

THE CHARGER



The Cleveland Civil War Roundtable

December 2024

CCWRT Founded 1956

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SPEAKER – Barbara Toncheff, a retired electrophysiology laboratory cardiac technician from the Cleveland Clinic Main Campus, has a long-standing interest in genealogy and Victorian history which has resulted in her research and creation of a living history presentation on the life of female spies and smugglers of the Civil War era.

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, December 3, 2024

Website:

<http://www.clevelandcivilwarroundtable.com>

MEETING – December 11, 2024

PROGRAM – “Connivers in Corsets—
Female Spies and Smugglers During the
Civil War”

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President's Message

Fellow Roundtable Members:

With the holiday season upon us and the end of 2024 drawing near, I find myself reflecting on the warmth and magic this time of year brings. Homes glow with the soft twinkle of lights, casting a cheerful shimmer on frosty evenings, while the scent of cinnamon, gingerbread, and freshly baked treats fills the air, evoking a comforting embrace of nostalgia. The crackling of a fire adds a cozy backdrop to this season of joy and togetherness. Outside, snowflakes gently fall, blanketing the world in a serene white, while festive decorations—whether Christmas trees adorned with twinkling ornaments, menorahs glowing with light, or colorful Kwanzaa candles—bring the spirit of the season to life. It is a time when the world feels a little brighter, a little kinder, as we celebrate our achievements, cherish our loved ones, and come together as a community. Whether through the joy of Christmas, the traditions of Hanukkah, the principles of Kwanzaa, or other December celebrations, we honor the people who make this season—and every season—truly special.

In keeping with that spirit, I am pleased to share a recap of our recent presentation in November by Dr. Brian Matthew Jordan. Dr. Jordan, a Pulitzer Prize finalist and renowned historian, took us through a lesser-known chapter of the Civil War. His presentation focused on the 107th Ohio Volunteer Infantry, a regiment of immigrants that played a critical yet often overlooked role in the Union Army. Composed mainly of ethnic Germans, they faced not only the brutal realities of war but

also prejudice from their fellow Americans. Dr. Jordan highlighted two views of Union soldiers during the Civil War: one sees them as patriotic heroes enduring hardship, while the other reflects the growing disillusionment felt as the war dragged on and its purpose became unclear. Using the 107th Ohio as a case study, Dr. Jordan illustrated how the regiment's initial enthusiasm was gradually worn down by the traumatic experiences of battle, including heavy losses at pivotal engagements like Chancellorsville and Gettysburg.

At Gettysburg, the 107th suffered heavy casualties. On July 1st, the regiment was ordered to position itself near Blocher's Knoll, a poor location that was quickly overwhelmed by Confederate forces, forcing the regiment to retreat. The following day, July 2nd, they were repositioned near East Cemetery Hill. They fought valiantly throughout the evening, holding off determined Confederate attacks and helping protect the critical Union right flank. However, they were unfairly criticized for retreating the previous day, even though they had been in a vulnerable position. This criticism left a stain on their legacy that Dr. Jordan worked to correct. He also shared that the veterans from the regiment chose to erect their monument at Blocher's Knoll, rather than East Cemetery Hill, as a poignant reminder of their sacrifice for future generations. Following Gettysburg, Dr. Jordan also highlighted the regiment's bravery at Fort Wagner and Dingle's Mill—the latter occurring on the same day as Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox Court House. Unfortunately, their actions at Dingle's Mill were overshadowed by the surrender, adding yet another instance of the regiment's remarkable efforts being eclipsed by other events.

Dr. Jordan's research also shed light on the post-war struggles of the 107th's veterans, many of whom faced physical injuries and lasting psychological trauma. Ultimately, his insights remind us that the history of the Civil War is more complex than it often appears, and the stories of immigrant soldiers like those in the 107th Ohio deserve greater attention and recognition. He challenged the audience with the following thought-provoking statement: *"Our Civil War histories are still rarely peopled with the likes of the 107th Ohio—hard-luck ethnic regiments who endured the slings and arrows of nativism in the army and society more broadly. But until we reckon with how and by whom our nation was saved, our understanding of the conflict will remain impoverished."*

The Cleveland Civil War Roundtable was incredibly fortunate to hear from such an accomplished scholar. Dr. Jordan's presentation not only deepened our understanding of the 107th O.V.I., but also underscored the importance of remembering and honoring the often-overlooked contributions of immigrant soldiers. His work serves as a vital reminder of the complexity of history and the lasting impact of these soldiers on the outcome of the war.

I am excited to invite you to our next meeting on December 11th, where we will enjoy a Living History Program by Barbara Toncheff about female spies and smugglers in the Civil War. We will gather to celebrate the season with delicious food, great company, and plenty of festive fun. As part of our Holiday Dinner, we will be having a Prime Rib Buffet (with vegetarian options), so come hungry! Do not forget to wear your most festive attire—whether it is an ugly Christmas sweater or a holiday-themed tie, let us spread some "Holiday Cheer." Please

feel free to bring your spouse or significant other to join in the holiday spirit!

As we approach the close of 2024, I also want to take a moment to thank each of you for your outstanding participation and enthusiasm—your involvement truly makes this group so special. Wishing you all a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, and a Happy New Year! May this holiday season bring you peace, joy, and warmth, and hoping that 2025 brings opportunities and success for us all.

I look forward to celebrating with you on December 11th!

Your obedient servant,

Gene Claridge

The Editor's Desk



WHEN IT RAINS, IT POURS! At least that was the wisdom of Grandma and "Morton Salt Company." This month has witnessed a bumper crop of submissions for

"The Charger." I am ecstatic! Keep it up! I would like to get a strong backlog of pieces so we can package a large variety of articles, book reviews, and other literature in every issue. In addition to submissions by regular contributors Dennis Keating, Brian Kowell, and Paul Siedel, we also introduce the work of two new members of CCWRT. Dr. Don Iannone shares with us a Civil War poem from his new poetry book (which is beautifully reviewed by Past President Ellen Connally) and Thomas Cooper has written a fine piece about the experiences of his Civil War ancestor. Al Fonner, who last year wrote about a unit of Native-American sharpshooters in the Union army has added an article on a Cherokee unit from western North Carolina in the Confederate army. Finally, in addition to his work as moderator for the upcoming Dick Crews Memorial Debate in January, Past President William Vodrey submitted an article on this past summer's trip by some of our members to Buffington Island, the site of the largest Civil War battle in Ohio. WOW! Take some time to enjoy this expanded edition of "The Charger;" and if you get inspired, do not hesitate to make your own contribution to its pages.

Annual Dick Crews Memorial Debate, Jan. 8, 2025

Our topic this year was selected by CWRT President Gene Claridge. It is, "The Table is Set, So Who Are You Bringing Along?" Our order of debate will be determined by random draw that evening. Our debaters and their particulars:

* Jonathan Collens has chosen Robert E. Lee. He will discuss with Lee, over buttermilk, what the general might have

done differently during the Civil War, and if Lee had any regrets.

* Emily Dickinson has chosen U.S. Grant. She will discuss with him, over London Fogs, how his Mexican War experience shaped his military plans during the Civil War.

* Terry McHale has chosen Thomas Francis Meagher. He will discuss with Meagher, over 69th N.Y. Regimental Cocktails, the general's expectations for his veterans eventually helping him expel the British from Ireland.

* Paul Siedel has chosen Patrick Cleburne. He will discuss with the general, over Irish whiskey, neat, Cleburne's proposal to let slaves serve in the Confederate Army and thus win their freedom.

* John Syrone has chosen Dan Sickles. He will ask Sickles, over scotch, why the general chose to move the Third Corps forward from Cemetery Ridge to the Peach Orchard at Gettysburg.

Debaters may speculate as to how their selected generals might have replied. Each will have five minutes to speak, and then take questions from the audience for up to another five minutes. They will then participate in a general discussion/rebuttal session ("the scrum"), after which the audience will be asked to vote on which presentation they found most compelling. The winner will, of course, receive fabulous prizes!

William Vodrey will again be our moderator.



Portland Landing on the Ohio River where two future Presidents, Rutherford B. Hayes and William McKinnley, briefly stood during the battle.

Touring the battlefield near Buffington Island, Ohio

By William F.B. Vodrey
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On July 20, 2024, seven members of the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable toured the Buffington Island Battlefield Memorial Park, site of the largest armed clash in the Buckeye State during the Civil War. Last year marked the 160th anniversary of the battle. Our November 4, 2023 tour had to be postponed, unfortunately, due to numerous scheduling conflicts.

Buffington Island is on the Ohio River near Portland in Meigs County, southeastern Ohio, about three and a half hours' drive from Cleveland. Dave Mowery of the Buffington Island Battlefield Preservation Foundation led our tour, which took us, among other places, on important private lands of the battlefield that are usually inaccessible. A contingent from the American Battlefield Trust was along for the tour, as well.

The battle, fought on July 19, 1863, was one of the last major incidents of Morgan's Raid that summer. Confederate Gen. John Hunt Morgan had ridden his way across much of southern and southeastern Ohio on his celebrated but unauthorized raid. His very weary and saddle-sore men hoped to make their escape across the Ohio River to West Virginia (which had been Virginia until just the previous month). However, the river, which was usually only about thirty inches deep then, was closer to six feet deep by the time of the battle, due to a four-day swell from heavy rains upstream. This made the Confederate crossing much more difficult.

Mowery emphasized the role that severe sleep deprivation likely played in the decision-making of both Morgan and his U.S. Army and Ohio militia pursuers. When the battle began, Morgan and his men had

already been in the saddle for about two and a half weeks, covering over six hundred miles and getting only about three hours of sleep a night. Morgan paused overnight on July 18, hoping to give his men some much-needed rest and also to avoid losing any on the road by a night march.

The delay proved nearly fatal, as it gave United States forces under Brig. Gen. Edward H. Hobson time to concentrate and build rudimentary fortifications across the main road (now Ohio Route 124). When U.S. and Confederate forces faced off, Morgan's men were nearly out of ammunition. They fired sparingly during the two-hour battle; even Morgan's four horse-drawn light artillery pieces had just three rounds each by then.

A small squadron of U.S. Navy gunboats commanded by Lt. Cmdr. Leroy Fitch, including USS *Moose*, *Imperial* and *Allegheny Belle*, played a key role in preventing the bulk of Morgan's forces from escaping across the river. The battle also marked one of the first combat uses of Spencer repeating rifles by U.S. troops.

A total of about 2,800 U.S. land and naval forces were involved in the battle, according to Mowery, our guide. There were an estimated 1,930 Confederate troops at the start of the battle; about 1,050 escaped. Those who surrendered did so on a battlefield strewn with looted items from their long ride, including birdcages, bolts of cloth, skates and ribbons, as well as buggies and carriages (and, oddly enough, a circus wagon), which the rebel cavalymen had used to carry their wounded.

Mowery explained that the official War Department post-battle casualty and captured numbers are somewhat suspect, in part because some prisoners were taken as stragglers at various points away from the battlefield, and in part because some U.S. Army and Ohio militia commanders were bragging rather than striving for accuracy. Take these numbers, then, with a grain (or three) of salt:

U.S. killed: 6

U.S. wounded: 20, including 1 wounded sailor

C.S. killed: 57

C.S. wounded: 65

C.S. captured: 71 on battlefield, 571 off

Some 140 Confederate troops escaped across the Ohio River, as Morgan actually had a chance to do, before he turned back mid-river when he saw that the troops he'd left behind him on shore were in trouble. The numbers of those rebels who moved north with Morgan then steadily diminished in the following days due to straggling, exhaustion and eventual capture. Morgan and just 364 remaining men would surrender at West Point in Columbiana County, Ohio (my home county), even more bedraggled and saddle-sore, exactly a week after the battle.

Col. Basil Duke, Morgan's brother-in-law and second-in-command, was among those captured at Buffington Island, having fought a delaying action to allow Morgan and the rest of the Confederate column to escape farther north. He later became friends with Theodore Roosevelt, who snuck in to see him on his hospital deathbed in 1916.

Four houses known to have been used as field hospitals after the battle still stand, and we saw one of them, now severely dilapidated, not far from the stone-lined Portland steamboat landing. Two future U.S.

presidents, Rutherford B. Hayes and William McKinley, both of the 23rd Ohio Volunteer Infantry regiment, were briefly at the landing during the battle. They never returned after the war.



A view of the 1931 Ohio Historical Society battlefield marker at the state memorial park, some of the CCWRT group making their way down a trail near the Ohio River, and the guide for the day, Dave Mowery.

Mowery concluded our tour by discussing the significance of the raid, noting its failure either to do serious harm to the U.S. war effort or to relieve pressure on Confederate forces in the east. “No raid wins wars,” he concluded.

The area is now quiet and peaceful. Were it not for a handful of monuments and signs, you might never know the largest Civil War battle in Ohio was fought there. The Portland Community Center, a former school next to the Ohio History Connection Park, has a small Buffington Island Civil War Museum, which is clearly a labor of love. No actual fighting took place on the island which gave the battle its name; it’s also difficult to see through summer foliage, despite being only a few dozen yards offshore.

Although the tour was free, our roundtable and I made donations to the Buffington Island Battlefield Preservation Foundation to support its mission. I encourage you to do so, as well!

For more on the battle:

<https://www.ohiohistory.org/visit/browse-historical-sites/buffington-island-battlefield-memorial-park/>.
<https://www.buffingtonislandbattlefieldfoundation.org/>.
<https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/battle-buffington-island-morgans-foray-across-ohio-river>
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Buffington_Island



The author's ancestor, James W. Cooper, standing in the door of his Steubenville tobacco shop, Cooper's "Angel," Emily V. Mason, and an 1870 picture of Cooper and his sole surviving son, Charles C. Cooper.

An Angel from Richmond, the 2nd Ohio Volunteer Infantry and the Long Path of Discovery

by Thomas M. Cooper, CCWRT Member

The biographical details of our ancestors emerge slowly, and perhaps this is a good thing. History needs to marinate some events over time so that their meaning can be understood by the living, in deeper, broader contexts. Especially true for wartime histories involving trauma and the years required to remember-and-resolve. This is one of the reasons we study these periods and come together to talk about them.

My family has carried around images and stories of "Blind Grandpa Cooper" for several generations, and we have over the decades carefully maintained photos of him and some of his belongings. My grandmother remembered him well, things he said and did, and told me about him, many years ago. I have personally been aware for 60 years of his Civil War service, engagements, capture at Chickamauga, imprisonment at Richmond's Belle Isle, Libby and Castle Thunder prisons, in Danville, and release. But in spite of hours of searching and reflecting on this family history, the "real story" did not emerge until 4 years ago, and with the help of a few others, mysteries fell open rapidly in succession, in a domino-like effect.

James W. Cooper, a 22-year-old plasterer in Steubenville, Ohio responded to Lincoln's first call for troops in April, 1861, serving several months in the 20th OVI, then re-enlisting on September 5, 1861 as a Private with the 2nd OVI, on active status until his discharge due to blindness on

May 9, 1864 and return home with accompaniment to Steubenville. His Company G was engaged at Perryville and Stones River before Chickamauga. On September 19, 1863 his 2nd Ohio and adjacent units including the 33rd OVI, were driven back through the woods at Winfrey Field at Chickamauga by Patrick Cleburne's division. Cooper was taken prisoner, moved as a POW to Richmond and then to the brick tobacco warehouses of Danville which had been repurposed to house hundreds of Union prisoners, packed into small rooms. There he contracted smallpox, with lesions in his eyes leaving him permanently blind. In his Post Historian's interview his words read: "Arrived at Annapolis, MD Mar 14, 1864, was unconditionally released through the friendship of **Miss Emily V. Mason of Richmond**. I being blind she thought it a disgrace to the Confederacy to keep a blind person in prison."

Post war life in Steubenville saw Cooper run a tobacco store ("Cooper's Institute") a popular gathering place for veterans, and he was appointed in 1867 as the "Inspector of Tobacco, Snuff and Cigars in the Seventeenth Collection District" in Ohio by Lincoln's Treasury Secretary Hugh McCulloch. He married, had one surviving child, later moving to Newark, Ohio (my hometown) with his son, where he died, with burial in Atwater, Ohio, his wife's hometown. His father William Lewis Cooper served in the 25th OVI, was wounded and buried in 1874 in Steubenville's Union Cemetery next to the 1869 CW monument dedicated to and with the inscription "The Great War for the Suppression of the Rebellion." Brother Justin M. Cooper served as a 16-year-old in the 129th OVI and moved to Kansas after the war. All this was known by the family through documents passed down and via military files obtained through the National Archives.

But who was Miss Emily Mason in 1864? Just a name. Where would there be sources of information about a young private citizen of Richmond? Nearly 60 years passed. Then in 2020 my Dartmouth College classmate Joseph Cosco, a recently retired American Studies and English professor, moved to Richmond and offered to "look up" Emily Mason. At that point there was little information about her on the Internet. (Now she is much more "discoverable.") But the Library of Virginia boasted large oil portraits of her and her brother Stevens T. Mason who was the first Governor of Michigan, descended from the distinguished colonial Mason family of Virginia which includes George Mason, one of the Founding Fathers. She had edited or authored two books: *Southern Poems of the War* (1867) and *Popular Life of Gen. Robert Edward Lee* (1872). She had been an intimate of Mrs. Lee.

I quickly travelled to Richmond to meet with the Library of Virginia's Meghan Townes, see the prison sites, walk across the James River to hike around Belle Isle and began to dig deeper into more obscure archives. Quite out of the blue (it seemed) an Ebay post popped up in my inbox from Defunct Bookstore of Nashville offering an original copy of *Southern Poems of the War*, by Emily V. Mason. I bought it for \$50. Two strong impressions emerge from that barely postwar compilation — the mournful expressions about the loss of the young men of the South, the hardships left to families, plus the compassionate resolve for all young soldiers, which bore evidence in the care provided to the young men of the North by Miss Mason and many other women, whose relief and nursing work has now been studied and documented. Mason was a matron in Richmond hospitals, taking up the cause of the wounded and prisoners on both sides and leader among the women in Richmond who advocated for more humane conditions. To be noted however is the absence of any mention of slavery, Black soldiers or Black prisoners.

Among other narratives, see a 1998 academic thesis by Elise Allison, "Confederate matrons: women who served in Virginia Civil War hospitals" or the fruit of several hours of my library spadework — In Emily Mason's 1902 article in *The Atlantic Monthly*, "Memories of a Hospital Matron" she wrote: "And my poor, ugly smallpox men! How could I fail to mention you, in whose suffering was no 'glory,' whose malady was so disgusting and so contagious as to shut you out from companionship and sympathy! ... Often in the night I would wake, thinking I heard their groans. Lantern in hand, and carrying a basket of something nice to eat, and a cooling salve for the blinded eyes and the sore and bleeding faces. I would betake me to the tents to hear the grateful welcome. 'We knew you would come tonight. Can I have a drop of milk or wine?' A few encouraging words and a little prayer soon soothed them to sleep. These were my favorites." Sitting in that library, a 150-year window of time swung open, in a very personal way.

Very recently I was in contact with a distant relative I had never met, who found a 1915 obituary of Private James W. Cooper from a Steubenville newspaper. I already had a lengthy Steubenville obituary, but this one provided additional detail that added to the "plot," excerpted here:

"At the battle of Chickamauga, Mr. Cooper was captured and...was taken seriously ill and removed with a number of companions from the prison to tents, where they were forced to spend the winter. Mr. Cooper contracted a heavy cold and gradually lost his sight. A Miss Mason, who was acting as a field nurse, seeing Mr. Cooper's condition, appealed to President Jefferson Davis of the Confederate States and was successful in obtaining a parole for him...No man who ever lived in Steubenville had more friends than 'Jimmy' Cooper,' as he was familiarly called and he was respected by everybody rich and poor...His cigar shop at the corner of Fifth and Market streets was the headquarters for the men about town and whatever was going on in 'Old Steuby' was sure to be discussed there."

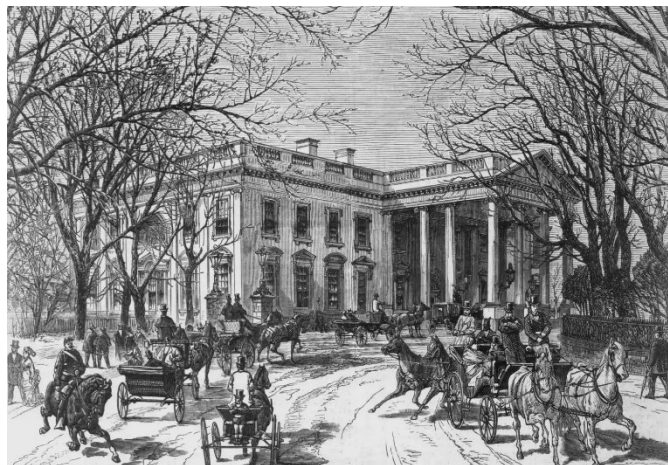
Shortly before the pandemic made travel impossible in 2020, I arranged a phone call with my lifelong friend and Civil War expert Jim Hall of Mt. Vernon, Ohio who dropped everything to help me research the 2nd Ohio's location and engagement in the field on September 18-19, 1863, and the narratives of the day. A visit to Chickamauga soon happened. I made contact with Chickamauga National Military Park Historian Jim Ogden, arguably the foremost expert on that engagement. With Jim's unselfish time and advice, I walked the 2nd OVI's movements of September 19 but more importantly we began to flesh out the narrative of the forced path of the prisoners through Confederate lines, as they were marched through Ringgold, Tunnel Hill, and Dalton, Georgia where they were loaded onto boxcars. After a week or more of rail transit through Atlanta and North Carolina they arrived in Richmond where they were moved into outdoor camps. Jim Ogden was uncertain about the particulars of that journey, but suggested I consult Lois Lambert's 2008 excellent history of the 33rd OVI which fought adjacent to the 2nd Ohio at Chickamauga in Scribner's Brigade. This volume cited the published diary of Private Warren Johnson (who was captured the same day as Cooper) and his undated "Life in Confederate Prisons, Account from Unidentified Newspaper."

Fortuitously, my nephew Matthew Cooper an Ohio State Univ. Law School professor and authority on library research and reference services, was intrigued by the search, jumped onboard and knew where to look, first finding the “New York State Military Museum and Veterans Research Center’s 1868 Fifth Annual Report of the Bureau of Military Statistics” which led to Priv. Johnson’s first person, remarkably detailed account (of his capture, POW march, train transport and arrival at Belle Isle) in an obscure, microfilmed 1868 Scioto County, Ohio paper. Johnson arrived at Belle Isle on the same day as my ancestor, and then was sent to Danville just 3 days before. In his account, he mentions the smallpox patients at Danville. We conveyed the scanned newspaper account for Jim Ogden and it has now been added to the NMP’s archive for the 33rd Ohio. During this entire process — all opening up in about a two-month period — Jim also shared a rare printed account of the capture at Chickamauga of another 2nd Ohio soldier, Horace Abbott and his 1889 “My Escape from Belle Isle” narrative describing a parallel experience of capture, transport on the same routes, meager rations, dialogue with guards and conditions of captivity. In all, an immersive experience for this descendant, grateful for the timely (and uncanny!) connections with experienced friends, family and professional researchers who were all too willing to help bring the past to life.

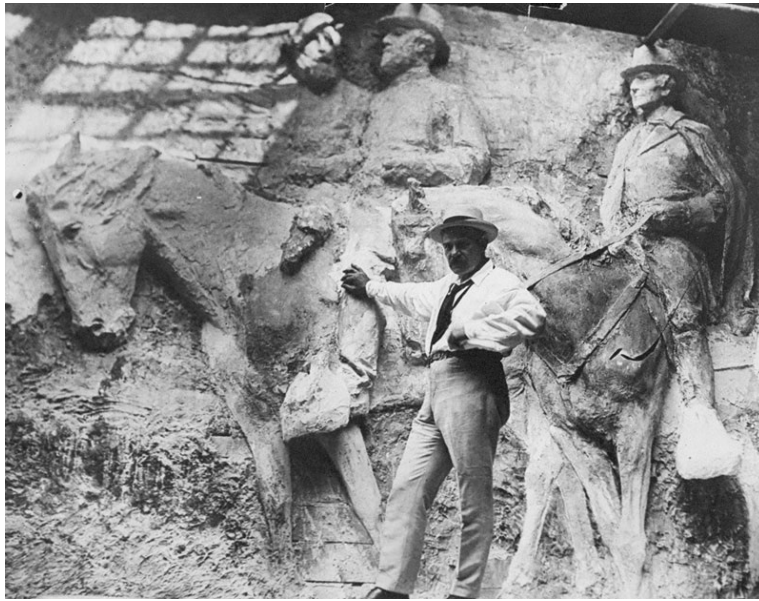
[Editor’s Note—Mr. Cooper, a new member to CCWRT, mentions the following reference materials that our readers might find useful:

A superb regimental history of the 2nd Ohio is Richard Baumgartner’s 2011 *The Bully Boys: In Camp and Combat with the 2nd Ohio Volunteer Infantry Regiment 1861-1864*. Among the regiment’s alumni are James Andrews of Andrews Raiders and the Great Locomotive Chase of April 12, 1864. Blue Acorn Press, 2011.

Heroes of the Western Theater: 33rd Ohio Veteran Volunteer Infantry. Little Miami Publishing, 2008.]



White House Christmas



Gutzon Borglum vs UDC and the State of Georgia

© Brian D. Kowell November 2023

The summer of 2023, my wife and I traveled to South Dakota. We visited Mount Rushmore and were awestruck by the magnificence of the sculpted mountain with the visages of Washington, Jefferson, T. Roosevelt, and Lincoln - all done under the skilled guidance of sculptor Gutzon Borglum. This was not Borglum's first try carving heroes on a mountain's face.

I knew little about Borglum until my wife purchased a book about the sculptor written by Rex Alan Smith. In chapter 4 of his book titled, *The Carving of Mount Rushmore*, I learned that it was Borglum who did the carvings on Stone Mountain in Georgia.

It is unclear who originally had the idea to carve a Confederate Memorial on Stone Mountain, but what is known is that an Atlanta newsman, John Graves, made the first recorded suggestion, although nothing came of it until, Mrs. Helen Plane, the 85-year-old national president of the United Daughters of the Confederacy decided to get a sculptor's opinion. That sculptor was Gutzon Borglum who had previously carved the statue of General John B. Gordon.

On August 17, 1915 Borglum arrived in Atlanta and met with the local chapter of the UDC who proposed carving a 20-square-foot likeness of Robert E. Lee. They took him to the 2000-foot-long, 800-foot-high Stone Mountain to have a look. "Ladies," he said after a while, "a 20-foot head of Lee on the mountainside would look like a postage stamp on a barn door! I'll have to think about it."

Spending three days examining the mountain, Borglum came up with a vision of a titanic grouping of the Confederacy's greatest leaders surrounded by infantry, cavalry and artillery. Upon returning to Atlanta he told the ladies of the UDC of his vision. The ladies worried about the vast sums of money it would cost, but Borglum, always self-assured, told them, it would not be a problem, as the South would give massive support. He presented his plans at the UDC national convention in San Francisco and dazzled the ladies. They gave Borglum verbal authority to proceed.

Borglum had to solve how to safely get men and equipment up the mountain's sheer sides. He consulted with inventor, Lester Barlow, of the Brown Hoist and Machinery Company in Cleveland, Ohio, but the cost was \$200,000 and the UDC had managed to raise only \$2000 so far, so that was abandoned. Borglum decided to use sling-seats suspended by cables attached to the top of the mountain. This was simple and inexpensive and worked.

Lack of money and World War I intervened and brought construction to a halt. After the war the UDC still was unable to raise sufficient funds and turned the promotion and financing to the Stone Mountain Monumental Association, comprised of the cream of Atlanta's social and financial society. Borglum was rehired and restarted the work, financing the project out of his own pocket believing he would be reimbursed.

Late 1923 saw the emergence of Lee's profile on the cliff, and the press took note. There was an unveiling on January 19, 1924, which was the general's birthday. A modest but steady stream of donations began flowing to the Association. Mrs. Plane, now 94-years-old and dressed in an 1860's costume, was carried to the rostrum, and with her signal two large American flags were parted revealing Lee.

Work progressed but so did the problems. The Association treated Borglum as just their employee, and this lack of respect rankled the artist. His ego bruised, Borglum needed to do other projects to raise money to feed his family and was frequently absent from the project. He also questioned the way the Association was handling the funds. The Association tried to raise money by getting Congress to authorize the issue of special half dollar coins. Borglum got into an argument about his design for the coins and accused the Association of trying to rig the affair to line their own pockets. He also said the Association owed him \$40,000, but the Association said they had already paid him \$25,000. In fact, according to their books (which were suspect) he owed them \$40,000. The Association began to view him as an obnoxious, money-hungry Yankee from Connecticut and a Republican to boot! The board had even suggested an assistant sculptor be hired to continue Borglum's work.

Borglum had a fit. He went to the site, grabbed his plans and sketches, took a hammer, and destroyed his models. Hearing of this, the Association declared that the models and plans were their property and promptly had an arrest warrant issued. Borglum received the news of the warrant and, before the sheriff arrived, jumped into an automobile and fled 120 miles, crossing into North Carolina.

The State of Georgia filed a \$50,000 damage suit against Borglum and called for his extradition. They tried to ruin Borglum's reputation, but they did not succeed. The national press sided with

Borglum. Conceding that Borglum was a hard man to get along with, they said he had a right to destroy his models. Public opinion began to side with the sculptor, and soon the lawsuits were dropped.

The Stone Mountain project was abandoned until after World War Two. The carvings of Lee, Stonewall Jackson and Jefferson Davis on their horses was finished in 1972. Borglum meanwhile went to the Black Hills of South Dakota to carve another mountain.

Sources:

The Carving of Mount Rushmore, Rex Alan Smith, New York, Abbeville Press, 1985.

<https://stonemountainpark.com/activity/history-nature/memorial-carving/>.



Legion Cherokee at a 1903 Reunion

Surrender? A better word would be quit: Eastern Cherokee and the Confederacy

By Al Fonner

When we think of the American Indian's support of the Confederate States in the American Civil War, we most often think of what occurred west of the Mississippi and in the Southwest. One name that often comes to mind is General Stand Watie who raised and commanded a contingent of Cherokee fighters for the Confederate States, operating in the Indian

Territory, Kansas, and Missouri. Although not as celebrated as Watie and his Cherokee, the Eastern Cherokees that remained in Western North Carolina (NC) also threw their lot in with the Confederate States. This remnant formed the backbone of what would be known collectively as Thomas's Legion of Indians and Mountaineers; the Cherokee contingent of the Legion would serve primarily in the defense of the Western NC Appalachian Mountain Region, although they would have some involvement in early operations in Eastern Tennessee.

In 1861, local businessman and politician William Holland Thomas recognized the importance of raising a local militia to defend Western North Carolina (NC). Thomas was a great friend of and advocate for the Eastern Cherokee, even being the first and only white to serve as their chief. Believing that the Eastern Cherokee would benefit from supporting the Confederate States, Thomas initially recruited 200 Cherokee Indians into what would be known as the "Junaluska Zouaves," so named in honor of the late Cherokee Chief Junaluska who had reportedly saved Andrew Jackson's life at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend. On April 9, 1862, the Zouaves would be incorporated into service with the Confederacy as Companies A and B of the NC Cherokee Battalion; Thomas was eventually given command with the rank of Major. When the Cherokee Battalion was ordered into Eastern Tennessee in September 1862, Thomas obtained permission from the Confederate government to recruit additional Indians and Whites as necessary. As a result, Thomas added five companies of Whites to his original two Indian companies; he would designate them as "Thomas's Legion of Indians and Highlanders."

On September 27, 1862, the Legion was officially mustered into service with the Confederate States in Knoxville TN as the 69th NC Volunteer Infantry Regiment. The full regiment included two battalions, the Cherokee Battalion and Walker's Battalion. By December 1863, Thomas would recruit two more Indian companies for the Cherokee Battalion. Thomas's Legion would eventually be bolstered by the addition of a light artillery battery and two companies of sappers and minors. Thomas's Legion was the largest single military unit raised in NC. However, the unit would eventually be split up as Walker's Battalion and other white units would be separated from the Legion to fight in Eastern Tennessee, Kentucky, and Virginia during Early's 1864 Shenandoah Valley Campaign. The Cherokee Battalion, under Thomas, would spend the war in Eastern Tennessee and Western NC, defending mountain passes, guarding against Union raiders, and performing provost duties. In the final months of the war, Thomas's Legion would be reunited in Western NC for a final defense of their homeland.

Thomas's Cherokee Battalion had their first serious engagement with Union forces on September 13, 1862, 10 miles North of Rogersville TN at Baptist Gap. There, a company of Cherokee were ambushed by a Union reconnaissance force. The Union's first volley killed one Cherokee; the Cherokee responded by resolutely charging the Union line and engaging them in hand-to-hand combat. Major William W. Stringfield of the 69th NC reported that "the Indians were led by Lt. John Astoogatogeh (or Astooga Gota), a splendid specimen of Indian manhood and warrior...." (Thomaslegion.net, 2023) Lt. Astoogatogeh was killed in the charge, which enraged the Indians who responded by scalping several of the Union dead and wounded. Upon hearing of the incident, Col. Thomas strongly rebuked the Indians and instructed them to never speak of it. However, word would soon spread to the Union forces anyway. Following this engagement at Baptist Gap, Lt. Col Stringfield reported that the men of Thomas's Legion performed the "hard, disagreeable work" of enforcing conscription, pursuing saboteurs and

insurgents, and guarding key installations and infrastructure like bridges, railroads, and blockhouses. (Thomaslegion.net, 2023)

In September 1863, Thomas and his Cherokee Battalion deployed to the mountains of NC, where he pressed into service absentee and furloughed men from his and other units. During the withdrawal from Tennessee, Thomas and the Cherokee Battalion, along with a mixed contingent of white soldiers, were pursued by Union forces. A brisk skirmish occurred between the Cherokee Battalion and the Federal pursuers at Sevierville, TN. However, Thomas succeeded in withdrawing across the Smokies and immediately secured the passes. When Confederate forces surrendered the Cumberland Gap to Union Maj. Gen. Ambrose Burnside on September 9, 1863, the Cherokee Battalion was guarding the passes through the Smokie Mountains.

Between October 27th and 28th, 1863, fighting occurred in Cherokee County, NC, between Confederate forces, including the Cherokee Battalion, and Captain Goldman Bryson's Federal Mounted Company. Bryson's company, also referred to as "Mountain Robbers," consisted of between 120 and 150 troops and had been active in conducting raids in a number of Western NC communities. Such raids garnered hatred from the local population. As if the raids were not enough to warrant animosity, Bryson, a native of the region, had been acquitted of the 1856 murder of John Timson, a Cherokee constitutional convention delegate and resident of Cherokee County. After sacking Murphy, NC, Bryson and his company were pursued by a confederate force that included Co. B of Thomas's Legion commanded by Lt. Campbell H. Taylor, a mixed-blood Cherokee. When the Confederates General Vaughn and detachment of his mounted infantry caught up to Bryson on October 27, they killed two of Bryson's company and captured 17 men and 30 horses.

Lt. Taylor and 19 men of his Cherokee company left Murphy on October 28 to continue their pursuit of Bryson through the mountains. They tracked Bryson over 25 miles for two days without stopping to eat. When Taylor and his men finally caught up to Bryson, he refused to surrender; Taylor shot Bryson several times, killing him. Taylor also captured one man accompanying Bryson, a copy of Burnside's orders to Bryson, and his company's roll. When the Cherokee returned to Murphy, they proceeded through the streets of Murphy wearing Bryson's bloody clothes. Lt. Taylor was honored by Lt. Col. W. C. Walker of Thomas's Legion, who commended the Lieutenant in writing to Gen. Bragg.

On December 8, 1863, several of Thomas's Cherokee scouts were captured and imprisoned in the Sevierville jail. Thomas responded by advancing on Sevierville with about 200 men of the Cherokee Battalion and overwhelmed the Unionist Home Guard. Thomas released the Cherokee scouts and captured around 60 Unionist Home Guard soldiers, six Federal men, and their weapons and ammunition. After this action, Thomas was pursued by Union Col. William J. Palmer's 15th Pennsylvania Cavalry. Palmer caught up with Thomas at Gatlinburg, TN, on December 10, where a skirmish erupted. Thomas and his Cherokee Battalion had camped at the foot of a steep wooded ridge from which they conducted a fighting retreat using the thick woods as cover. After their ammunition was exhausted, Thomas and his Cherokee melted away into the mountains, having suffered two wounded and the loss of Thomas's hat, as reported by Col. Palmer. (Thomaslegion.net, 2023)

In 1864, Governor Zebulon Vance of North Carolina wrote that, “the condition of Western North Carolina is deplorable,” referring to bushwhackers and outlaws. (Thomaslegion.net, 2023) In affirmation of the Governor’s concern, Thomas’s Cherokee Battalion would spend the Winter of 1863 – 1864 defending Western NC against bushwhackers and outlaws who terrorized the local population; Walker’s Battalion and the remainder of the Legion was assigned to Jackson’s Brigade in Eastern Tennessee. In evidence as to how dangerous it was in the region, Thomas’s Legion’s very own Lt. Col. William Walker was murdered in his Cherokee County home on January 3, 1864, while recovering from an illness.

In February 1864, Union Maj. Francis M. Davidson and the 600 troopers of the 14th Illinois Cavalry were ordered to pursue and destroy Thomas and his Cherokee Battalion. The 14th Ill. Cav. surprised Thomas and his men on February 2 ten miles West of Quallatown at Deep Creek, NC. The Cherokee quickly formed a skirmish and held off the advancing Federal cavalry for an hour before their ammunition ran out. The Cherokee then melted away into the mountains. Thomas initially reported that two Indians had been killed, which he would later amend to five, and 18 taken prisoner. Davidson, however, reported that he had killed nearly 200 Indians and taken prisoner 54 Rebels, utterly destroying the Cherokee; exaggerated claims to be sure since no other Union report corroborated the claims and continued resistance in the NC Mountains would demonstrate.

While Thomas and the Cherokee Battalion defended Western NC, the rest of Thomas’s Legion would be reassigned from Jackson in Eastern TN to Gen. Early’s Army of the Valley for the Shenandoah Valley Campaign during the Summer and Autumn of 1864. All elements of Thomas’s Legion would be reunited in December 1864 with orders to defend Western NC, although that part that had participated in Early’s Valley Campaign was depleted, having begun with over 700 men and returning with around 100. As for the Cherokee Battalion’s condition, their ranks had been thinned by mumps and measles.

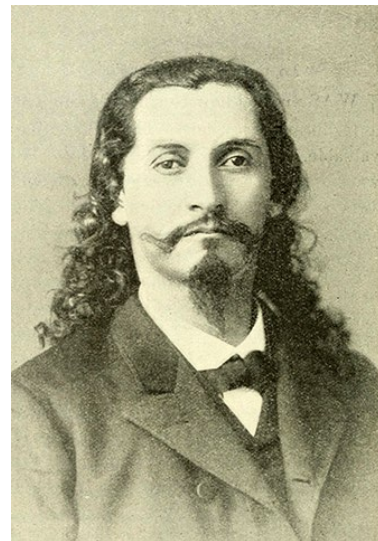
During the winter of 1864 – 1865, Union scouting parties began a campaign of hit-and-run raids into Western NC. On February 4, Union Col. George Kirk and his 3rd NC Mounted Infantry, 600 strong, left Newport, TN and entered Haywood County, NC. This raid went as far as the county seat, Waynesville. In Waynesville, Kirk and his men pillaged stores, stole horses, burned down several houses, released prisoners in the town jail, and killed 20 men. Lt. Col. Love’s Infantry Regiment of Thomas’s Legion battled Kirk’s men in Haywood County, and Lt. Conley’s sharpshooters of the Legion pursued Kirk across Balsam Mountain to Soco Gap, 13 miles North of Waynesville. On March 6, Lt. Col. Stringfield and a battalion that included many Cherokee engaged Kirk at Soco Creek, forcing the raiders back into Tennessee towards Sevierville. Stringfield’s force killed or wounded several Union soldiers and took a number of horses. Had the Stringfield’s men not been low of ammunition (five rounds per man), things would have gone much worse for Kirk and his men who were nearly boxed in. Nonetheless, this engagement dispelled any doubt that Thomas’s Legion and its Cherokee contingent were still an effective fighting force.

As the Civil War wound down, even after Lee’s surrender at Appomattox, Thomas’s Legion and its Cherokee Battalion continued fighting a guerrilla war NC’s Southern Appalachian Mountains. On May 4, 1865, Union Brig. Gen. Davis Tillson ordered Lt. Col. William Bartlett and his 2nd NC Mounted Infantry to Waynesville, NC. On May 6, Bartlett and his command were

surprised at White Sulphur Springs, NC, by 1st Lt. Robert T. Conley's sharpshooters of Thomas's Legion, who drove the Federal forces off the field. Bartlett and his men spent a restless night in nearby Waynesville, NC. Restless, because all through the night, Bartlett and his men observed campfires in the hills surrounding the town and endured the war-whoops and drums emanating from all directions. Thinking he and his contingent surrounded and outnumbered, Bartlett offered a flag of truce.

The exact events that transpired following that night are unclear. Some accounts indicate that a truce was negotiated on May 7, while others report May 9 and even May 10. (Lewis, 2022; Thomaslegion.net, 2023) What is certain is that Confederate Brig. Gen. James G. Martin – Commandant of the District of Western North Carolina, accompanied by Col. James R. Love (Love's Regiment – Thomas's Legion) and Col. William H. Thomas (Indian Battalion – Thomas's Legion), met with Bartlett to discuss the surrender of Waynesville. Col. Thomas was accompanied by approximately 20 to 25 of his Cherokee personal guard who were, along with Thomas, "stripped to the waist and painted and feathered in good old style." (Lewis, 2022) To bolster their effort to obtain more favorable terms, Thomas even went so far as to threaten Bartlett by his unleashing his Cherokee warriors in an orgy of scalping.

In the end, Bartlett surrendered Waynesville to Martin; and, ironically, Martin surrendered his command to Bartlett, ending organized conflict in Western NC. Additionally, Bartlett agreed that the Cherokee could retain their arms to, "... protect their families from ther (*sic*) marauder bands still roaming Western North Carolina." (Lewis, 2022) Thus, the Cherokee of Thomas's Legion had the unusual distinction of negotiating the simultaneous surrender of an enemy-held town as well as their own surrender. However, as one of the Legion's veterans later wrote, "I say surrender, but a better word would be quit, for I don't think we really ever did surrender. In fact, we just disbanded and carried our guns and cartridges home with us." (Cottrell, N.D.)



Campbell H. Taylor, William H. Thomas, and Eastern Cherokee Chief Nimrod Jarrett Smith

In the end, the Cherokee that survived the war returned to the homes and families to resume their uncertain lives in a land where the white man continued to whittle away at their way of life. Some, like Chief Nimrod Jarrett Smith, who achieved the rank of 1st Sergeant by the end of the war, would rise to prominence within their people. The Cherokee's contribution to the Confederate's war efforts cannot be understated: their knowledge of the mountains was unmatched; tracking and hunting was their forte. The Cherokee's guerrilla tactics were often derided as cowering and retreating in the face of superior Union forces. Largely armed with .69 caliber muskets, the Cherokee were no match in an open field for the Federal troops armed with Enfield rifles. By luring the Federals into the mountains and forests, and employing guerrilla tactics, the Cherokee's stealthy ways more than evened the odds against the Federals. Additionally, Union soldiers' recollections of scalping early in the war gave the Cherokee a psychological advantage, although Thomas had early on forbidden that practice. Finally, the independent spirit of the Cherokee warrior could not be denied since, as was stated before, they did not surrender, they simply quit.

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Three Significant Civil War December Battles

By Dennis Keating

In the 19th Century, warfare generally paused for the winter. This was true during the Civil War as the opposing armies usually went into winter encampments. However, in 1862, and 1864, three major battles occurred during the month of December with significant consequences – Fredericksburg (a Union defeat) in 1862, Stones River also in 1862 (a draw), and Nashville (a Union victory) in 1864. This article will review the significance of these three important December engagements in Virginia and Tennessee.

Fredericksburg

After the dismissal of George McClellan as commander of the Army of the Potomac, Lincoln chose a reluctant Ambrose Burnside as his successor. Burnside decided to try to outflank Lee's army, cross the Rappahannock River at Fredericksburg, and capture Richmond. While beating Lee to that city, a crossing from Falmouth was delayed for lack of pontoons arriving on time. After their arrival, Burnside was finally able to cross the river. On December 13, 1862, he chose to attack Lee's army below the city, while also making a diversionary attack from the city against Lee entrenched behind a stone wall and sunken road on Marye's Heights. This resulted in

repeated suicidal attempts to breach that defense and huge casualties. The Army of the Potomac suffered over 12,500 casualties.

Despite Congressional criticism of Lincoln after this disastrous defeat, he held firm in signing the Emancipation Proclamation to go into effect on January 1, 1863. Militarily, the battle of Fredericksburg was notable for the first Civil War experience of urban warfare as the Union army after crossing the river battled Confederates defending the city before they retreated.

Stones River

In December, 1862, Ohioan William Rosecrans' Army of the Cumberland held Nashville but he was under pressure from President Abraham Lincoln to advance. (as had been Burnside). South of Nashville was General Braxton Bragg's Army of Tennessee. The day after Christmas, half of Rosecrans' army headed South toward Chattanooga, meeting Bragg's army on the banks of Stones River.

Both commanders planned to attack on December 31. On Rosecrans' right, corps commander Alexander McCook (of the Fighting McCooks of Ohio) ignored warnings of approaching Confederates. The exception was his division commander Phil Sheridan. Early the next morning, the Confederate left appeared out of a fog and smashed into McCook's corps, sending it reeling except for Sheridan's division, which doggedly resisted. While the Federals retreated, eventually Bragg's advance was stopped in the Round Forest. While observing the fight at the Round Forest with Rosecrans, his aide Julius Garesche was decapitated by a cannonball. His successor as Rosecrans' chief of staff was James Garfield.

The next day, the two armies still faced each other but did not engage. On January 2, Bragg sent John C. Breckinridge's Kentucky Orphan Brigade to attack a strong Union position over the strong objection of Breckinridge and the threat of the brigade's commander to shoot Bragg. In the face of Union artillery, the brigade suffered heavy casualties. Sobbing, Breckinridge cried:

“My poor Orphans! My poor Orphans! My poor Orphan Brigade! They have cut it to pieces.”

With that, the next day Bragg retreated. Just as with Antietam, the Union claimed victory after a battle draw when the Confederates withdrew. Later, Lincoln would write Rosecrans:

“Whilst I remember anything, that about the end of last year and the beginning of this, you gave us a hard-earned victory, which, had there been a defeat instead, the nation could scarcely have lived over.”.

The Stones River Union “victory” restored hope for the Union and provided needed political support for the Emancipation Proclamation that so affected the future course of the Civil War.

Nashville

After his series of reckless and unsuccessful attacks against the armies of William Tecumseh Sherman resulting in his abandonment of the besieged Atlanta, John Bell Hood's Army of Tennessee was reduced to 30,000, less than half of its original size when his predecessor Joe Johnston used defensive tactics to try to defend against Sherman's much larger invading force in 1864. At first, Hood then tried to cut Sherman's railroad supply line from Chattanooga. However, Sherman decided not to continue to defend that supply line. Instead, he convinced President Lincoln and Ulysses Grant to allow him to take much of his force and "make Georgia howl." Soon living off the land, Sherman made his "March to the Sea", ending with the capture of Savannah in December, 1864, after a quick capture of the fort guarding the land approach to the city. There was no serious defense of Georgia by the Confederate army.

Instead, Hood decided upon the quixotic plan to take his army and from Alabama cross into Tennessee, capture Nashville, and continue into Kentucky and possibly then head East to unite with Lee's besieged army defending Petersburg and Richmond. To defend a heavily fortified Nashville, Sherman assigned a reinforced George Thomas to defend against Hood's advance. One of those reinforcements was the Army of Ohio, commanded by John Schofield.

Hood, failing initially to cut off Schofield's army before it could retreat to join Thomas in Nashville, pursued Schofield as he headed North. On November 29, 1864, Hood's army camped at Spring Hill ahead of Schofield, with Hood planning to attack Schofield there the next morning. Instead, through still debated mysterious circumstances, Schofield's army was able to march unmolested through Hood's army that night. On November 30, an enraged Hood discovered that Schofield's army had reached the entrenched defenses of the village of Franklin North of Spring Hill.

Against the advice of his top generals and without his trailing artillery, Hood nevertheless ordered a direct assault across a two mile plain, ignoring the proposal of Nathan Bedford Forrest to try to prevent Schofield's escape by flanking Franklin. As a result, Hood's army's desperate assault that afternoon and evening resulted in 7,000 casualties (almost one-third of the attackers), including the deaths of six generals, among whom was General Patrick Cleburne, who foreseeing his death led his troops on foot after his horse was killed. Ohioans who were prominent in the defense of Franklin were commanders Jacob Dolson Cox, Emerson Opdycke, and Jack Casement. That night, Schofield's retreating army was safely enroute to Nashville while Hood's shattered army still prepared to pursue it and engage Thomas's forces defending Nashville.

To defend Nashville, in addition to Schofield's force, Thomas had some troops from his Army of the Cumberland, C.F. Smith's 16th Corps, garrison troops, and some USCT regiments, totaling 70,000 (with 27 Ohio infantry regiments, including the 7th OVI and 41st OVI from NE Ohio), with 55,000 able to combat Hood's 20,000 (Hood having sent Forrest's cavalry to attack Murfreesboro). Hood established a perimeter southeast of the city, hoping to repulse a Thomas attack. While Thomas organized his polyglot force and awaited the arrival of his cavalry, he was under constant pressure from Grant to attack. Also, Schofield was secretly conspiring to have

him removed from command. Finally, Grant sent General John Logan to investigate. Thomas informed Grant that weather, including ice storms, temporarily prevented an attack. But on December 15, Thomas did attack. While the heavily outnumbered Confederates barely held, the next day they were overwhelmed, and Hood's decimated army fled South, belatedly followed by Thomas.

Reaching Alabama, a small remnant of the Army of Tennessee went to North Carolina to join Joe Johnston, where it was part of the surrender of his army. The outcome of the battle of Nashville was effectively the military end of the Confederacy (except for Mobile and Selma) in the Western Theater East of the Mississippi River.

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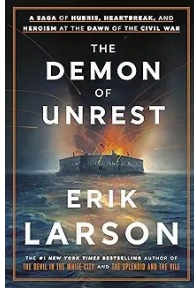
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BOOK REVIEWS



Erik Larson. *The Demon of Unrest: A Saga of Hubris, Heartbreak, and Heroism at the Dawn of the Civil War* (Random House 2024)

I have admired Erik Larson's previous writings. For this book, Larson explained how it came to be:

"Whenever I search for a book idea, I look first for a subject that is inherently suspenseful and lends itself to being told as a story with a beginning, middle, and end....I began working on this book in early 2020 during the first weeks of the COVID pandemic, when...I started reading about Fort Sumter and the advent of the Civil War. Political unrest had heightened the chaos of the pandemic, and for whatever reason, I began wondering, Exactly how did the Civil War begin? What really happened at Fort Sumter?"

He explained that he came across *The War of the Rebellion* and he was enthralled. "There it was: my narrative spine." He then explained how he came across other key sources, including several other books about the siege and surrender of Fort Sumter in 1861:

"Once the pandemic eased, I was at last able to visit Charleston, where I toured the fort and spent many happy hours in the reading room of the Charleston Historical Society...Before starting my journey, I had known little about Lincoln beyond what I'd learned through casual reading, but I quickly gained an appreciation of the sheer substance of the man, especially his warmth and sense of humor."

He begins the book with this note to the reader:

"I was well into my research on the saga of Fort Sumter when the events of January 6, 2021, took place. As I watched the Capitol assault unfold on camera, I had the eerie feeling that present and past had merged...I set out to try to capture the real suspense of those long-ago months when the county lurched toward catastrophe, propelled by hubris, duplicity, false honor, and an unsatisfiable craving on the part of certain key actors for personal attention and affirmation. Many voices at the time of Sumter warned of civil war, but few had any inkling of what that might truly mean, and certainly none would have believed that any such war could take the lives of 750,000 Americans...I invite you now to step into the past, to that time of fear and dissension, and experience the passion, heroism, and heartbreak-even humor-as if you were living in that day and did not know how the story would end."

The structure of the book is a chronological day-by-day recounting of events from November 6, 1860 (the day of Lincoln's election as President) to April 18, 1861 (the day that Robert Anderson

and his garrison of Fort Sumter arrived in New York Harbor). It reads like a diary. Larson focuses on Anderson, Abraham Lincoln, and William Seward (and outgoing U.S. President James Buchanan), among others on the Union side and on the Confederate side Edmund Ruffin (a leading secessionist), several South Carolina politicians, and Mary Chestnut (quoting often from her diary). Also, London Times correspondent William Howard Russell.

Larson's epilogue begins with Robert Anderson returning to Fort Sumter exactly four years after its surrender (April 14, 1865) to raise the U.S. flag that he had taken with him when he evacuated the fort. That night he toasted President Lincoln but

"He could not know it, but at that instant, Abraham Lincoln lay dying of a gunshot wound in a box at Ford's Theater in Washington. Forever afterward John Nicolay would feel haunted by the coincidence, believing that had he not gone to Sumter for this commemoration, had he stayed behind in Washington, the assassination might not have occurred."

Larson ends the epilogue and the book with the suicide of 72-year-old Edmund Ruffin on June 18, 1865. When he had returned to his ruined Virginia plantation on August 17, 1862, he found that occupying Yankee soldiers had left their names and messages on the walls of the house including:

"One soldier cut to the heart of it: 'You did fire the first gun on Sumter, you traitor son of a bitch'".

While I did find that Larson's detailed account of this period surrounding the fate of Fort Sumter after Lincoln's election a bit of a slog, on the other hand it gives you great insights into the acts and thoughts of many of the key actors and observers in this dramatic saga that initiated the Civil War.

Other reviews:

The Washington Post reviewer Patrick Young had high praise for Larson:

"Perhaps no other historian has ever rendered the struggle for Sumter in such authoritative detail as Larson does...Few historians, too, have done a better job of untangling the web of intrigues and counter-intrigues that helped provoke the eventual attack and surrender."

He praises Larson's portraits of Anderson and Lincoln, while noting the absence of attention to Frederick Douglass and Abolitionists.

The New York Times reviewer Alexis Coe was less positive. She criticizes "the extraordinary dense level of details" in the 565 pages and says that "I almost drowned from exertion, especially in the incredibly banal final stretch."

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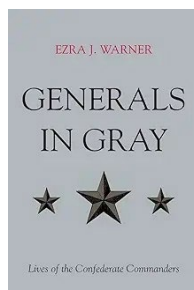
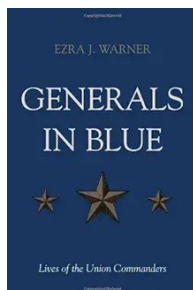
If you want to read more about the history of what led up to the Civil War beyond Larson's account, see, for example:

David S. Brown. *A Hell of a Storm: The Battle for Kansas, The End of Compromise, and the Coming of the Civil War* (Simon & Shuster 2024)

Robert W. Merry. *Decade of Disunion: How Massachusetts and South Carolina Led the Way to Civil War, 1849-1861* (Simon & Shuster 2024)

NB Erik Larson will speak at the Cuyahoga County Public Library's Writers Center Stage at the Maltz Performing Arts Center on May 7, 2025.

--Dennis Keating



Warner, Ezra J. *Generals In Blue* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Louisiana State University Press, 1964. Library of Congress Number: 64-21593)

Warner, Ezra J. *Generals in Gray* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Louisiana State University Press, 1959. Library of Congress Number: 58-7551)

I would like to bring to our attention today two of the most important reference works, (in my opinion) to be included in any Civil War library. These are two fantastic works by Ezra Warner "Generals in Blue" and "Generals in Gray". These two definitive works contain mini bios of each man that reached the rank of general officer during the Civil War. The amount of research that must have been done boggles the mind. Each book is an alphabetical listing of the general officers and a short biography of each. One can find the life history of any officer they come across while reading their nineteenth century Civil War history. Some of these men went on to become governors of various states, congressmen, senators and clergymen to name just a few. Many such as Patrick Cleburne never made it through the War but left an indelible mark on the United States. As one leafs through these books and spot reads parts of the various biographies one can pick up information such as that of General Mortimer Leggett: born 1821 died 1896 buried in Lakeview Cemetery, Cleveland, Ohio. Raised in Geauga County, Ohio. Served as school superintendent in Zanesville, Ohio. He was a law partner of general and later governor Jacob Cox. He distinguished himself as a brigade commander in General Logan's Division of McPherson's XVII Corps and during the Battle of Atlanta had Legget's Hill, a prominent landmark on that battlefield, named for him. After the War he was appointed Commissioner of Patents by President Grant. He founded a successful electric distribution company which eventually became part of General Electric Co. He died in Cleveland on January 6, 1896, and is buried in Lakeview Cemetery in Cleveland, Ohio.

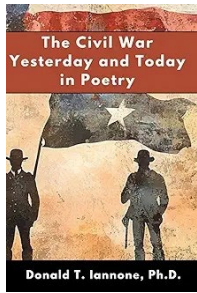
Moving on to “Generals in Gray” one comes across names that only well versed historians know about and the collateral knowledge that comes while perusing that volume, such as : General William Thompson Martin: born 1823 died 1910 buried in City Cemetery Natchez, Mississippi. Before the War General Martin formed a lucrative legal practice and was district attorney in Adams County, Mississippi. In 1861 he organized the Jeff Davis Legion and was with Jeb Stuart on his famous ride around McClellan in 1862. He was active in the Tullahoma and Chickamauga Campaigns and accompanied Longstreet to Knoxville in 1863-64. After the War he resumed his law practice and lived at his estate “Montaigne” in Natchez. (Now listed on the National Register of Historic Places) He was a delegate to the Democratic Conventions of 1868 and 1880, he served on the board of trustees of Jefferson College in Washington, Mississippi, was president of the Natchez, Jackson, and Columbus Railroad. He died at Natchez, Mississippi, and is buried in the City Cemetery in Natchez. It’s interesting to note that for those of us interested in collateral knowledge that General Martin was the prosecuting attorney in the murder case of “The Barber of Natchez”. (A piece which ran in this newsletter about one year ago) Mr William Johnson a black barber and prominent citizen was murdered near Natchez in 1849, unfortunately the case was never solved and the real murderer went unpunished.

The incidental knowledge and facts that these two volumes contain is fantastic . One can read about people who are basically unknown but fit together in the amazing puzzle of American History. Here are some statistics gleaned from these volumes regarding general officers who participated in the American Civil War: Killed in Action: USA 47, CSA 77, declined appointment: USA 1, CSA 2, committed suicide: USA 1, CSA 1, killed in “personal encounters:” USA 1, CSA 2. Other facts that come to light are: 62 had Mexican-American War backgrounds, 217 were West Point Grads, 20 had emigrated from Europe. General John Beatty one of the generals who resigned did so that his brother who was conducting their joint banking business could get a taste of soldiering. Just one story of the 129 general officers who resigned their position during the War. Other facts include; The last Confederate General to pass away was General Felix Robertson who died on April 20, 1928, the last remaining U.S. general officer to pass away was Adelbert Ames who died April 13, 1933.

I would highly recommend both of these volumes for any private library; they are in my opinion invaluable reference works. The “Generals in Blue” volume is 680 pages while “Generals in Gray” is a 420 page volume. Each entry, except one, has a corresponding photo that goes along with the bio. The print is easy to read and the books are well organized so that information may be looked up easily and quickly. Many of these men are not listed online which only compliments the huge amount of research done by Mr. Warner. Very highly recommended and as I have said a must for any Civil War library.

Although probably out of print I believe one could obtain a volume from any online book exchange such as American Book Exchange or Abe Books, and of course Amazon Books. Your efforts will be well rewarded.

--Paul Siedel



Don Iannone, Ph.D. *The Civil War Yesterday and Today in Poetry*
(Independently Published, 2024)

Don Iannone is a new member of the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable. Don is a professor of business at Transcontinental University and a prolific writer. He published “America’s Dream at a Crossroads, The 2024 Presidential Election and Beyond” earlier this year. He has previously published ten books of poetry, and five nonfiction works dealing with autobiography, economic development, and spirituality and religion.

In his latest work, “The Civil War Yesterday and Today in Poetry,” Don uses his poetic skill to carry the reader back to the years before, during, and after the Civil War, to show how power based on privilege, class, race, and wealth more often corrupts than heals a nation and its people.

This poetic journey of 100 poems traverses 175 years of American history – reaching back to the time before the Civil War, through the conflict, into the remainder of the 19th century, and across the 20th and 21st centuries.

Through these vivid and often unsettling poems, readers will witness not only the violence and suffering of the Civil War, but also the moral and societal battles that have continued to define America. This collection captures the voices of those who fought for freedom, the leaders who wrestled with doubt over the righteousness of the conflict, the enslaved people and the civilians caught in history’s relentless tide. There are graphic depictions of battlefields and the brutality of slavery, along with reflections of America’s past and present struggles for justice, equality, and democracy.

The poems will allow the reader to walk alongside soldiers, mothers, enslaved people, and leaders and share their hopes, fears and triumphs. In addition to his doctorate in philosophy, Don holds a degree in divinity that brings a spiritual dimension to his works, which is comforting to readers, as they consider the violence and suffering of the Civil War and the moral and societal battles that faced both the citizenry and leaders of the 1860’s.

As a sample of his works, Iannone selected the following poem: “Nobody Knew Hold Long it Would Last,” which is reprinted here with his permission. It is a moving work that raises the ultimate question of every war: how long will it last?

Those members who more often read detailed accounts of battles and generals will find poetry a new genre. But trying something new is always an adventure. I do not think that the reader will be sorry. Iannone brings a new look at the Civil War and its long-term impact on American society. His works are well worth reading.

--C. Ellen Connally

[Editor—As promised, here is one of Dr. Iannone's excellent poems. Enjoy!]

Nobody Knew How Long It Would Last

By Don Iannone

They thought it would be over
by the harvest,
before the leaves turned red
and fell like soldiers
cut down in fields.
But the war stretched on—
an endless line of boots
marching toward a horizon
that never came.

Nobody knew how long it would last.
They counted days
like grains of corn in a sack,
hoping the supply would hold,
but the sacks emptied,
the land turned barren,
and the sky offered no relief.

Letters came less often,
ink smudged by rain and blood.
Mothers buried the words
before they buried their sons.
In towns where the church bells
once rang for Sunday services,
now they tolled for the dead—
their echoes carried by the wind
like a distant thunder
no one could escape.

The fields stayed unplowed,
as farmers traded plows for rifles,
hands calloused by work
became hands that shook
under the weight of war.
Every hill, every river,
every fence line became a border
between life and loss.

The truth was,
they didn't care how long it lasted—

as long as the other side broke first,
as long as they could stand and say,
“We won.”

But the war didn't listen
to pride or purpose.
It devoured both
and left only bones
where dreams had been.

Still, they fought on,
because what else could they do
but fight
until there was nothing left to fight for,
until the last cannon fired,
until surrender
was the only thing left to give.

Nobody knew how long it would last—
all they knew
was it would last
as long as it took
for someone to finally say
they'd lost.

