



THE COURIER



Northeast Ohio Civil War Round Table



Tuesday, April 13th 2010 Meeting #108

Dino's Restaurant at I90 & State Rt. 306 Willoughby, Ohio

Guest Speaker: Dan Frazier

Topic: "The Life and Times of Maj. General J.E.B. Stuart"

Canteen at 6:00 pm

Dinner at 7:00 pm

Guests are welcome

Reservations required

Please call Steve Abbey

Phone 440 255 8375 e-Mail: abbeysr@yahoo.com

Dan Frazier is 77 years old but his body doesn't know it. Dan is the quintessential man that is too busy to relax and take retirement seriously. He and his bride Ruth have been married for 52 years and live in Perry, Ohio. They both revel in the success of their four children and ten grandchildren. Dan is a graduate of Dupont High School in Belle, West Virginia. He met Ruth while attending the Charleston School of Commerce in Charleston, West Virginia where he graduated with a degree in Analytical Chemistry. Dan Frazier served in the U.S. Navy with the CB's during the Korean War. After the war, he worked as a chemist for Martin Marietta Corporation. Dan and Ruth were the proprietors of the **Perry Tavern**, a favorite eatery for many years. He now works part time for Perry Township as a road supervisor most weekdays. Dan enjoys a light, healthy supper with Ruth, and then rushes off to Perry High School to help manage an adult physical fitness program. When Dan and Ruth are not working out in their second floor fitness room they can often be found tending their ¼ acre garden of flowers and vegetables. Somehow, Mr. Frazier finds the time to read historical periodicals like the Civil War Times and Blue and Gray magazine. He was also a past commander of the Perry American Legion post.

Dan Frazier was smitten by American Civil War history when he presented a book report on "The Life and Times of J.E.B. Stuart" by Burke Davis back in his freshman year of high school. Mr. Frazier now dons the uniform of a Confederate Major General of Cavalry and becomes the persona of J.E.B. Stuart transported in time from 1864, to the present. Dan Frazier is six foot three inches tall and has a full black beard. Therefore, the costume and actor will have a commanding presence. Mr. Frazier has presented his J.E.B. Stuart talk to a number of schools and social organizations and I am told that it gets better each time he presents it. He has been doing this program for 38 years! Dan Frazier never loses his enthusiasm for history and especially for General Stuart. Come join us for this special evening with Major General J.E.B. Stuart.

CIVIL WAR MINUTES by Franco M. Sperrazzo

March 9th meeting: Founder **Norton London** not only pinch hit but provided his profound expertise profile of President Lincoln's Generals. He discussed Irwin Mc Dowell, George B McClellan, Ambrose Burnside, Joseph Hooker, George G. Meade, and of course Ulysses S. Grant. An interesting timeline of the Generals, describe their backgrounds and how they rose to prominence, their strengths and weaknesses. After many failures in his personal life and as a soldier, Grant led a relentless pursuit from the spring of 1864 to April 1865 in cornering General Robert E. Lee. He was tenacious in fighting a war of attrition forcing Lee's surrender. Once again **Norty** rose to the occasion.

Speaking of Grant: There is a movement by 17 co-sponsors Rep. Patrick McHenry of North Carolina to have the likeness of President Ronald Regan printed on the \$50 bill. The only problem is that President U.S. Grant presently holds that honor. Ohio Rep. Danny Bulp, a republican from the district that includes Grant's birth place in Point Pleasant, also Grant's childhood home in Brown County, is preparing a resolution that would oppose the currency change. It would be a disgrace to diminish Grant's place in our history. Stay tuned... this one has only just begun. Should our group pursue signing a petition to protect our 18th President and victorious Union General?

Spring One-Day Trip: Editor **J. Sandy** will work with President **Terry Reynolds** and yours truly to coordinate this year's annual spring outing. We will visit Historic Cleveland Churches such as St. Stephen's and St. Coleman, break for lunch in Ohio City and on to a 3rd church. Perhaps we can visit the newly restored Soldiers and Sailors monument being rededicated on April 9th to end the day. Our tour guide will be native Cleveland Historian Tim Barrett. Further details and cost will be listed on the back page.

Journey to Erie P.A.: On March 16th **Theo Karle, John Sandy, Arlan Byrne, and Franco** visited the Erie Maritime Naval Museum to view the splendid 171st Ohio Infantry battle flag that **Theo** donated. It was a thing of beauty. We also shared an educational dinner at a Max and Erma's restaurant with leaders from the Erie Civil War Round Table and their featured speaker **Michael G. Kraus**. **Mr. Kraus** may have given his presentation over 100 times before but it was fresh as can be. He is a gifted sculptor, historian and host of the past 4 part video series "Civil War Minutes" released back in 2002. He was the military coordinator with the late **Brian Pohanka** on the film Gettysburg. Other credits include being a technical consultant on the team for the movies "Gods and Generals and Cold Mountain." (Cold Mountain was filmed in Romania). Sharing his experiences with a gathering of about 60 people in attendance was quite interesting. He is entertaining, knowledgeable, approachable, and easy to listen too. I have spoken to him about being a guest at our NEOCWRT perhaps the first half of 2011 We will keep you informed when we work out the details.

Shelby Foote once more: Last month it was noted in this column that the 40th anniversary edition of "The Narrative" is available at Ollie's Outlet Store in the Oakwood Village Plaza off interstate 271 off the Broadway /Forbes exit. You can also obtain the books for \$4.95 each at the Mentor location at route 2 and interstate 615 where our club met through 2003.

NEOCWRT Website: Members **Mike Sears** and **Tom Horvath** recently completed the first stages of getting our club's website up and running. You will find our wonderful history membership, speakers and more. Plan to stay some 15 minutes following our April speaker **Dan Frazier** on "the Life and Times of Major General JEB Stuart." **J. Mike and Tom** will explain to our members how to navigate the site under the guidance of **Joe Tirpak**.

Ron Morgan's Memory: Sadly we report the passing of our 5th member. Soldier **Ron Morgan**, brother of **Brent Morgan** from Richmond, VA., passed away suddenly following our March 9th meeting. **Ron** was an active participant who rarely missed a meeting, contributed a lot to our club as well as our flag bearer. Over 20 fellow comrades attended his memorial service on Saturday March 13th. Besides his brother, **Ron** 72 years old is survived by his wife **Peg**, three children, and several grandchildren. He was an avid outdoors man and belonged to several organizations including "Sons of the American Revolution." Our thoughts and prayers are with him and the entire Morgan family. Ron Morgan will be sorely missed.

THE “NUTS AND BOLTS” OF THE CIVIL WAR

COMPILED BY CARL DODARO

From Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary – MASSACRE – The act or an instance of killing a number of usually helpless or unresisting human beings under circumstances of atrocity or cruelty.

During the American Civil War, a number of events are usually labeled by history as “massacres”, including but not limited to the “Fort Baxter Massacre”, “Fort Pillow Massacre”, “Lawrence, Kansas Massacre”, “Shelton Laurel Massacre”, “Sand Creek Massacre”, and the one that we are going to deal with in this article, the “Centralia, Missouri Massacre” and the battle that followed.

On the night of September 26, 1864, Confederate guerilla leader William “Bloody Bill” Anderson camped with his men at Singleton farm, four miles south of Centralia, Missouri. Early the next morning, Anderson and 30 to 80 men (reports vary depending on the source) rode into Centralia, whose population was less than 100 persons, looking for a newspaper and the latest information on Union Troop movements. For three hours they terrorized the residents, shooting wildly, killing a civilian who had attempted to defend a young woman, and looting the homes and businesses {or as stated in “Noted Guerillas” pg. 292 – “levying contributions upon the citizens and taking from the stores such things as were needed by his {Anderson’s} soldiers.”}. After they had seized everything they wanted, they began destroying everything else. The raiders broke every piece of china they could get their hands on. They amused themselves by unrolling long bolts of cloth and dragging the fabric through the dusty streets.



At eleven o’clock, the stagecoach from Columbia, Missouri arrived. The armed guerillas surrounded it and relieved the seven startled passengers of their money and jewelry. One of the passengers aboard the stagecoach was United States congressman, James E. Rollins; another was Boone County Sheriff James Waugh. Both were prime candidates for a bullet in the head. They successfully concealed their identities, “pretending to be as Southern in their sympathies as Jeff Davis himself” (Quantrill’s War – pg.285). As the guerillas were robbing the stage, a train whistle was heard, coming in from the east. The westbound train from St. Louis chugged into view. When the engineer saw the waiting band of men with drawn guns, he figured they were bushwhackers and opened the throttle all the way, hoping to race through town unscathed. Anderson’s men fired wildly at the locomotive, three passenger cars, and the baggage car, then threw railroad ties onto the track. The train might have been able to knock off the railroad ties with its cowcatcher, but the brakeman in the last car panicked and applied the brakes. The guerillas swarmed through the train cars, grabbing, robbing and firing their guns. Anderson went straight for the baggage car and had no trouble convincing the baggage clerk to open the safe. Frank James, in what may have been his first train robbery, found a suitcase said to contain several thousand dollars. It was a profitable morning of fighting.

(Bill Anderson photo above from the Library of Congress)

The bushwhackers shoved the passengers off the train. Among them were 23 Union soldiers, on furlough, heading to their homes in the western Missouri and Kansas, unarmed. Some were recovering from wounds, others were ill, and one was on crutches. Anderson ordered them to remove their uniforms (he often used the uniforms to bushwhack Union Troops and their wagon trains). After taking a sergeant as a hostage to be exchanged for one of their men held captive by the Yankees in Columbia, the other 22 soldiers were shot and killed on the spot, witnessed by the horrified Centralia residents and train passengers. One German civilian on the train who was wearing military style clothing was also killed, as he could not speak English to tell the guerillas of his civilian status. Then Anderson had his men set fire to the train, release the brakes and sent it on its way west, with no crew aboard, to later crash and be destroyed and then burned the depot to the ground. “Some of those Union soldiers then were scalped or mutilated on the spot also. So it was outright massacre. Helpless, unarmed men who never posed a threat to the Confederate guerillas were shot down simply for being Union soldiers.”(T.J. Stiles – on the PBS “American Experience – Jesse James” – Stiles authored “Jesse James: Last Rebel of the Civil War.”)

Word of the massacre quickly spread. A unit of the Thirty-ninth Missouri Infantry was in the vicinity, searching for the guerilla bands and was dispatched to Centralia. The 155 men, under Major A.V.E. Johnston, were largely new recruits, riding farm horses and armed with outdated Enfield muskets, a heavy muzzle-loading gun. Upon arriving in Centralia, and receiving civilian reports of there being less than 100 men with “Bloody Bill” Anderson, all of which headed southeast out of town,

Johnston started to follow the guerilla trail. Though he was told by some Centralians that there were more bushwhackers bivouacked south of town, Johnston vowed to give no quarter. “About three miles southeast of Centralia, they became entangled in a guerilla ambush, with as many as 400 Southerners”(T.J. Stiles – PBS).

The inexperienced Federal troops, with their single shot muskets, followed the traditional warfare practice of dismounting and advancing on foot, leaving their horses to be tended by every fourth man. They marched into a three-sided formation of several hundred guerillas, most on fast, stolen horses, all armed with revolvers, some with as many as four or more, and within minutes the Union troops were nearly annihilated. The few soldiers not killed on the first guerilla volley and charge, ran back to their horses, but the guerillas with their faster mounts, overtook the fleeing troops and within the hour, over 120 Union soldiers were killed. Some nearly reached the sanctuary of the town of Sturgeon, some ten miles from the battleground, before the guerillas killed or captured them, completing the rout. Less than a dozen guerillas were reported dead or wounded. Among the guerillas in action this day were Frank James and his younger brother, Jesse James and Cole Younger. Jesse James is credited with killing Major Johnston, the commander of the ill-fated troops.

Michael Gooch {local historian} – “immediately after the battle, Bill Anderson’s boys went down and started mutilating the bodies. I cannot say that there was a corpse on that field that had the same head on it that started the day with...”

Thomas Goodrich {author of “Bloody Bill Anderson: The Short, Savage Life of a Civil War Guerilla} – “the aftermath of Centralia would have been truly horrific. In the middle of an autumn day, roughly a hundred dead Federals lay on the ground. They have had their throats slashed and some are still being tortured (late into the afternoon). Many of the guerillas are drunk. All the emotions are coming out of the guerillas at this point. This is the chickens of John Brown coming home to roost so to speak. This is one of the ultimate atrocities of the Civil War. There are 100 and some men, helpless, disarmed, and murdered in their tracks. And it would have been a terrible thing to see: beheadings, disembowelments, torture, fiendish torture, men begging for their lives. This is where the emotions finally come and bear fruit in Missouri. This is the place where every man who felt the oppression of Federal soldiers for the last three years, can finally have his vengeance.”

SOURCES

“Quantrill’s War: The Life and Times of William Clarke Quantrill” by Duane Schultz, published in 1996

“Three Years with Quantrill: A True Story as told by his scout John McCorkle” by O.S. Barton,

Published in 1914

“Noted Guerillas, or the Warfare of the Border” by John N. Edwards, published in 1879 (this book has a

decidedly guerrilla slant and varies significantly with most of the eye witness accounts listed in other sources.

“Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, series I, volume 41”

The Quotes are from the PBS show – “American Experience – Jesse James”

“Mid-Missouri Civil War Round Table” web page – “The Centralia Massacre and Battle”

The Courier is the monthly newsletter of the Northeast Ohio Civil War Round Table

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BATTLE OF THE CRATER by Arlan Byrne

PART 4 "The Battle"

As soon as General Lee heard the Union Mine explosion, he knew exactly what had happened. He immediately bypassed the Confederate Chain of Command, General P.G.T. Beauregard and General A.P. Hill, and sent word directly to General William Mahone, who was in charge of the two remaining brigades of Confederate re-enforcements south of the James River; to move them to Elliott's Salient and plug the gap. Earlier in the war General Mahone's abrasive personality had kept getting him in trouble with the Confederate Command structure; but by this time in 1864 he had built a reputation as an outstanding tactician and the best combat officer in the Southern Army. He immediately started moving his men toward the crater to help the Southern troops there. Several weeks earlier when rumors of a Union Mine under Elliott's Salient began to surface, Confederate engineers had prepared fallback trench positions between the main Confederate trench line and Cemetery Hill. And now, when the veteran Confederate troops who had fled when the mine exploded realized there would be no more explosions, they began to return and occupy them.

As the volume of unorganized Union troops trickling into the crater began to grow, things became even more chaotic and confused. Units became hopelessly intermingled. Officers ran around frantically trying to find and re-organize their men in order to capture the vitally important Cemetery Hill. But to the average soldier the bare ground between them and Cemetery Hill looked fearfully like the killing fields of Spotsylvania and Cold Harbor; and although there was little enemy firing, it was almost impossible to get them to leave the relative safety of the Crater.

By 6:00 A.M., seventy five minutes after the explosion, General Meade, in his rear command post out of sight of the battle was getting frustrated and angry. By now, Union troops should be in control of the Confederate fallback trenches and Cemetery Hill; but Meade had no idea where they were. His repeated telegraph inquiries to Burnside were either ignored or the answers contained no information about what was really happening. To Meade, it seemed like Burnside was refusing to follow his orders. In reality Burnside had lost control of the battle as he had in other battles. The disorganized Union troops were still crowded into the crater and the nearby Confederate trenches. Finally Union Officers managed to reorganize their men enough to begin attacks across the open ground between the crater and Cemetery Hill, but these attacks were weak and uncoordinated. They were easily broken up by Southern musket fire and those deadly canister firing cannons. Soon Mahone's Confederate re-enforcements began arriving and by 11:00 AM they had recaptured the original Confederate trench complexes on both sides of the crater. By 2:00 PM they had captured the crater itself. The Battle of the Crater was over. Now the battle between General Meade and General Burnside was about to begin.



Immediately after the battle General Meade did what practically every general in history who has lost a battle does. He tried to put the blame on somebody else. He convened a 'Court of Inquiry', and in order to make sure Burnside was blamed for the outcome of the battle, he staffed it with friends of his. Burnside knew this, of course, so he used the 'Court of Inquiry' to prepare his defense for other investigations. When the 'Court of Inquiry' found him at fault he was relieved of command and he returned to his home in Rhode Island. Congressional friends of his smelled a cover-up and persuaded the Congressional 'Committee on the Conduct of the War' to hold its own investigation. They found Burnside not guilty, but it didn't make any difference. Burnside's military career was over. He later became Governor of Rhode Island and served three

General George Gordon Meade photograph from the Library of Congress terms as a United States Senator.

Colonel Henry Pleasants, the designer and architect of the tunnel was so disgusted with the way the battle was fought that he resigned from the Army as soon as he could. He returned to Pennsylvania and a successful career as a mining engineer.

Immediately after the battle the important lead Division Commander General Ledlie, who spent the day of the battle in a bombproof in the rear drinking rum instead of leading his troops; plead illness and resigned from the army before he could be court martialled. He later conquered his addiction and participated in the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad.

Sergeant Harry "Snapper" Reese, the tunnel foreman, was honorably discharged from the army after the war with the rank of Lieutenant. He returned to Pennsylvania where he held numerous jobs. His tombstone reads "The Hero Who Touched the

Fuse at Petersburg."

Also after the war the farmer who owned the land, William Griffith, returned and tried to resume farming; but the land was too torn up. Soon so many people started showing up to look at the crater that he put a fence around it and began charging 25 cents admission. Then he added a souvenir shop and the 'Crater Saloon' for refreshments. He became an early American entrepreneur. He didn't become wealthy, but he made more money than he would have made farming. In 1931 his decedents sold the land for a golf course. The site was eventually incorporated into the Petersburg National Battlefield Park; and even today the Crater is still a popular tourist attraction. The tunnel is gone, but a wooden door marks the spot it started. The Crater itself is just a shallow grassy depression in the ground.

Conclusion:

On the Confederate side the Southern Command structure worked to perfection. General Lee's handling of the battle was superb. As soon as he heard the explosion, Lee picked his best combat officer in the vicinity, General Mahone, and gave him complete charge of the battle. In fact, he and Mahone's two superior officers General Beauregard and General Hill watched the battle from the crest of Cemetery Hill without comment.

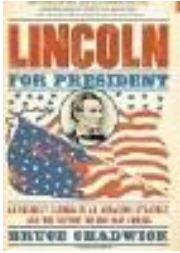
On the Union side, however, the Northern Command structure did not work. When the tunnel idea was first proposed neither Grant nor Meade took it seriously. Tunnels had been dug under defensive works many times in the past; and were rarely successful. Plus, this one would be twice as long as any ever attempted. Their attitude seemed to be 'if Burnside wants to dig a tunnel, let him dig away. What harm can it do; as long as we don't waste any money are materials on it?' Then when Colonel Pleasants and the 48th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry Regiment actually succeeded and the mine was ready for exploding, they were taken by surprise.

General Burnside's original attack plan was good: but it depended on speed and avoiding entering the crater for it to succeed. Meade and Grant, by substituting an untrained lead division for the trained one; and Burnside for not providing a fast exit through the Union defense line, practically guaranteed the attack would fail. The result was 5600 more casualties and another nine months of deadly trench warfare.



April 13, 2010, guest speaker Dan Frazier above right photograph and with his wife Ruth, photograph above left, will be presenting "The Life and Times of J.E.B. Stuart" at the Northeast Ohio Civil War Round Table.

***Lincoln for President* by Bruce Chadwick Book Review by Tom Horvath**



In *Lincoln for President*, author Bruce Chadwick attempts the literary equivalent of quilt making. A talented quilter can take hundreds of tiny pieces of cloth and sew them into a beautiful creation. Mr. Chadwick takes over 900 bits of information – there are more than 900 separate footnotes – and weaves them into 315 pages of text. The result is far from beautiful.

There are a number of problems with the volume. The first relates to the topic. This book covers the period from the 1860 Republican nominating convention to Election Day. Lincoln did not attend the nominating convention. In 1860 it was considered unseemly for a candidate to campaign for himself, so the subject of the book stayed in Springfield almost the entire time and gave no significant speeches.

Though there was a great deal of activity, travel, and speeches, very, very little of it involved Lincoln.

Another problem: the overwhelming majority of quotes come from others, not Lincoln. Perhaps Lincoln saved the correspondence he received and others did not; or perhaps the correspondence Lincoln received is simply more accessible, but the book about Lincoln, once again, has much less of Lincoln than one would expect.

The large number of quotes works against a smooth flow to the writing. The author uses one or two lines from most sources. It makes for very choppy reading. I believe that longer quotes from fewer sources would have provided sufficient support for Mr. Chadwick's contentions and allowed for smoother flow.

Finally, Mr. Chadwick's style disrupts the flow. Though the overall thread of the narrative is chronological, he often jumps around in time. He sometimes adds information about correspondents that is totally irrelevant to the quote or the story, such as the note that one correspondent was later named by Lincoln as the ambassador to Portugal. He also tends to repeat himself, sometimes in the same chapter. Lastly, he ends several chapters with the question, "But would it (the effort to elect Lincoln) be enough?" That's a pretty silly question.

All in all, the volume reads longer and drier than it might have. The fact is, the election was a very close one. A relatively small number of votes made the difference between a direct election of Lincoln and throwing the election into the House of Representatives, where the outcome would have been very much in doubt. Some scenarios even had a vice-presidential candidate becoming acting president. Handled differently, the subject could be a very interesting read.

To give Mr. Chadwick his due, he does achieve some of his objectives. He contends that, despite the Democratic Party splitting behind three candidates, the election was both hotly contested and anything but an easy victory for Lincoln and the Republicans. Those two premises are well supported. His contention that Lincoln was in firm control of the campaign is certainly likely -- knowing Lincoln as we do. Mr. Chadwick does offer some support for that contention, but there is as much in this volume that indicates that supporters like longtime friend and Illinois circuit Judge David Davis and Thurlow Weed, William H. Seward's mentor and campaign manager, also played very significant roles.

There is new information here if the reader is willing to work his way through the book.

Published in 2009, this volume contains 393 total pages, including an extensive notes section and an index. Amazon has the book available in hard cover for \$16.49, while B&N has it for \$24.99 (\$17.99 for members). Mentor Library does not own a copy but can obtain it through [SearchOhio](#). The ClevNet System has two copies.

Quotes from Sir Winston Churchill:

There is no such thing as a good tax.

The inherent vice of Capitalism is the unequal sharing of blessings, the inherent virtue of Socialism is the equal sharing of miseries!

I am prepared to meet my Maker. Whether my Maker is prepared for the ordeal of meeting me is another matter.

You can count on Americans to do the right thing after they've tried everything else!

Courage is the first of human qualities because it is the quality that guarantees all the others.

It is said that democracy is the worst form of government except for all the others that have been tried.



The Northeast Ohio Civil War Round Table



Spring 2010 Field Trip

Saturday May 15th, 2010 Historic Churches of Cleveland, Ohio

Tim Barrett, noted Cleveland Sacred Architecture historian, will be our guide on a tour of



Altar and Sanctuary of St. Colman Catholic Church

some of the most famous churches in Northeast Ohio. Our tour will begin at 10 am at St. Colman Catholic Church, located at 2027 West 65th Street. St. Colman is one of the most famous Irish American churches in Ohio. [St Colman Catholic Church](#) and [St Stephen Catholic Church](#) were both slated to be closed by the Cleveland Diocese's Bishop Richard Lennon. However, the Bishop changed his mind after a massive public appeal.



St. Stephen's Catholic Church

We will then journey to [St. Stephen Catholic Church](#), at 1930 West 54th Street, to view one of the grandest German American houses of worship in the United States.

Next, we will venture to the Tremont neighborhood to see the [Pilgrim Congregational United Church of Christ](#) which is located at 2592 West 14th Street.



Pilgrim Congregational United Church of Christ

Contact **John Sandy** at **216 486 9406** to reserve your tour of the Historic Churches of Cleveland. All members and their guests are welcome.