compassion for "the negro," but because it made the Planters rich, powerful and arrogant. And, of course, the Planters returned the sentiment with

respect to Northern industrialists and merchants who became rich, powerful and arrogant by what the Southerners referred to as "the smell of trade."

So what's the bottom line? The bottom line is that it is not true to say that slavery was the cause of the war if by so saying we mean that there was a great outpouring of compassion in the Northern states for the slaves; that a majority of Northerners, therefore, elected Lincoln to rid the country of the pestilential, odious and peculiar institution; that after the fashion of a white knight, he did so, at terrible cost, but a cost deemed by Northerners worth paying because they despised slavery so much. False. That is simply false. What is true is that the two regions were very different from the beginning; that their differences, social, cultural, economic and political, became greater with time rather than less; that slavery was the engine that drove the Southern agricultural economy with the sanction of the Constitution; that slaveholders had hundreds of millions of dollars invested in their slaves and that to free them would have been economically ruinous to them, besides the enormous social disruption that this would have caused (What were they going to do with 4,000,000 ex-slaves? Annihilation? This was the term used by Jefferson Davis in his first commentary on the Emancipation Proclamation.); that some in the South opposed slavery on ideological grounds, but they were a tiny minority; that some in the North opposed slavery on ideological grounds, but they were also a minority, albeit a somewhat bigger minority than the one in the South; that most Northerners were indifferent to slaves and slavery; and that many Northerners were downright hostile to slaves and had no wish whatsoever to free them, again, most probably for economic reasons, i.e. job competition. (Virulent racism persists in the North in our own time. Martin Luther King said that he saw more race hatred in Cicero, Illinois, than he every saw anywhere in the South.) Most Northerners supported their government because it was a democratically elected government that was fighting, first and foremost, as Lincoln himself said in his famous letter to Horace Greeley, to save the Union. The abolition of slavery went with the territory. It went along for the ride, as it were, when Lincoln deemed it necessary to emancipate slaves in states and parts of states in rebellion in order to keep foreign powers from intervening in the war (which was imminent and he knew it) and in order to deplete Southern manpower and (the opposite side of the same coin) increase Northern manpower, especially fighting men in his armies. Am I making excuses for the South? Not at all. Rupturing the Union is a terrible thing unless done for a very good reason. I submit that the preservation of the institution of slavery is not a good reason, and the fact that it was attempted for economic or socioeconomic reasons does not make it a better reason. Lincoln offered slaveholders compensated emancipation. Stupidly (there is no other word for it), they rejected the offer. Even the border states - even Delaware, which had fewer than 1800 slaves - rejected it. He therefore had no choice but to wage war, a war that was thrust upon him. The war, therefore, was the quintessential American tragedy, occasioned, like Greek tragedy, by a flaw in our character. Grant said it best: All our troubles began with Mexico...Nations, like individuals, are punished for their transgressions.

Let the debate continue.



Franz Sigel and August von Willich

Franz Sigel and August von Willich: Two German-American Civil War Generals

By Dennis Keating

Germans were among the first large group of Europeans to emigrate to the new United States. The cities of Cincinnati and St. Louis became major urban destinations for these German emigrants. Germans were generally anti-slavery and therefore drawn to the candidacy of Abraham Lincoln in the 1860 election. According to Brian Matthew Jordan in his history of the German 107th OVI, with Cleveland having a significant German emigrant population:

“In Cleveland, for instance, “nearly” half of the city’s German population cast ballots for Lincoln. The returns were still more impressive in Cincinnati, where the ethnic wards cushioned Republican margins at the polls.”

(A Thousand May Fall, p. 9)

With the South’s secession and Lincoln’s call for volunteers, many German-Americans responded, mostly joining German-language regiments. For instance, in Cincinnati, Germans,

including August Willich, quickly responded by joining the 9th OVI (known as “Die Neuner” – the Niners).

Franz Sigel

A leading figure in the German-American community of St. Louis was Franz Sigel, who recruited his fellow German-Americans to enlist in the Union army. He became commander of the 3rd Missouri Infantry and President Lincoln soon promoted him to the rank of Brigadier General.

Sigel was born in Baden Germany and was a lieutenant in the Baden Army. But he joined the 1848 revolution in Germany. When it failed, Sigel fled Germany and eventually emigrated to New York City. In 1857, he moved to St. Louis, where he became an influential figure among the so-called “Forty-Eighters”. Sigel’s command joined Nathaniel Lyons’ Union Army of the West and he fought in the battles of Wilson’s Creek and Pea Ridge in the West.

After that, Sigel came East and participated in the unsuccessful attempt in 1862 to defeat Stonewall Jackson’s Shenandoah Valley campaign. At the second battle of Bull Run, in August, 1862, Sigel commanded a corps and was wounded in the hand.

In 1864, Sigel returned and was given command of the Army of West Virginia. As part of Grant’s overall offensive strategy that Spring, he was ordered to coordinate efforts to drive the Confederates out of the Shenandoah Valley, including cooperation with George Crook’s force. Grant’s intention was to have General Edward Ord command Sigel’s field army but he departed after being unable to operate with Sigel. Sigel then took command of his forces in the field and advanced up the Valley and took Winchester. Meanwhile, after defeating a small Confederate force at Cloyd’s Mountain, Crook withdrew to West Virginia.

This left Sigel alone to confront another small Confederate force at New Market defending the Valley. It was commanded by General John C. Breckinridge . On May 15, 1864, Breckinridge ordered an assault against Sigel’s divided army. The attackers included cadets from the Virginia Military Institute (VMI). A defeated Sigel retreated while the victorious Breckinridge’s casualties included 10 VMI cadets killed and mortally wounded and another 47 wounded. Within a few days, Grant replaced Sigel with General David Hunter, effectively ending Sigel’s wartime military service. As a political general, Sigel was more useful to Lincoln helping to gain the support of German-Americans than as a military commander.

August Willich

August Willich had a fascinating life and, in contrast to Sigel, an impressive Civil War combat record. He was a Prussian military officer who became politically radicalized, resigned his commission and was arrested and court martialed. He joined the 1848 revolution as a leader, with Friedrich Engels as his aide-de-camp. After its failure, he escaped to England where he met Karl Marx and became a Communist. He emigrated to the United States in 1853. Willich became editor of a daily labor newspaper in Cincinnati.

With the outbreak of the war, Willich first enrolled as a private in the 9th OVI. But, in August, 1861, Indiana Governor Oliver P. Morton appointed Willich colonel of the 32nd Indiana Infantry. At the battle of Shiloh, Willich impressed his commander General Lew Wallace by drilling his faltering troops in the face of enemy fire to prevent their scattering. After the battle of Perryville, Willich had his horse shot from under him and he was captured at the battle of Stone's River. He was imprisoned until exchanged in May, 1863. He resumed a command and fought at the battles of Chickamauga and Missionary Ridge. Participating in Sherman's Atlanta campaign, on May 15, 1864, Willich was severely wounded at the battle of Resaca, Georgia and due to his paralyzed arm was unable to serve in the army after that. His January 24, 1878, obituary in the New York Times stated:

“Gen. Willich was undoubtedly the ablest and bravest officer of German descent engaged in the war of the rebellion, and owed his preferment wholly to his untiring energy, bravery in the field, and marked abilities.”

Willich is remembered for designing a new method of rapid-fire attack and pioneering the use of bugle calls in battle

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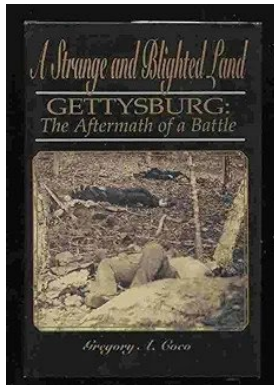
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BOOK REVIEW



Coco, Gregory A. *A Strange and Blighted Land: Gettysburg, the Aftermath of a Battle* (Thomas Publications: Gettysburg, PA, 1995) ISBN # -1-57747-041-9, LC # 94-60303

In deference to our trip to Gettysburg I would like to highlight a book I picked up about ten years ago at the Cyclorama Museum in Gettysburg and just re-read. This work is a very well researched work on the aftermath of the great battle and many of its lesser known aspects. The author Mr. Gregory Coco has turned out a well-organized work, broken down into various chapters depicting what happened to the land and community after everything was over. I found it fascinating and well worth reading in order to give one a more complete idea of what the community of Gettysburg went through in the weeks and months following the battle. I will break this essay down into a chapter by chapter review each one being a book in itself.

Chapter 1: No Tongue Can Depict the Carnage; The Battlefield in the Aftermath, This Chapter describes the first sightseers to arrive on July 4 and the Government's efforts to secure all its property before anyone could purloin it. In the words of J. Howard Wert a Gettysburg resident, "All was a trodden, miry waste with corpses at every step, and the thick littered debris of battle-broken muskets and soiled bayonets, shattered caissons and blood defiled clothing, trodden cartridge boxes and splintered swords, rifled knapsacks and battered canteens. When a description of a scene such as was presented on these fields... is attempted words have lost their power" This is one of the many first hand experiences describing the July 4, 1863 condition of the field and one of the first .

Chapter 2: A Long Black Shadow; The Burial of the Dead. This chapter covers such topics as, The First Internments, Marking the Graves, Union and Confederate Field Hospitals, Camp Letterman and The U.S. Sanitary Commission. Photos of the exhumation parties and the price paid by the government for each body exhumed by these parties. It seems that the burial of Confederate dead however was much more controversial. One Pennsylvania newspaper denotes: "There seems to be considerable feeling in and around Gettysburg that a place be set apart for the burial of Confederate dead who are now buried promiscuously on the battlefield, or in the vicinity. The recent rains have washed the places where they are buried and the bones have become exposed. "The author also includes a photo of one of the trenches where the Confederate dead were buried. Confederate officers such as William Barksdale and Lewis Armistead were taken to their final resting place by the families shortly after the battle ended. Mr. Coco also gives a vivid description of the celebrations that November when President Lincoln came to dedicate the graves of the fallen.

Chapter 3: A Great Rushing River of Agony; The Care of the Wounded. Most people are familiar with Camp Letterman, however there were several aspects of caring for the wounded at Gettysburg that few realize. After the battle thousands of people came from across the country to claim the bodies of dead relations. Many of them went home empty-handed as the dead had already been buried but many of the wounded were taken home either to die or recover. The Confederate wounded were left and were cared for pretty responsibly by the U.S. Sanitary Commission. Many of the area farmhouses were commandeered for corps hospitals such as the George Spangler Farm off the Baltimore Pike where General Lewis Armistead died. One publication notes that, "Surgeon Daniel G. Britton was engaged in his own medical work as a division surgeon -in- chief at the field hospital of the Eleventh Corps on the George Spangler Farm, one mile south of Gettysburg. From July first through the fifth he was present at the hospital, describing his duties as very hard work and where four operating tables were going night and day. On the 4th of July the number in the hospital was over 1000."

Chapter 4: "The Woods are full of them!" Prisoners of War, Stragglers, and Deserters. It is estimated that the number of soldiers captured added up to relatively the same number on both sides but it is almost impossible to talley an accurate number. For an example General Lee ordered all wounded U.S. soldiers left behind and all others offered parole. Only the ones that refused parole were taken south. Most of the captured Confederates were taken to Fort Delaware near Wilmington, Delaware or DeCamp General Hospital in New York. The majority of the Union prisoners were taken to Belle Isle in Richmond, Va. General Lee's order #72 prohibiting any wanton destruction of private property was generally obeyed, however "the farms everywhere suffered the loss of oats, horses and cattle etc. Horses were generally run off to the mountains before the invaders arrived, however some farmers were injured to the extent of thousands of dollars, through various stealing and destruction of fences and wasting of crops. Cherry trees were cut down by the rebels to get the cherries, or the branches were lopped off. Orchards were destroyed; searches were made in farmhouses for hidden goods or for money. Not altogether a pretty picture but neither did the U.S. forces have a pristine record when invading southern territory .

Chapter 5: "The sacred sod" This chapter delineates the thousands of people who came to Gettysburg after the battle to find their loved ones or mementoes of them. Notices such as this were flooding the area newspapers: "Any person giving information about the grave of James M.

Daniel, Twenty Seventh Pennsylvania volunteers, will confer a great favor on an affected family in Philadelphia. Address, Rev. Thomas F. McClure, Oakland Mills, Juniata County, Pa.” As no transcript of Daniel’s final resting place is available, it is presumed that he was buried as an “unknown,” and the sorrowing family would never gain any shred of solace or peace of mind concerning his fate, except that he was killed on July 1. Or adds such as this: “Any person at Gettysburg, who can give information of the exact burial place of Lieut. Humpherville, of the 24th Michigan Inf., will confer a favor upon his sister in Chicago”

The “Battlefield Cleanup” was managed by General Rufus Ingals, (Grant’s former roommate at West Point) Thousands of dollars’ worth of government property had to be reclaimed. Warnings such as this were run in various Pennsylvania and Maryland newspapers: “SPECIAL NOTICE. Citizens visiting the battle field are warned against carrying away any Government property, either Federal or Confederate, and are directed to return the same without delay to my office in Gettysburg, thereby saving themselves from arrest and prosecution. W. Willard Smith.” Arms collected on the battlefield tallied up to: 24,864 Muskets, 10,589 Bayonets, 2,487 Cartridge Boxes, 366 Sabers....”

Civilian Deaths besides that of the well-known Jenny Wade were also a common threat. Local newspapers ran notices such as this.” On Wednesday last, whilst Mr. Michael Crilly, of this place, was engaged in an effort to unload a shell, it exploded and seriously injured his hand, requiring the amputation of three fingers.” Also this: “We are informed that on Monday week, Mr. William Frame, residing at Harney, Carroll County, Md. lost his life by the explosion of a shell. His brother George had the shell screwed in a vice, (in his blacksmith shop) and was attempting to open it with a chisel when it burst...” Farmers were constantly turning up live ammunition while working in their fields. As time went on a “fake” relic industry grew up around battlefield visitors. Shops selling Gettysburg Battle Relics (most of them manufactured) sprung up around the town and even in private residences. Thankfully that aspect has almost totally faded away.

All in all “A Strange and Blighted Land” was a fascinating book and one that covers an aspect of Gettysburg and indeed the entire Civil War that we don’t normally think about. A well-researched work of 433 pages including credits, by Mr. Coco, I would highly recommend it for anyone who desires reading about the lesser-known aspects of American History. A great book!

--Paul Siedel

FINIS!