



THE CHARGER

THE CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

October 2026

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SPEAKER—Steve

Magnuse, Past President and Program Chair for the Indianapolis Civil War Roundtable and past board member for the Society for Women in the Civil War, is the author of a book telling the remarkable story of

Rufus Dawes and Mary Gates, *To My Best Girl*. His new book, *The Dawes Brothers in Battle*, is pending publication in 2026.

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 7:30 PM

For reservations email:

ccwrtreserve@gmail.com. To ensure dinner is reserved for you, the reservation must be made by Tuesday, October 6, 2026.

Website:

<http://www.clevelandcivilwarroundtable.com>

MEETING – October 14, 2026

PROGRAM – “The Dawes Brothers”

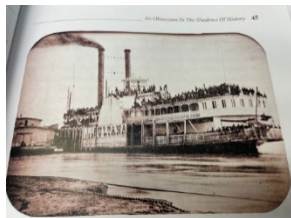
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President's Message

At the September 9, 2026, meeting of the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable, author and historian John Banks took members on what he described as a **"Civil War Road Trip of a Lifetime."** Drawing from his book of the same name, Banks shared stories from his travels across Civil War battlefields, mostly the obscure and forgotten names, forts, homes, and historic sites that have mostly been lost to history. But as he emphasized throughout the evening, the trip was not simply about reaching famous destinations. It was about the journey—and, most importantly, the people and unexpected discoveries along the way.

Banks's presentation was filled with fascinating characters, remarkable discoveries, and the types of stories that often can only be found by getting off the beaten path. It is often this path where stories and history are preserved by everyday people whose passion for the Civil War became the story of legend.

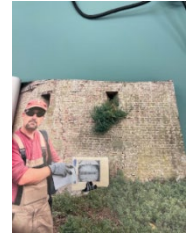
One of those stories involved Jerry Potter and the remains of the *Sultana*, the ill-fated steamboat whose April 1865 disaster remains one of the great tragedies of the Civil War era. Banks's journey brought him into contact with Jerry and his passion to locate the exact location



of the steamboat. The Mississippi River had changed course over the years and who knew that its remains lie in Arkansas? His story is another reminder that Civil War history can be found in places that are easily overlooked and where barren fields become the final resting place for those soldiers looking forward to a journey home to loved ones instead of a disaster and tragedy.

Banks also told the story of Englishman Matthew Locke and Castle Pinckney, demonstrating once again how his travels uncovered connections and personalities that

might otherwise remain hidden from the traditional Civil War narrative. Who knew that Castle Pinckney is a site that is still unforgotten to history? Its remains are now inhabited by Pelicans and overgrown brush that remind us that mysteries still remain to be discovered.



Another memorable stop involved Michael Meehan, who helped Banks investigate an old, dilapidated building. What might have appeared to be nothing more than an abandoned structure became a time capsule when Civil War-era discoveries were made inside. Among the



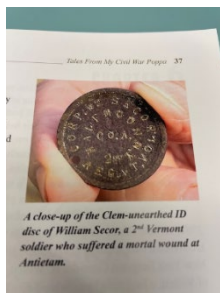
remarkable finds was the signature of Civil War soldier John Shivler, still visible on a second-floor wall. For Banks,

discoveries such as this illustrate why exploring these places can be so rewarding: history is sometimes literally written on the walls.

Banks also shared his visit with Donald Shank, who lives in the former house where a young Rutherford B. Hayes, the future 19th President of the United States, was cared for by his wife, Lucy, during his recovery. Banks was able to visit the room where Hayes recuperated. The experience provided an intimate connection to the future president and another example of how a physical place can transform a historical figure from a name in a textbook into a real person.

No discussion of Civil War travel would be complete without Gettysburg, and Banks recalled his relationship with Ronn Palm and Palm's extraordinary collection of Civil War photographs at his Gettysburg Museum. Palm's vast collection represents another way of preserving the past—through photographs that allow us to see the people and places of the Civil War in ways that words alone cannot convey.

Banks also discussed Tim Talbott and the Battle of New Market Heights, where United States Colored Troops made a determined assault against Confederate defenses, including the Texas Brigade. Banks noted that the earthworks from that battle are still visible today and are considered the most preserved earthworks of the Civil War. I personally had not heard of the Battle of New Market Heights but was intrigued how a tangible connection to soldiers who fought at a place serves as an important reminder of the courage and sacrifice of the USCT and the efforts by Damon Radcliffe to preserve the memory of his great-great-grandfather who earned a Medal of Honor with the USCT.



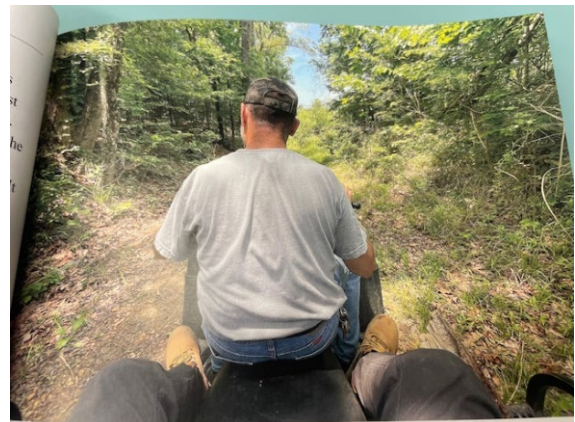
One of the more personal stories involved Richard Clem, whom Banks affectionately calls his “Civil War pappa.” Clem was involved in the discovery of an identification disc found on the Otho Smith farm at

Antietam. The disc belonged to William Secor of the 2nd Vermont, a soldier who suffered a mortal wound during the Battle of Antietam. The discovery of Secor's identification disc brought an individual soldier's story back into focus more than 160 years after the battle. It was my first time ever hearing that Civil War soldiers carried dog tags. The story that one was found and preserved resonated with me and demonstrated how the most bizarre and obscure moments of the Civil War are the ones that make history alive.

Perhaps the most memorable story of the evening was Banks's visit with Sid Champion V, who still lives on his family's property at Champion Hill, Mississippi. Banks described being taken by Sid on an ATV ride along the Old Jackson Road, the historic route that winds between Jackson and Vicksburg and passes through the Champion Hill battlefield and Champion's property. The ride offered Banks a unique opportunity to experience the terrain much as the soldiers did in 1863. Along the way, the landscape continues to yield reminders of the battle, including minnie balls, battlefield relics, and old burial trenches. It also reminded me of our 2025 Field Trip to Vicksburg. While we did not get to see the actual Champion Hill where Sid lives, we did see the general area where the battle took place. It also

reminded me of our past president, Gene Claridge's story that he visited Sid Champion's property a few days after our field trip. Perhaps we will hear an article from Gene that pertains to his experiences with Sid Champion V.

The story of Sid Champion was particularly fitting because it captured the spirit of Banks's entire presentation. The Champion family connection to the land, Sid's knowledge of the battlefield, and his willingness to take Banks into places that most visitors would never see demonstrated how Civil War history survives through the people who live on, preserve, explore, and care for these historic landscapes.



Throughout the evening, Banks made clear that his book is not simply a collection of battlefield travel stories. It is a celebration of discovery, friendship, curiosity, and the people who keep Civil War history alive. The destinations certainly mattered—but the real treasures were the people Banks met along the way: Jerry Potter, Matthew Locke, Michael Meehan, Donald Shank, Ronn Palm, Tim Talbott, Richard Clem, Damon Radcliffe, Sid Champion V, and many others.

This may have been the most important message of Banks' presentation: the best Civil War stories are not always found at the famous battlefields we have grown accustomed to visiting, The Gettysburg Battlefield, or the Vicksburg Battlefield, or Ft. Sumter. Sometimes the best stories are discovered in an old building, on a field in an abandoned corn field, in a dog tag buried in the soil, or on an ATV down an old road through a battlefield. For John Banks, the road trip truly was about the journey, not the destination. And on September 9, he brought

that journey to the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable.

I look forward to seeing everyone at our October meeting.

John Syrone
President
Cleveland Civil War Roundtable

CCWRT Dispatches



PRESENTATION OF PROGRAM ON THE SINKING OF THE SULTANA

The NORTHEAST OHIO CWRT, meeting October 13, 2026, at the Pine Ridge Country Club in Wickliffe, will be hosting a talk on “The Sinking of the Sultana: Arthur Jones and Michael Brunner—Coming Home from Andersonville Prison. Check out the NEOCWRT new website at

<https://northeastohiocivilwarroundtable.com/>

CCWRT CIVIL WAR PRINT RAFFLE

This year we are offering Raffle Tickets for a Civil War Print created by famed artist, Keith Rocco. The name of the print is "The Coaling" and depicts the scene at the Battle of Port Republic. Tickets will be offered to any members, friends, family, or acquaintances for the price of \$10 per ticket. Members and friends can start purchasing tickets during the October Meeting and at every meeting afterwards. Members can also send in tickets through the mail as well. Information regarding this will be coming shortly. There is no limit to the number of

tickets purchased and the winner will be announced at the May 2027 meeting.

CCWRT HEADGEAR FOR SALE

Back by popular demand is the next generation of CCWRT hats! We have ordered a limited number of these new hats and will make them available at our September 9th meeting. Priced at \$30.00 each they'll make a great addition to your Roundtable swag. If interested, please provide cash or check payable to the CCWRT. Depending on demand, we can also order additional hats.



The Editor's Desk



A BROTHERS' WAR—that's what many scholars have called the American Civil War. The term, of course, refers to many aspects of the conflict. It was not uncommon for brothers from the same family to be found in opposing armies fighting on land close to the boys' homestead. “Brothers” in college fraternities often chose opposing sides. It was especially common for brothers to enlist at the same time in volunteer regiments being formed by local recruiters near their home. Perhaps more common, however, were brothers who entered the service of the respective armies in different units at different times. Age differences sometimes account for this as

well as marital status and/or the needs of their parents to keep one brother longer at home to help with harvests or caring for the family farm or business. Our speaker for this month's meeting is going to tell us about the Dawes brothers, Rufus Dawes who served in the Iron Brigade with the 6th Wisconsin and Ephraim Dawes who served in the 53rd Ohio Volunteers.

When I read about the upcoming meeting, I was reminded about two sets of brothers I discovered in my home county, Greene County, Pennsylvania, when I was writing a book about the area during the Civil War era. The Purman brothers, from "Purman's Run" near Waynesburg, made quite a name for themselves in local lore as each of the boys enlisted in two different regiments from Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. They each made serious bloody sacrifices on three different battlefields. More about them later.

The first brothers from Greene County, Pennsylvania, who caught my empathy were the Greenlees. Cpl. Leroy (Roy) Greenlee enlisted in Company A, 140th Pennsylvania Infantry, a regiment formed in the Fall of 1862. Roy's brother, Lt. Samuel Greenlee, was an officer in Company F, 1st Pennsylvania Cavalry. Roy Greenlee was killed in action near the Wheatfield at Gettysburg in 1863. The family had his body interred in the Evergreen Cemetery, Gettysburg. Sam Greenlee was killed in Virginia nearly a year later in 1864. He was buried on the field in Virginia. Rather than bring Sam home to Greene County, the boys' father had his body recovered and interred at Gettysburg beside his brother Roy. Their father was the only family member who could be present at Roy's internment, but the town of Gettysburg showed up *enmasse* to support the grieving parent. Today, the two brothers lay beside each other under two separate headstones, a reminder of just how much one family gave to save the United States from ruin.



Headstones of the Greenlee Brothers

As for the Purmans, Lt. David Gray Purman of the 16th Wisconsin, was seriously wounded at the Battle

of Shiloh while urging his Company onto a charge. His clothes were riddled by bullets. Over a year later it was reported in the Greene County newspapers that he had not yet recovered and probably never would. His brother, Sgt. Nelson Purman, Company A ("The Greene County Rifles"), 140th Pennsylvania Infantry, was wounded in the regiment's first major engagement at Chancellorsville when a rifle ball passed through his shoulder and buried itself deep in his chest. The lead was never located and recovered, and Nelson suffered the effects for the rest of his life. The third brother, Lt. James Jackson Purman, Company A, 140th Pennsylvania Infantry, was wounded in both legs in the Wheatfield at Gettysburg. One leg was so severely shattered that it had to be amputated. Lt. Purman, however, received his first wound while moving another wounded soldier to cover behind a nearby rock. For his action that day he was awarded the Medal of Honor. Actor Stephen Lang (George Pickett in "Gettysburg") has written, produced, and starred in a one-man portrayal of Lt. Purman and his battlefield experience for stage and a short film. In addition, Lang also wrote and published a children's book based on Purman's story titled *The Wheatfield*. As one Waynesburg newspaper reporter wrote in an article published 22 July 1863, "The Purmans are not men whose patriotism evaporates in talk, and who stand on street corners and point out and mutter curses at 'Copperheads.' They seal their love of their country and government with their blood."



Lt. J.J. Purman and His Medal of Honor

Perhaps you too have a brothers' story, or a sisters' story, you would like to share with *The Charger*. We would love to hear from you. Just email the editor at dkfonner@gmail.com.

~Kent Fonner

Shenandoah Valley Field Trip — 1862 Valley Campaign



Thursday, September 17th

Our annual field trip this year took us to the Shenandoah Valley to explore the 1862 Valley Campaign. Some of us settled into the Home2Suites in Harrisonburg, Virginia, while others embarked on an audacious expedition to McDowell, Virginia, to visit one of the most obscure and hidden battlefields of the Civil War.

Past President Bob Pence drove the eleven of us who decided to put our fates—and our lives—into his driving expertise. Traveling over the Shenandoah and Alleghany Mountains by way of switchbacks and daunting turns eventually led us to the tiny hamlet of McDowell.

Our small band of brothers spent a few moments visiting Sitlington's Hill, where most of the fighting between Jackson's troops and Milroy's forces took place. We also had time to visit a small cemetery and the Presbyterian Church, which served as a field hospital during the battle.

Knowing that we had only 50 minutes to make the drive back before our tour guide's presentation, the band loaded back into the van for a somewhat less audacious trip to Harrisonburg. We arrived in time to hear our guide, Gary Ecelbarger, provide an overview of the 1862 Valley Campaign, followed by a question-and-answer session that included many interesting and stimulating "what if" questions concerning Jackson and the Gettysburg Campaign.

Friday, September 18th

The morning began with all 25 field-trip attendees and Gary loading into two vans for the 66-mile drive to Kernstown. On our way, we were able to link both vans through our phones and

listen to Gary's narration of the events of the 1862 Valley Campaign that ultimately led to the Battle of Kernstown on March 23, 1862.

Upon arriving at the Opequon Church site, Gary showed us an original stone wall that was more than 200 years old, lying right next to an original roadbed from the battle. We then proceeded to Pritchard's Hill, where the Union Army positioned its artillery defense on the morning of March 23.

Gary explained that the artillery battle resulted in the firing of more than 700 rounds by Union cannon. The artillery had its sights set on Colonel Samuel Fulkerson's 23rd and 37th Virginia regiments, which had been ordered to cross the area in front of Pritchard's Hill on their way toward the Confederate-held position on Sandy Ridge.

During the advance, more than 80 Confederate troops were killed by the Union bombardment. As Gary explained, men died right in front of us. Pritchard's Hill would also see the future United States Presidents Rutherford B. Hayes and William McKinley deployed during the Second Battle of Kernstown, as Gary noted.

Before leaving Pritchard's Hill, we were given some time to explore the Kernstown Battlefield Association Museum. Inside was a wonderful mini museum that included an old-time electric map depicting both the First and Second Battles of Kernstown, battle memorabilia, cannons, and a fine selection of books available for purchase. Many of us took advantage of the special they were running: one book for \$5 or three for \$10.

After getting everyone rounded up and back into the vans, we drove to the infamous "Stone Wall" [pictured] on Sandy Ridge. Here, we saw the location where the famous breakthrough was made by Union troops and where Jackson's Confederate forces suffered their only defeat during the 1862 Valley Campaign.



Colonel Erastus Tyler packed his 2,300 men into double-line columns stacked behind one another for an assault against Confederate Brigadier General Richard Garnett's Brigade. The 7th Ohio took the lead of Tyler's double-line attack and absorbed the full brunt of the ill-advised maneuver.

As Gary told us, Tyler instructed his men, “Boys, put on your bayonets. You will need them today.” They certainly needed them. Not only did they need their bayonets, but they also witnessed firsthand what a Confederate rifle could do to a regiment at such close range.

Gary also explained that approximately 4,000 soldiers were firing at one another during the fighting at the Stone Wall. According to Gary, the romantic period of the Civil War came to an end at this wall.

Running out of ammunition, Garnett’s Brigade began to disengage from the wall. This gave the Union forces an opportunity to regroup and launch their successful charge over the wall.

After lunch, the group traveled to Front Royal, the site of the May 23rd fight for this strategic hamlet on the Shenandoah River. Gary explained how, over the next two months, General Nathaniel Banks pursued Jackson back toward Harrisonburg and how Jackson retreated into the Luray Valley in order to cross the Blue Ridge and disguise his true intentions—joining Confederate General Allegheny Johnson for the Battle of McDowell.

It was during this period that Confederate General Richard Ewell was assigned to Jackson’s forces in the Valley.

Gary also explained the reasoning behind Confederate President Jefferson Davis’s strategy for Jackson: to demonstrate in the Valley and, if practicable, combine with Ewell’s forces to sweep Banks’ army out of the Valley and threaten the Potomac River. The rationale behind this strategy was to distract President Lincoln from moving Union forces to General George McClellan on the Peninsula and to keep additional Union forces in the vicinity of Washington.

Gary contends that Lincoln was an astute political president but a terrible commander in chief. He also contends that Jefferson Davis had the vision to use Jackson’s army to distract the Union from concentrating against Richmond. In Gary’s view, this was not General Lee’s thinking but rather Jefferson Davis’s idea all along.

During this period, Jackson and Ewell slipped through New Market Gap, approximately 21 miles north of Harrisonburg, and began moving down the Valley toward Front Royal. By May 23rd, Jackson’s army of 16,000 men was located just outside Front Royal. From May 3rd through May 23rd, Gary explained how Jackson lost approximately 2,000 men to desertion and how Jackson did not fully realize the extent of the desertions he was facing.

We stopped just outside Front Royal on the exact road used by Jackson’s army during its movement toward Front Royal, parking at the site of a period church. It was at this stop that Gary informed us about the famous Belle Boyd encounter, during which she passed information to Jackson concerning the size of the Union forces in Front Royal.

Gary then ushered us back into the vans for what was described as the third-most-visited Civil War site, after the famous Little Round Top and Bloody Lane. We anticipated, with considerable excitement, finally seeing this supposedly third-most-visited battlefield for ourselves: Front Royal.

Our anticipation was, I can truthfully say, excited.

Finally, we arrived at our destination—the parking lot of a fire station in downtown Front Royal.

Kidding aside, we saw the location where 650 Union officers and men, led by Union Colonel John Kenly's First Maryland Regiment, were able to hold off Jackson and Ewell's 14,000 troops for more than two hours.

While the Confederate forces had 48 cannons available, Colonel Stapleton Crutchfield, Jackson's chief of artillery, had a very ineffective day. In fact, Gary believes that Jackson's staff was, in many ways, ill-equipped to assist Jackson effectively during the Valley Campaign. However, that same staff would evolve into an effective group during later campaigns led by Ewell and Early.

We then proceeded to the Thomas McCay House, or "Fairview," site outside Front Royal. Here, we saw where a New York cavalry unit, Company B, sacrificed itself to allow the rest of the Union forces to escape.



Unfortunately, Company B sent 35 men to confront the approaching Confederate forces, and 26 of the 35 were either wounded or killed. Following the sacrifice of Company B, Confederate forces were ultimately successful in capturing more than 700 prisoners and more than \$300,000 worth of government material at the railroad depot in Front Royal.

Gary illustrated how this small Union force was able to delay Jackson's army for more than 12 hours, even though the Confederate Army held a 14-to-1 numerical advantage.

Our next stop was the pristine overlook atop John Handley High School in Winchester, Virginia. This was the site of the First Battle of Winchester on May 25, 1862.

Union General Nathaniel Banks had seven regiments defending a position against 16 Confederate regiments under the combined commands of Jackson and Ewell. At the top of the hill, which offered a beautiful and breathtaking view of the Blue Ridge Mountains, we saw the position where the 29th and 27th Indiana held against 2,100 men under Confederate Brigadier General Richard Taylor's command.

It was at this site that Gary explained how Jackson raised his hat in the air and rushed up the hill following the breakthrough by Taylor's forces. However, the breakthrough was actually part of a planned retreat by Banks' men. Nevertheless, it provided Jackson with the impetus to consider using Taylor's men in future battles.

This was a bit of foreshadowing of Port Republic and the "Coaling."

Banks' army would retreat 40 miles in the next 13 hours to the Potomac River, thereby reaffirming Jefferson Davis's military strategy for Jackson.

We departed Winchester and traveled to our final stop, Meems Bottom. Along the way, Gary explained the strategy behind Jackson's movement toward the Potomac River, only to discover that Union forces were approaching his rear from three directions: Fremont from the Alleghany Mountains, McDowell and Shields from Manassas Gap, and eventually Banks from north of the Potomac.

As Jackson's army moved back up the Valley toward the south, near Mt. Jackson on the Shenandoah River and in the vicinity of New Market, it was harassed by a portion of McDowell's command—Bayard's Brigade, led by Brigadier General George Bayard. This brigade consisted of cavalry regiments and the Pennsylvania Reserves, or 1st Rifles.

During the pursuit, Bayard's 1,500 men constantly tailed Jackson's army. Jackson's army had marched from outside Harper's Ferry on the Potomac to Meems Bottom, a distance of more than 80 miles in just four days. Jackson's troops were exhausted and were accompanied by 1,000 Union prisoners.

Gary showed us the location of the bridge that was burned by Confederate forces to prevent Bayard's men from continuing the pursuit. We walked along the pathway of the original Valley Turnpike and saw the remnants of the burned bridge.

Gary explained that Jackson lost 500 men during this rearguard pursuit. He also stated that it was the third-highest loss in numbers for Jackson, equaling his losses at the Battle of McDowell.

Gary described this engagement as the day President Lincoln was defeated by Jackson in the Valley Campaign. His reasoning was that Jackson would concentrate his forces below Harrisonburg, forcing the Union to split its forces into smaller targets that Jackson and Ewell's forces could then isolate and defeat.

Saturday, September 19, 2026

Saturday began with another journey through the Shenandoah Valley. Our tour began with a stop at the Turner Ashby Monument.

As previously mentioned, Jackson's cavalry forces had been able to cross the Shenandoah River just north of New Market by burning the bridge, putting both time and distance between Jackson's retreating army and Bayard's "flying cavalry." Moving 22 miles south of the burned-out bridge, Jackson's army was able to get some much-needed rest around Harrisonburg. Meanwhile, Bayard's cavalry began crossing the Shenandoah River using a hastily constructed pontoon bridge. Ashby, perturbed by the constant pressure from Bayard's movements, reportedly uttered the words, "It all ends today" to his men.

Ashby was able to occupy Chestnut Ridge and engage Union forces along the Port Republic Road. Union commander Thomas Kane engaged one end of Chestnut Ridge with approximately 150 members of the Pennsylvania Bucktails. Ashby confronted the Pennsylvanians with the 58th Virginia, numbering around 250 men. In a dangerous decision, Ashby placed himself in the open area between the two lines.



During the brief skirmish, Ashby was struck by a bullet that passed through his side, killing him instantly. Meanwhile, the 44th Virginia engaged the Bucktails along the flank of their position while the 58th faced them from atop Chestnut Ridge. In the fighting, the Bucktails lost approximately one-third of their men, including the capture of Thomas Kane, while Jackson's forces suffered another 70 casualties.

Ashby's body was removed from the field and taken to nearby Port Republic, where it was placed in the Thomas Kemper home.

The rest of the morning was spent examining a series of bridges that would become important during the Valley Campaign. These bridges crossed the South Fork of the Shenandoah River along the Massanutten Mountain Range. Their destruction was intended to prevent Union troops on the opposite side of the river from combining

with Shields' army in the Luray Valley and Fremont's army across the Massanutten Mountains.

Captain Samuel Coyner would now assume command of Ashby's cavalry.

Gary took us to several locations where remnants of these bridges can still be seen, including the White House Bridge, Columbia Bridge, and Miller's Bridge at Conrad's Store. At the White House Bridge, we were able to see the White House, or Kaufman House, which was built in 1760 and had seen action during the French and Indian War.

We also viewed the remaining abutments of the Columbia Bridge, which once stretched approximately 400 feet across the

South Fork of the Shenandoah River. During the 1862 Valley Campaign, persistent rain caused the river to swell to more than 12 feet in depth. Gary explained that by the time Shields arrived at the bridge on June 4, the communication route with Fremont, across the Massanutten Mountains, had become a 60-mile overland trek rather than a 10-mile journey had the bridge remained intact. Fortunately for Shields, his men were able to construct a temporary pontoon bridge across the river by June 6.





Gary then shared with the group a series of communications between General Shields and Colonel Samuel S. Carroll, commander of Shields' 4th Brigade. The messages, sometimes addressed to Colonel Carroll and at other times to Brigadier General Carroll, document the confusion surrounding the destruction of the bridges along the South Fork of the Shenandoah.

On June 4, one message instructed that the bridge at Port Republic be saved. Later, however, there was a belief that the bridge had already been burned. By June 7 and 8, a series of communications between Shields and Carroll reiterated the belief that there was no longer a bridge at Port Republic.

Shields believed that if Carroll could get his men across the river, he might be able to position his forces to cut off Jackson as he moved below Port Republic toward Waynesboro.

As we made our way toward Port Republic, we saw the exact location of the bridge. The believed-to-be-destroyed bridge—a covered bridge—was, in fact, still standing. Gary showed us the location of the bridge and the site of the brief skirmish that occurred when Carroll's men entered Port Republic. It was here that a series of miscommunications took place among Carroll's men over whether the bridge should be burned or left intact.

The decision was significant. The confusion surrounding the bridge represented one of the closest opportunities Union forces had to potentially capture Jackson.

Cross Keys

After lunch, the group traveled to Cross Keys, where Fremont's army of approximately 10,500 men confronted Ewell's Confederate force of roughly 5,500. Despite being outnumbered nearly two-to-one, Ewell's artillery was able to hold the high ground and keep the Union forces in check.

We made our way to the location of the Widow Pence Farm, where the 8th New York suffered a terrible fate because of the undulating terrain. Ewell's 7th Brigade, commanded by Brigadier General Isaac Trimble, was able to array approximately 1,350 men along a protected fence line.

Gary took us to the exact location from which the 8th New York advanced. We marched up the slope toward Trimble's brigade, attempting to experience the terrain from the perspective of the Union soldiers.



It was eerie seeing the location firsthand. Our small group lined up and, for a brief moment, pretended to be the 8th New York as we walked the same ground they had traversed. You only needed to march several meters before you could see for yourself the trap that had been set.

It is no coincidence that 187 members of the 8th New York were killed or wounded, while another 50 were captured, out of approximately 550 men engaged. The Battle of Cross Keys lasted six hours, with Ewell's army suffering approximately 267

casualties compared with more than 600 Union casualties.

Gary contends that the Confederate artillery prevented an even greater and more terrible toll—one that would occur the following day at the Battle of Port Republic.

Port Republic and the Coaling

Our tour finished with the final stop at the Port Republic Battlefield and the Coaling. We saw the area where more than 1,000 men from both sides became casualties. The ground between the opposing forces witnessed vicious fighting, resulting in more than 550 men killed or wounded in only 30 minutes.

The fighting across the fields represented the Confederates' largest offensive of the 1862 Valley Campaign up to that point, before the battle at the Coaling a few hours later.

We climbed back into the vans for the short drive to the Coaling. Walking to the top and seeing the terrain where Union artillery had been positioned was a daunting sight. Hearing Gary describe how the men of the 66th Ohio defended the guns with their spikes, ramrods, and sponges against repeated waves of Louisianans from Taylor's and Wheat's battalions was harrowing, to say the least.

The stories of the desperate fighting around the guns were chilling. Gary explained how the Confederate attackers reportedly slashed the throats of the approximately 50 horses on top of the Coaling to prevent the Union forces from displacing the artillery.

Standing on that ground, it was difficult not to think about the scale of the fighting. The area around us had witnessed more than 1,500 casualties from both sides.

With that, our tour came to an end. We climbed back into the vans and made the drive to the Home2Suites before heading into downtown Harrisonburg for a group dinner at Rocktown Grille.



It had been another remarkable day in the Shenandoah Valley—one that took us beyond simply seeing battlefields and allowed us to walk the ground, examine the terrain, and better understand the decisions, confusion, courage, and sacrifice that shaped Jackson's 1862 Valley Campaign.

~John Syrone





The 8th Wisconsin and Old Abe

By Dennis Keating

The 6th Wisconsin and the 2nd and 7th Wisconsin formed that state's nucleus of the famed Iron Brigade of the Army of the Potomac. Another Wisconsin regiment also gained fame. The 8th Wisconsin had as its mascot a bald eagle which it named "Old Abe." In 1861, Ojibwe natives sold a young eagle to an American, who in turn in August sold it to the newly formed Eau Claire Badgers, who became Company C of the 8th Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry. It carried the eagle on a perch as its mascot and the regiment became known as the "Eagle Regiment".

It served in the Western Theater. As part of John Pope's Army of the Mississippi, its first battle was the capture of Island Number Ten in the Spring of 1862. Its next engagement was in the siege of Corinth, where its first eagle bearer died of illness. At the second battle of Corinth on October 3-4, 1862, the 8th had 21 killed, 60 wounded, and its colonel Joseph Mower was wounded and briefly captured. During these battles, Old Abe spread its wings and screamed. The 8th participated in Grant's first aborted campaign in 1862 against Vicksburg and was captured at Holly Springs by Van Dorn's raid on December 20 but paroled. It next joined Grant's second campaign against Vicksburg as part of Sherman's Corps. It participated in the capture of Jackson

and the first assault on May 22 against the Vicksburg defenses. It became part of the siege until it was sent to Louisiana, where it fought in the battle of Richmond on June 15, 1863. It returned to Vicksburg in July after its surrender. In early 1864, it participated in Sherman's expedition against Meridian, Mississippi. It was assigned to the Red River campaign in Louisiana in 1864 and fought in several engagements. In June, 1864, veterans of Company C and Old Abe returned on furlough to Eau Claire, where they were honored. After rejoining the regiment, in August, 1864, under Mower, it fought Nathan Bedford Forrest's command twice. It later fought in the battles of Nashville and Mobile. This ended the 8th Civil War combat service. Overall, it suffered 280 casualties, including 59 killed in combat. Confederates failed in efforts to kill or capture Old Abe, which they called a buzzard. Upon the regiment's return to Wisconsin, state officials took possession of the eagle and he occupied the "Eagle Department" in the State Capitol building. He became a national celebrity, appearing at major events like the 1876 Centennial Exhibition.

After raising an alarm about a fire in the Capitol building, he later died on March 26, 1881 from smoke inhalation. His stuffed remains were put in a glass display case in the Rotunda of the Capitol. In 1904, another fire destroyed the Capitol building, including his remains. A replica was then placed in the Wisconsin State Assembly Chamber in the Capitol. Old Abe's insignia lives on in the shoulder patch of the 101st Airborne Division of the U.S. Army, which had its origins in Wisconsin.

Two other Wisconsin regiments had interesting animal mascots: the 12th Wisconsin had a tamed bear and the 26th Wisconsin had a badger.

Some other Union regiments also had mascots (e.g., dogs). The 104th Ohio had a dog named Harvey and became known as the "Barking Dog Regiment". Cleveland's 7th Ohio had the nickname of the "Roosters", displaced as images on their uniforms. But the regiment did not have a live rooster mascot.

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Pickett's Charged *[Part I]*

by David A. Carrino

Speaking in absolutes is a dangerous enterprise. For instance, to say that everyone likes strawberries or that no one likes black licorice or that a certain sports team is never good is an invitation to being proven wrong by being informed of an exception. In spite of that, it is safe to say that every Civil War enthusiast knows about Pickett's Charge, which is one of the most iconic events of the Civil War. The agonizing desperation and futile gallantry on the one side and the resolute resistance and courageous tenacity on the other make Pickett's Charge seem like a majestic chapter in a work of fiction rather than the grim real-life event that it was. Civil War enthusiasts, from the knowledgeable to the casual, all know about Pickett's Charge. But it may be that not every Civil War enthusiast has heard of Pickett's Charged. Pickett's Charged is used here to refer to a sizable number of Union soldiers who were taken prisoner by a Confederate force under the command of George Pickett and then subsequently accused of being deserters from the Confederate army, which led to their execution by hanging. After the war, this incident was investigated by the U.S. military with the aim of prosecuting Pickett for a war crime.

A thorn in the side of the Confederacy

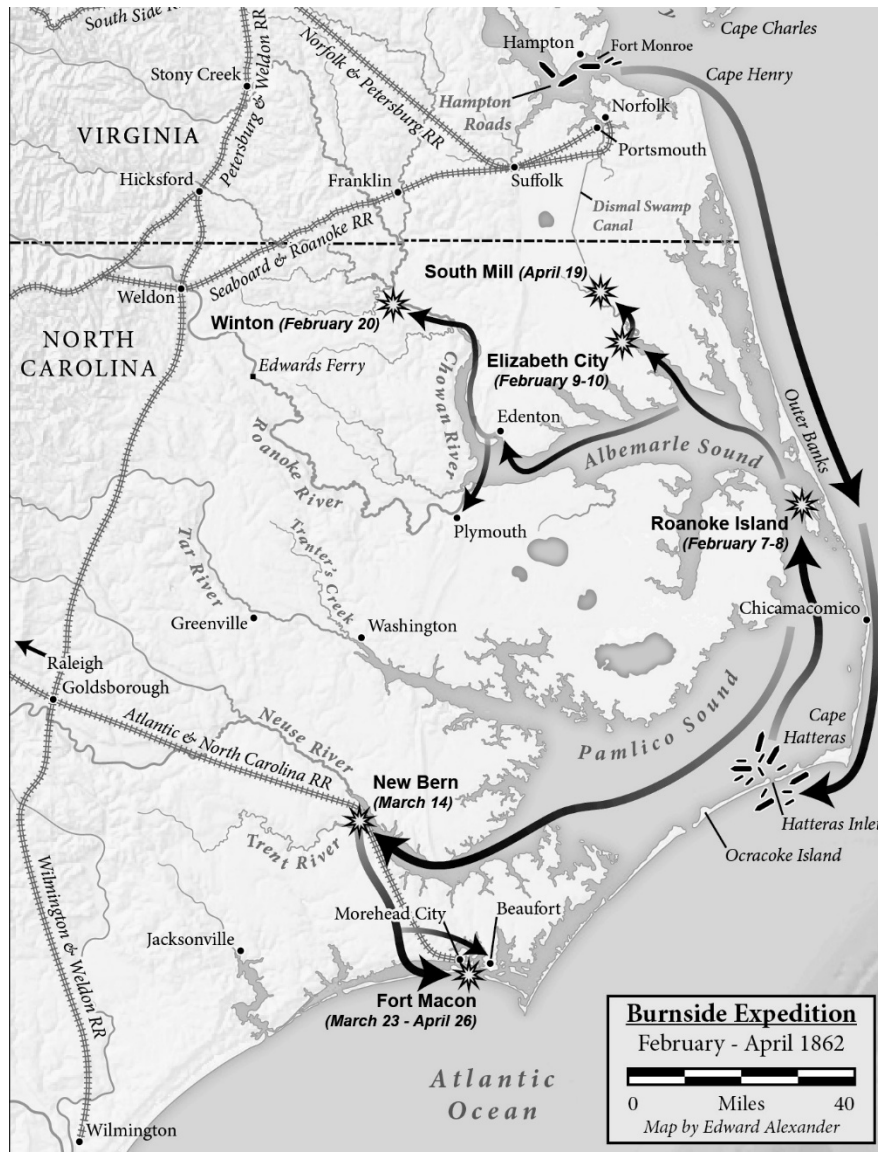
The story of Pickett's Charge arose from a long-term thorn in the side of the Confederacy, a thorn that resulted from a double thrust early in the Civil War by two unlikely Union army officers. The initial thrust of this thorn involved the capture of two Confederate forts on the Outer Banks of North Carolina by a Union combined army and navy force in late August of 1861 (which was almost half a year before the capture of Fort Henry and Fort Donelson by a different combined army and navy force under the command of a cigar-smoking Union officer who came to occupy a very prominent position later in the war). For the August 1861 expedition, the commander of the naval force, Flag Officer Silas Stringham, was in overall command of the expedition, and the commander of the army force was General Benjamin Butler, the first of the two army officers who was an unlikely person to be in command of a force that conducted an effective, successful, and valuable operation.

The objective of the expedition was Hatteras Inlet, the most important of the Outer Banks inlets used by Confederate raiders of U.S. shipping. The combined force under Stringham and Butler attacked the two forts that guarded the inlet and captured those forts. In other words, Benjamin Butler was a prominent figure in the capture of two enemy forts almost six months before Ulysses Grant captured two other enemy forts. After the surrender of the Outer Banks forts, the majority of the Union expedition withdrew. However, a small force was left to allow the Union to retain possession of this Outer Banks area because of its importance to Confederate raiders. Retaining possession also left open the possibility of future operations.

That possibility, which comprised the second and deeper thrust of the thorn, was proposed a few months later by General in Chief George McClellan, who envisioned an invasion of North Carolina by a combined army and navy force. The person whom McClellan chose to lead the follow-up expedition was General Ambrose Burnside, the second of the two unlikely Union army officers to command an effective, successful, and valuable operation (and the man who later in the war replaced McClellan as commander of the Army of the Potomac). This military venture was approved by Secretary of War Edwin Stanton and Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles, and after preparations were complete, an army of 12,000 men under Burnside and a fleet of 80 vessels under Rear Admiral Louis Goldsborough left Hampton Roads for the Outer Banks. In pronounced contrast to his dismal performance at Fredericksburg, Burnside, beginning in February 1862, overwhelmed the albeit outnumbered Confederate defenders of the North Carolina coast.

With the help of the navy, Burnside's force moved briskly throughout the inland region, defeated the enemy at a number of different places, and captured several significant inland locations. This Union occupation of North Carolina land constituted some of the first pieces of Confederate States of America territory to fall into enemy hands. One of the most important places that Burnside captured was New Bern – or New Berne or Newbern or Newberne, depending on the spelling used in the document that is being consulted. (For the record, the official name, which was decreed by the North Carolina General Assembly in 1897, is New Bern.) The capture of New Bern, a city on the Neuse River, was significant because Union forces later used this city as

a base of operations to disrupt the railroad that was used to transport foodstuffs from this region to the Army of Northern Virginia. (As an aside, New Bern is the birthplace of Pepsi-Cola, which was invented there in 1893.)



These two Union invasions of Confederate land, one by Benjamin Butler and the other by Ambrose Burnside, resulted in long-term occupation of enemy territory. As such, both expeditions represent successful military campaigns that are significantly underappreciated. One reason that these campaigns are underappreciated may be because the men in charge of the army contingent of these expeditions have overall poor reputations due to their ineffective performance later in the war. Or perhaps this underappreciation is because subsequent events in the Eastern Theater went very much in favor of the Confederacy, and this may have caused the significance of the two early campaigns in North Carolina to be diminished. It may also be that these two campaigns are underappreciated due to the Union's failure to expand upon the

occupation of the North Carolina coastal region. While the initial success of Burnside's expedition gave the Union control of a large part of the coast of North Carolina, more could have been gained. Further action could have resulted in the capture of Raleigh and Wilmington, but this was not to be because of a decision by McClellan, the person who proposed the Burnside expedition in the first place.

Burnside's expedition was terminated because he was ordered by McClellan to return to Virginia with most of his troops in order to increase the number of men in the Army of the Potomac during the Peninsula Campaign. McClellan issued this order because he famously (or infamously, but certainly erroneously) considered his army insufficient in size to match the size of the enemy army that he was facing. With the reduction of the Union force in North Carolina to a small number, most of the subsequent action in the region around New Bern consisted of skirmishes and raids for much of the remainder of the war. Three notable periods of more intense military action occurred when the Confederacy attempted to recapture New Bern and regain control of that region so the Confederacy could obtain supplies from that area. New Bern was the focus of the Confederacy's military actions, because New Bern was the Union's base of operations in that region. The first of these three attempts was in March 1863 by a force of 13,000 under the command of D.H. Hill, the second was in February 1864 by a force of 13,000 under the command of George Pickett, and the third was in May 1864 by a force of 10,000 under the command of Robert Hoke.

All three of these attempts failed to return New Bern and the surrounding area to Confederate control, and the second of these is noteworthy because of what happened in the aftermath of the Confederate defeat. The second attempt originated in January 1864 when Robert E. Lee decided to send a detachment under George Pickett. Lee felt that this was the time when he could spare troops before his army resumed Eastern Theater operations in earnest in the spring. One of Lee's objectives for the New Bern expedition was to alleviate the supply shortage impacting the Army of Northern Virginia by regaining access to that area, which could serve as a source of supplies for Lee's army. Moreover, New Bern was a supply depot for the Union forces in that region, and the capture of New Bern would make those supplies available to Lee's army.

Lee's longstanding desire to retake the Union-occupied coastal area of North Carolina was, in fact, part of his reason for detaching James Longstreet with troops from Longstreet's corps a few weeks before the Battle of Chancellorsville, which resulted in those troops and Longstreet, himself, not being at that battle. Longstreet's expedition in the spring of 1863 encompassed not only southeastern Virginia, but also northeastern North Carolina, that is, the area of North Carolina that was occupied as a result of Burnside's expedition. D.H. Hill's unsuccessful March 1863 attack on New Bern, which is mentioned above, was an action that was undertaken in cooperation with Longstreet's detachment. The detachment sent under Pickett's command early in 1864 was another of Lee's attempts to end the Union occupation of the North Carolina coast that resulted from Burnside's expedition two years earlier.

Pickett's detachment arrived in the region in late January 1864 and assembled at Kinston, which

is about 30 miles northwest of New Bern, where the main Union force in the area was located. Pickett's force then moved into position near New Bern in preparation for its attack. This movement was made in cold, damp weather on the day before the attack. Despite the bitter weather, the men camped that night without fires to maintain secrecy. Pickett's plan involved a three-pronged attack on the city with one column advancing from the southwest, another from the northeast, and the third, which Pickett accompanied, from the northwest. In addition, a naval force, consisting of some small warships that had been transported by rail, was to coordinate with Pickett's land force by attacking three Union gunboats in the Neuse River adjacent to New Bern in order to prevent the gunboats from assisting the Union defenders in the city.



Pickett's attack began early on February 1, 1864 and initially went well as the Confederates on land gained ground, and the Confederates on water captured and then sank the lone Union gunboat that was present when the battle commenced. However, as the Confederates' three-pronged land force continued its advance, two of the columns (the northeast and the southwest columns) met resistance that their commanders considered too strong, and these commanders broke off the advance before reaching their objectives. Meanwhile, the northwest column fought to within a mile of New Bern, and Pickett waited with this column for the other columns to launch assaults that never came. With two of his three columns stopped, Pickett ended the attack and withdrew. *The New York Times* derisively reported that the Confederates "accomplished but little, and retreated in haste." As at

Gettysburg, Pickett again was the leader of a spectacular failure, and this time it happened with Pickett in independent command.

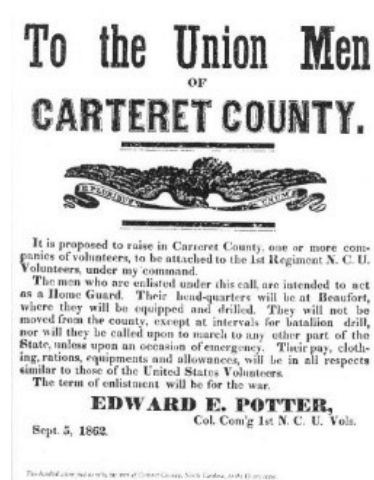
North Carolinians in blue

Although the primary objective of New Bern eluded them, the Confederates were able to capture a blockhouse fort that was in a heavily wooded area several miles forward of New Bern. Among the troops manning this outpost were men of the 2nd North Carolina Infantry Regiment (Union). The outpost came under attack by a portion of Pickett's retreating troops, who came upon this previously undetected fort as they were withdrawing from New Bern. The North Carolina Union soldiers in the blockhouse were fearful of what would happen to them if they were captured by the Confederates who, as fellow Southerners, were compatriots prior to the war, but who were now adversaries due to the fact that the men of the 2nd North Carolina (Union) had chosen to serve in blue. When it became clear that the blockhouse could not be held, these North Carolinians suggested that the troops in the outpost flee along paths through the woods that were familiar to the North Carolinians because these men were native to that region. But the commander of the blockhouse, Lieutenant Samuel Leith, refused, and when the outpost surrendered, the men of the 2nd North Carolina (Union) became prisoners, along with all of the

other Union soldiers who were captured there. Some North Carolinians in blue managed to slip away, but 53 were taken prisoner by an enemy force that included North Carolinians in gray.

There were some men in the 2nd North Carolina (Union) who particularly dreaded capture, and they had a compelling reason for this. Specifically, these men had previously enlisted for service on behalf of the Confederacy. Initially they served in North Carolina as part of the home guard. They had agreed to this service because the recruiters promised them that they would be able to stay close to home while they were aiding the Confederate cause. As it was, many people in North Carolina, arguably more so than in any other Confederate state, were not staunch supporters of secession. Home guard service allowed men to have an appearance of loyalty to the Confederate cause by participating in the war effort while avoiding participation in rigorous military service and intense combat. But the crippling Confederate losses in the summer of 1863 combined with the downward course of the war for the Confederacy caused that tangential service to end.

In October 1863, Confederate Brigadier General James G. Martin, the commander of the District of North Carolina, recommended to the War Department that a regiment be formed from the home guard troops in his district, and that this regiment, which was to be in the Confederacy's regular army, would be sent to Virginia for service. In light of the Confederacy's severe shortage of military manpower and the prevailing opinion that home guard troops were providing relatively little of value to the war effort, Martin's recommendation was heartily approved. When the home guard units received the orders for this, many of the men viewed this as a violation of the terms of their enlistment. The response of a large number of these men was to flee into the areas along the North Carolina coast that had been in Union control since Burnside's 1862 expedition. Once the men were there, they joined the Union army. In addition, there were some North Carolinians who had deserted from the Army of Northern Virginia and returned to their homes in the area around New Bern. The disastrous setback at Gettysburg and multiple appeals in letters from their family to return home provided the impetus for these men to desert, and quite a few of them subsequently joined the Union army.



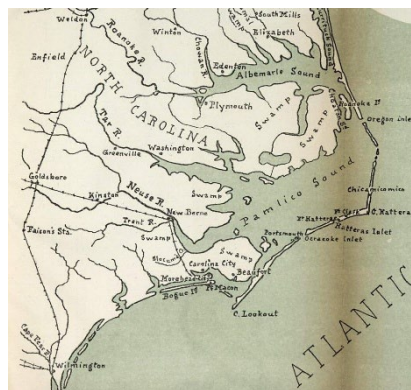
The motivation for many of these deserters to join the Union army was their destitute situation. These men needed subsistence of some sort, and enlistment in the Union army was a readily available and easily attainable option. This was also a way to do military service in a relatively safe situation. Moreover, the men were given strong assurances by Union recruiters that they would be protected from retribution by Confederates and that their service would be within the region around their homes. Union recruiters were so enthusiastic to enlist North Carolinians that the recruiters were willing to overlook any shortcomings that should have disqualified some of these men for service. In fact, the Union's commander of the District of North Carolina, Major General John J. Peck, commented that the recruiters "enlist all the

men they can possibly persuade, without the slightest regard to their capacity, either mental or physical." Once enlisted in the Union army, these North Carolinians were organized into an infantry regiment, the 2nd North Carolina (Union). (The 1st North Carolina Volunteer Infantry Regiment (Union) had been formed over a year earlier from Unionist men living in the coastal region of North Carolina who were similarly motivated to join the Union army.)

Not surprisingly, these North Carolinians in blue were far from exemplary soldiers, given their qualifications as described by John Peck and their motivations for joining the Union army. Soldiers on both sides considered them substandard, both the soldiers whom they left behind and the soldiers whose ranks they joined. One person wrote about these formerly home guard North Carolinians, "They exhibit no more zeal for glory than the mules that pull their commissary wagons." D.H. Hill, the commander of the first of the three Confederate attempts to retake New Bern, also had an exceedingly low opinion of these troops, which he made clear when he expressed with disdain that "the most trifling soldier in the ranks...is now more respectable than an army of these skulking exempts." But despite their attempt to ride out the war in a comparatively safe assignment, a few months after their enlistment in the Union army, many of the men of the 2nd North Carolina (Union) found themselves in a life-threatening situation that led to almost two dozen of those lives coming to a brutal end.

"Nothing but the death penalty"

Soon after the formation of the 2nd North Carolina (Union), men from this unit were assigned to the outposts that were several miles forward of New Bern, which is how these men came to be in the blockhouse that was captured by Pickett's retreating troops. After its defeat at New Bern and its capture of the blockhouse, Pickett's withdrawing force halted near Dover, North Carolina, which is part way between New Bern and Kinston, the next destination for Pickett's retreating force. While Pickett's force was at Dover, word spread that North Carolinians were among the prisoners, and some of the Confederates came to see them. Among the 53 Union North Carolinian prisoners were Joseph Haskett and David Jones, both of whom were from the area near New Bern and both of whom had deserted from a regiment in the Army of Northern Virginia. One of the Confederates who came to see the North Carolinian prisoners, Blunt King, recognized Haskett and Jones as former members of the Army of Northern Virginia.



As it happened, the prisoners were being held near Pickett's headquarters. When Pickett came out of his tent, one of the Confederates who had come to see the prisoners informed Pickett about the two deserters. Pickett flew into a rage and angrily told Haskett and Jones that they would never see their Union unit again. According to a witness, Pickett railed, "God damn you, I reckon you'll hardly go back there again. You damned rascals, I'll have you shot, and all the other damned rascals who desert." Pickett then called for a court-martial to try the deserters, and he ended his tirade by declaring that "after some are shot, the rest will stop deserting."

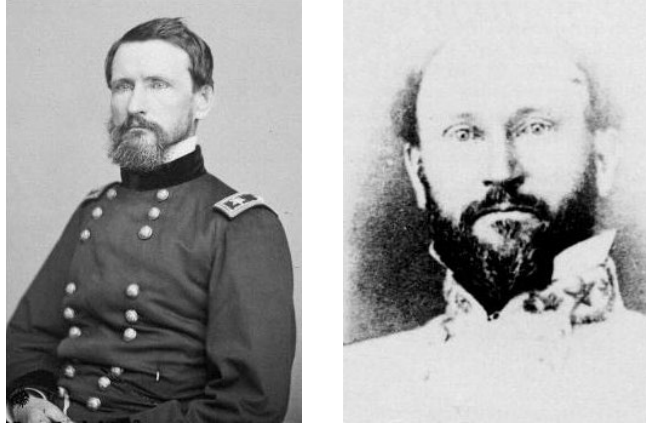
The court-martial was hastily organized, and Haskett and Jones, under questioning, admitted that they had deserted, but claimed that they subsequently enlisted in the Union army only because they had been forced to do so. The two men were found guilty and sentenced to be executed. However, the execution was not to be by firing squad, the typical execution for deserters, but by hanging. The unusually severe sentence was in keeping with a stern view of desertion that was held by Pickett's overall commander in the Army of Northern Virginia, Robert E. Lee. Because Lee's army consistently fought at a numerical disadvantage and had a perpetual need for more manpower, Lee was infuriated by desertion and once wrote that "nothing but the death penalty, uniformly, inexorably administered, will stop it." Perhaps this mindset filtered down to Pickett and led to the harsh sentence for Haskett and Jones. It has also been suggested that Pickett's anger over his defeat at New Bern caused the severe sentence.

The retreat continued the following day and eventually Pickett's force reached Kinston, where it again stopped. It was here that the executions of Haskett and Jones were to take place. A gallows was constructed, and on February 5, 1864, Pickett's troops were assembled around the gallows to witness the hanging. In addition, a crowd of Kinston residents gathered around the large group of Confederate soldiers. Then Haskett and Jones were led onto the gallows, the charges against them were read, and their heads were covered with sacks. After nooses were placed around their necks, the lever on the gallows was pulled, the platform dropped away, and the lives of the condemned men were extinguished, not on the battlefield, but in the ignominy of being hanged as deserters. After the bodies were cut down, Blunt King, the Confederate soldier whose identification of Haskett and Jones began the process that ended in their execution, cut off the brass buttons from their Union uniforms, presumably as souvenirs.

Because the identification of Haskett and Jones as deserters raised suspicions that there may be more deserters among the prisoners, other Union North Carolinians were tried by court-martial for the same crime. More cases were heard in Kinston by the same court that had been convened in Dover. The men who were tried in these cases were all found guilty, and all of them received the same sentence. Before those executions took place, even more North Carolinians were tried. The court found all of the men in the third group guilty and added their names to the list for execution by hanging, which brought the total for execution to 20.

Unaware of the executions of Haskett and Jones or of the impending executions of the other 20 men, John Peck, the Union commander of the District of North Carolina, sent a message to Pickett to warn him that there would be retaliation against Confederate prisoners if any Union

prisoners were not treated humanely. Peck also included a list of the 53 Union North Carolinians who were taken prisoner at New Bern. Pickett sent a biting, sarcastic reply, dated February 17, 1864, in which he noted "the list of fifty-three which you have so kindly furnished me, and which will enable me to bring to justice many who have up to this time escaped their just deserts." To further taunt Peck, Pickett closed his message by writing, "Extending to you my thanks for your opportune list, I remain, very respectfully, your obedient servant, G.E. Pickett."

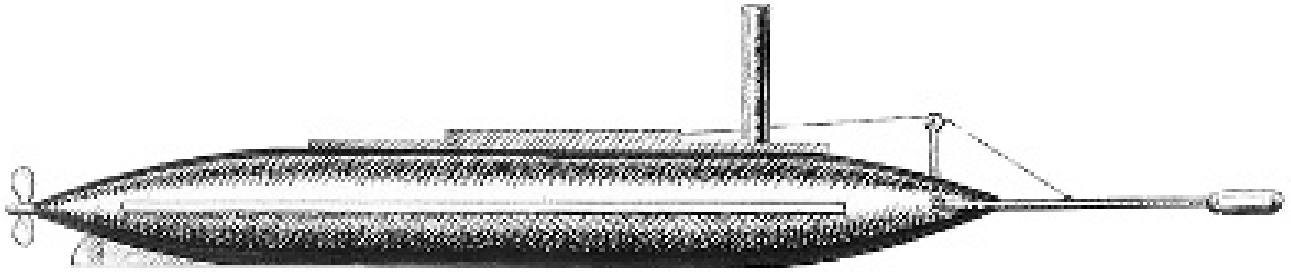


Generals John Peck, USA, and James Martin, CSA

Pickett's caustic reply included a list of the 22 men who had either already been hanged or were sentenced to be hanged. Peck sent a stern reply to Pickett in which he warned Pickett about the "violent and revengeful acts" committed against those 22 men, and Peck scolded Pickett that the commission of such acts "evinces a most extraordinary thirst for life and blood." In addition, Peck foretold that "the government will take immediate steps to redress these outrages upon humanity, and to correct such gross violations of usages of civilized warfare." Furthermore, Peck gave notice to Pickett that "the blood of these unfortunates will rest upon you and your associates." Future events after the war bore out Peck's predictions.

According to a post-war report by a U.S. military board of inquiry, after the execution of Haskett and Jones, another 13 prisoners were hanged in Kinston in a second group of executions followed by seven more in a third group. These 20 men were Amos Amyett, Mitchell Busick, William Bryan, Andrew Britton, John Brock, Joseph Brock, Charles Catherell, William Dougherty, John Freeman, Lewis Freeman, William Haddock, William Hill, Calvin Houghman, William Irvine, Stephen Jones, William Jones, Elijah Kellum, John Stanley, Jesse Summerlin, and Lewis Taylor. Along with Joseph Haskett and David Jones, the first two men who were hanged, this makes a total of 22 men hanged. (Note that a number of the 22 names can be found in somewhat different forms in different accounts of the Kinston hangings, most likely due to uncertainty about the exact spelling.)

[EDITOR'S NOTE: Part II, including the references, for Dave Carrino's excellent article about "Pickett's Charged" will appear in the November 2026 issue of *The Charger*.]



CSS David

It is possible that Mr. Doty was present during some of the work on construction of this “infernally machine,” but was he its “inventor?” He claimed patents in Europe on similar torpedo devices. Only the U.S. Congress could decide.

The Infamous Mr. Doty

By ©Brian D Kowell July 22, 2026

I just finished reading historian John M. Coski’s new biography *An Officer of Six Navies: The Life of Confederate Commander Hunter Davidson* published by Savas Beatie (\$22.95). Davidson was a man of “infuriating complexity” and he led a “messy, uneasy life.”

After the Civil War, Davidson joined the Chilean Navy. He was in command of *Henrietta*, an English-built screw steamer that left England in early February 1866 bound for Chile to break the Spanish blockade of Chilean ports. Davidson uneasily shared command of the venture with H. H. Doty. That name sparked my interest as we have a member of our roundtable by the name of William Doty which led me to learn more about H. H. Doty.

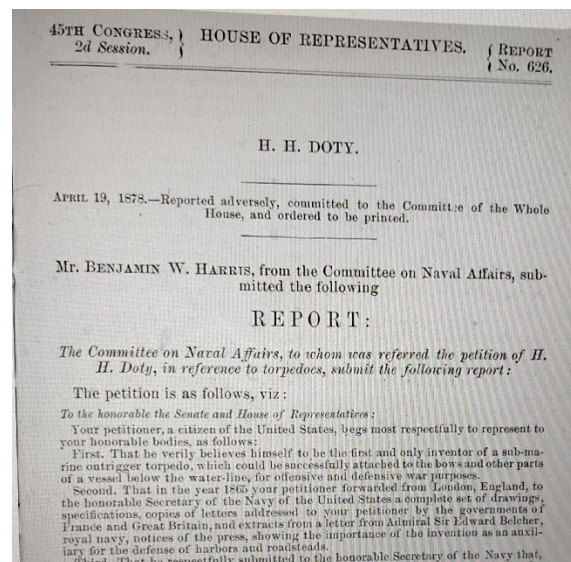
Henry Harrison Doty was born in Herkimer County, New York in 1824. He was the second of ten children of Lucretia and Henry Doty. As Ethan Allen Doty, a 19th-century family genealogist wrote about H. H. Doty, “Being of an adventuresome disposition, he early left home, and, engaging in business, traveled throughout the country.” Coski would characterize H. H. Doty as “equal parts entrepreneur, inventor, and charlatan, altruistic citizen and merciless self-promoter.”¹

Doty first appears on the public record in 1846 in Milwaukee where he denies being in debt to a local hotel. A year later, he was a daguerreotype artist in Philadelphia and who also went to Caracas where he took a photo of Venezuelan military hero Jose Antonio Paez and then returned

to Washington with diplomatic messages of civil unrest in that country. In Philadelphia he was prosecuted and fined for operating an illegal lottery. In the 1850s he promoted “Grand Concerts” from Albany to Buffalo to Cleveland, before deciding to move to California. In San Francisco he was a partner in Robb & Company Ice Cream, Breakfast, and Tea Saloon. Retiring from that he headed to Japan, loaded with provisions and a partner, to try to open a department store, ala John Jacob Astor. Doty and his partner were rebuffed by the Japanese people and, after filing a complaint against the Japanese government they left three months later for San Francisco, bearing diplomatic papers for the Russian embassy. Doty became a self-professed expert on everything in Japan lecturing in Trenton, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, and even hawked a “Great Japanese Remedy for Sore Eyes.”²

In 1858 he arrived in Norfolk, Virginia and established the North Carolina Steam Transportation Company to transport cotton through the Albemarle and Chesapeake Canal.

During the Civil War he was false to both sides and while in Richmond befriended William (Willie) Whistler, younger brother of the American artist. Doty went to England where he and touted himself an expert in torpedoes and called himself “Captain Henry Doty” and “Captain William Porter Downer” depending on which side he was selling torpedoes to. He sent plans for a “submarine outrigger torpedo” to the U.S. secretary of the navy only to learn that the navy already had the plans under someone else’s name. Instead of admitting he copied them, he petitioned the U.S. Congress for recognition and remuneration for “his” invention.³



First Page of Congress' Report on Doty's "Invention"

In 1866 Doty signed a contract to bring torpedoes and torpedo launches to Chile to destroy Spanish ships and to receive hefty bounties for sinking them. The contract made Doty a captain in the Chilean navy. Willie Whistler escorted Doty's supposed wife and another woman to Valparaiso to gather intelligence. During the months-long voyage Whistler had an affair with

“Mrs. Doty” who was in fact Doty’s mistress. Doty was married as many as four times in his life, possibly bigamously.

When Doty and Whistler arrived late in Chile due to poor weather and mechanical problems, Doty wrote a report to the Chilean authorities blaming Hunter Davidson for not obeying his orders. Davidson was unaware of the report until months later. To add insult to injury, Doty had borrowed \$700.00 from Davidson during the trip which he failed to pay back.

In January 1868 Whistler was already back in England when Doty arrived spreading news about Whistler’s affair. The scandal prompted Whistler’s men’s club, the Burlington Club, of which Doty was also a member, to investigate the allegations. Whistler asked Davidson to speak to the Burlington Club on his behalf. Davidson insisted that Whistler was a gentleman. In contrast, Davidson characterized Doty as “a wretched criminal,” called him a “snake-like abject coward,” and expressed concern about a club that had Doty as a member. But Davidson’s appeal did not help Whistler as Whistler’s membership was revoked.⁴

In 1867 Davidson received a letter from Doty who was now in Riga, Latvia, out of Davidson’s reach, denying that he owed Davidson any money. Doty had gone to Latvia attempting to sell torpedoes to the Russian government. Davidson sent a report to the Russian authorities to “thus head off this rascally fellow.”

Doty eventually returned to England and married an English woman, Emma Crozier Bohn in 1868. In 1875 Mr. H.H. Doty of London offered to provide at his own expense the necessary light for the memorial monument that was proposed to be erected in New York Harbor that was donated to the United States by France. Three years later Doty won a silver medal at the Paris Exhibition for his lighthouse lamp. His wife Emma died in 1888, and the English census found Henry H. Doty living in Chelsea, London with yet another (American-born) wife. Doty died in London on January 15, 1896.⁵

I am pretty sure that our fellow roundtable member William Doty is not related to H.H. Doty and that William has nothing to do with torpedoes or the Statue of Liberty. I hope that’s right, William.

¹ Coski, John M., *An Officer of Six Navies: The Life of Confederate Commander Hunter Davidson*, El Dorado Hills, CA: Savas Beatie, 2026, pp. 156-157, fn 11, p. 157. Doty, Ethan Allen, *Doty-Doten Family in America: Descendants of Edward Doty, an Emigrant by the Mayflower, 1620*, Brooklyn, NY: 1897, p. 91.

² Coski, *Hunter Davidson*, p. 158.

³ Ibid. P. 159.

⁴ Ibid. p. 165

⁵ Ibid. p. 172. Fn. 35, p. 172.

FINIS!