



# The Courier



## Northeast Ohio Civil War Round Table



***December Meeting: Tuesday, December 11, 2018 at 6 PM***

***Pine Ridge Country Club***

***30601 Ridge Road, Wickliffe, Ohio 44092***

***Speaker: Ashley Buzzanca Topic: "Christmas in Cleveland"***

***Reservations Required:***

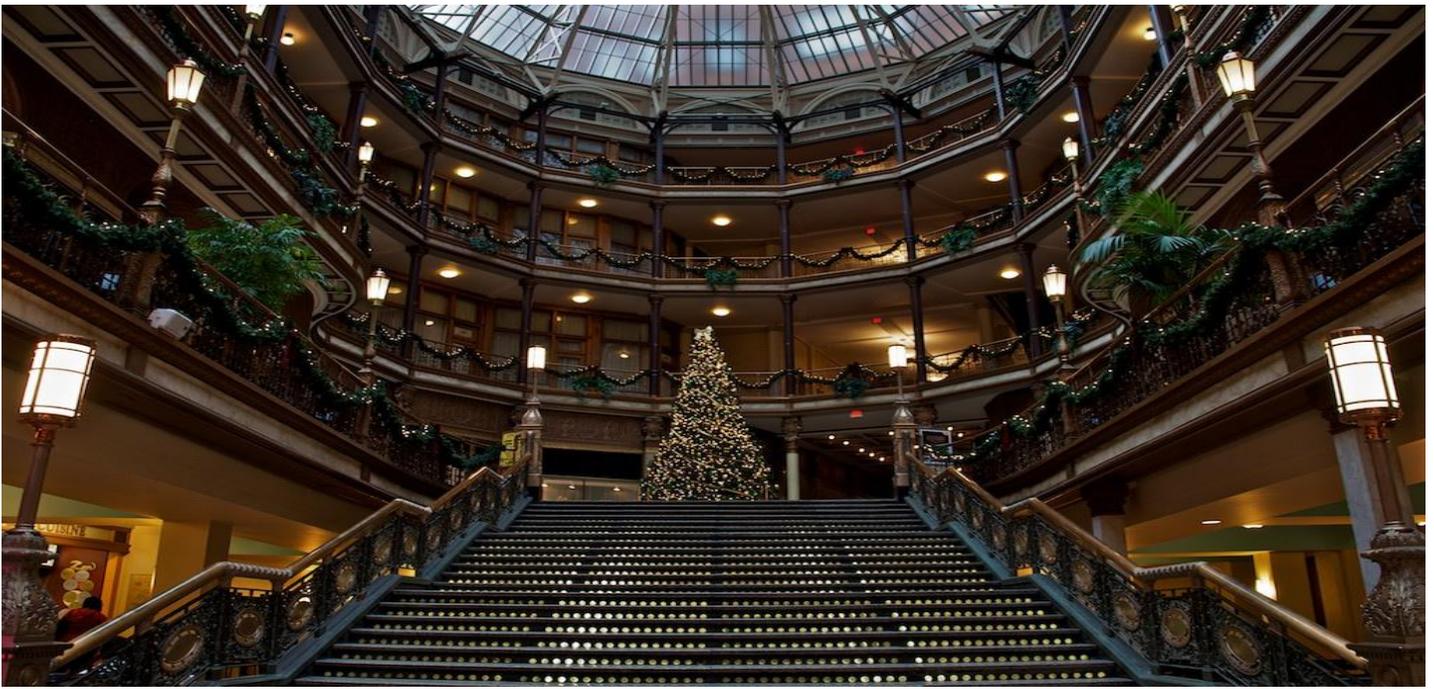
***Email: [davelintern@rwsidley.com](mailto:davelintern@rwsidley.com)***

**Ashley Buzzanca of the Western Reserve Historical Society** will be our December 2018 guest speaker, and she will be presenting a special slideshow lecture on the history of **Christmas in Cleveland**.



Miss Buzzanca will be exploring how many of our Northeast Ohio yuletide traditions have changed over the years. Remember attending the annual Christmas parade on Euclid Avenue and the tree lighting displays in front of Terminal Tower and Public Square? Maybe your Dad parked the family car, and you took the Shaker Rapid downtown to the Terminal Tower, and you spent the day viewing the spectacular department store window displays at Higbee's, The May Company, Halle's, and Sterling Linder Davis. The little ones had to go to Halle's seventh floor to see Mr. Jingaling. If you were lucky enough to get a table, you enjoyed a late afternoon lunch at the Sterling Grille in Higbee's. We will explore these memories and more.

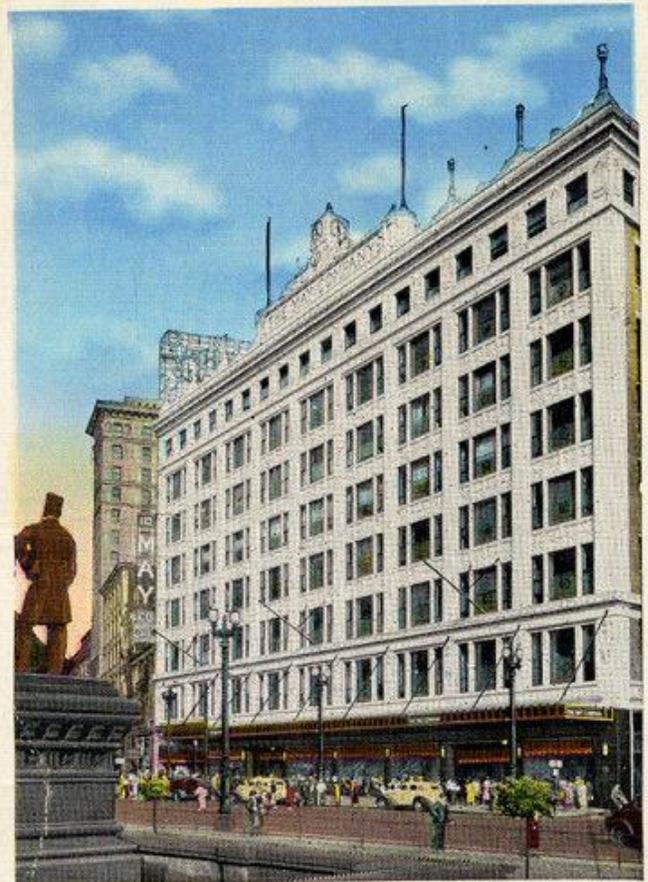
Ashley Buzzanca is a 2018 graduate of Loyola University in Baltimore, Maryland with a Bachelor of Arts degree in History and Classical Civilization. She spent her senior year writing her thesis on the Western Reserve Historical Society while working as an intern in the Historical Society's curatorial department. In the fall of 2018, Ashley was thrilled to join the Education Department at the Cleveland History Center officially. (Debbie Weinkamer contributed our front page feature story.)



The Cleveland Arcade at Christmas



Christmas time at The Higbee Company, Cleveland, Ohio



*Souvenir of*  
**THE MAY COMPANY**  
*Ohio's Largest Store*  
**GREAT LAKES EXPOSITION**  
**CLEVELAND, OHIO**

# NEOCWRT Holiday Gathering



**Saturday, December 15<sup>th</sup>**

**4:00 to 6:00 p.m.**

**Willoughby General Store**

**4148 Erie Street**

**Downtown Willoughby**

*(Above Fiona's Coffee Bar)*

**440-749-3423**

**<https://www.facebook.com/willoughbygeneralstore/>**

**Spouses Welcome!**

**BYOB**

**Appetizers provided**

***\* Old-fashioned holiday carols by Chris Black \****

**Please RSVP to Ken Godnavec at**  
**[kennygodnavec@yahoo.com](mailto:kennygodnavec@yahoo.com)**

**Or Call 440-749-3423**



**Kenny's Museum is located in the Willoughby General Store Building  
above Fiona's Coffee Bar**



**“We were still playing golf on this day last year!”**

# A Special Tribute to Major William Koeckert by Joseph Tirpak



Tonight, Tuesday, November 13<sup>th</sup>, we honor the veterans who are members of the NEOCWRT. Also, I feel honored to recognize a very special member of our group who participated in two remarkable and historic events in our nation's history. I also believe he is our oldest veteran and our oldest member. Bill Koeckert was supposed to be here this evening. We knew that at his age this could happen. However, we feel his story and achievements need to be shared. Bill was a participant in two remarkable events in our nation's history. Both were truly world-changing events... Bill has been a member of our Round Table since 2011. He is also a close friend of member Frank Moore. I wish to thank Frank Moore and Norma for their effort in trying to get Bill to attend this Veteran's Day recognition tonight. Bill was born on Columbus Day in 1925 in Cleveland, Ohio and recently he celebrated his 93<sup>rd</sup> Birthday. Bill is a graduate of the Culver Military Academy. He was drafted into the U.S. Army in December of 1943 at age 18.

Historic situation No.1: Six months after being drafted into the Army he waded ashore with his Browning automatic rifle on "D Day with General George Patton's 3rd Army.

The Normandy invasion was the largest invasion in history, and the weather was awful. General Eisenhower received weather reports that were terrible. However, the last report offered a small window of opportunity and Gen. Eisenhower made the fateful decision to attack. Allied Forces Under general Eisenhower launched a combined Naval, Air Force and Army Land assault on German-occupied France. It is often referred to as the largest invasion in the history of the World. Bill and his fellow soldiers fought their way across France and Bill was wounded at the Battle of the Bulge. He was sent to a London Hospital to recover. He returned to Active Duty to administer a US Prisoner of War camp of Germans in France. No German soldier wanted to escape. They probably knew what awaited them if they were sent back to Germany.

Historic Situation No. 2: Bill was a member of a special investigative unit that was involved in the conviction and



execution of General Hideki Tojo on December 23, 1948. General Tojo had served as Minister of War, Prime Minister and Commander-In-Chief of the Japanese General Staff. He is most remembered for ordering the attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941. "A Day that will live in Infamy!" Bill shared his remarkable insights on a cold winter evening in January of 2012 with our group. He talked for 90 minutes without notes. Our members were spellbound sitting on the edge of their chairs about

the process that led to the conviction and execution of General Tojo. That evening he also shared his thoughts on General "Black Jack" Pershing of WW I fame. He also shared his insights on General Douglas MacArthur the highest ranking World II officer in the South Pacific. Bill left the Army in 1950 and enrolled at Miami University in Oxford, OH to pursue a B.S degree. During his first semester at Miami fate again intervened and he was called back to the armed services for the Korean War. Bill was offered the opportunity to attend OCS which he completed and became a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. He became a Tank Commander during the Korean War and was promoted to Captain and subsequently to the rank of Major.

Bill took advantage of the GI Bill and received his BS degree from the University of Omaha. He became an Instructor at the OSU in Columbus, OH. For many years he served as President of a Literary Society and continues to this day to be a voracious reader. This meeting provides us the opportunity to say "THANK YOU for your service" to not only Bill Koeckert but to all our members who have served in our Armed Services.

## Christmas Memories of the Civil War by Paul Siedel

As we enter the Holiday Season our thoughts turn to many things such as family, parties, dinners with loved ones and of course presents under the tree. But lets for a moment turn our thoughts to what Christmas might have been like during the American Civil War if one was stationed at the front or in some lonely fort in the middle of nowhere. During the 1920s the Plain Dealer did a series called "The Fading Blue Line." In it, they interviewed the many old Civil War Vets living in Cleveland and asked them to tell about their experiences during that conflict. One such interview was taken from the Superintendent of Delivery at the Cleveland Post Office. His name was Salem Hart, and he was a drummer boy all those many years ago, and the Christmas party for 16,000 men is the memory that came to him most vividly.



The Plain Dealer tells it like this: "It was December 23, 1863," said Mr. Hart "I was a drummer boy in the forty-first Ohio Regiment, Gen. William B. Hazen's brigade. Our army corps, the fourth, was hurrying from Missionary Ridge to Clinch Mountain in eastern Tennessee to relieve Burnside who was being besieged by Longstreet. When we arrived Longstreet had gone, and we proceeded to spend Christmas in nearly the approved fashion as possible.

Some of us saw a rabbit and chased it for about an hour hoping to obtain a good Christmas dinner, we lost the rabbit and dined on hardtack, bacon, and coffee, but we lightened up the meal with songs and stories. That was my first Christmas away from home, and I shall never forget it." (Photo above, the Battle of Nashville, December 14-15, 1864. From the National Archives.)

Mr. Hart evidently had many fond memories of his service years during the American Civil War. As with all of us the passage of time seemed to filter out all the negative aspects of those years. The biting cold, the friends that didn't make it through the conflict, and the massive destruction of southern cities and farms all were left behind as he came home and started a new life here in Cleveland.



He raised a family, took a job with the U.S. Postal Service and purchased a house at 13408 5th Ave. in East Cleveland. While many returning vets then as now had trouble adjusting to post-war lives Mr. Hart seemed to move right along. I use the word "seemed" because there is no written record of his life that I know of until he passed away in 1932. By then The Fading Blue Line had almost faded completely away.

(The photo on the left is of a Union Army hospital near Washington, D.C... Note the Christmas decorations strung from the rafters. From the Smithsonian Collection)

As we celebrate Christmas in 2018, the "Blue Line" has totally vanished, but we still have the accounts of those that struggled to keep this nation whole and who celebrated the holidays as best they could during those fateful years. With that, we join others in keeping the holiday tradition alive and wishing all a very merry Christmas.

## CIVIL WAR JOURNAL of Franco M Sperrazzo

**November 13th Meeting, John Moser, PhD., Ashland University, Armistice Day:** Today, we honor & recognize our living active & retired Military Service Americans for their dedication to our country on Veterans Day November 11th. Mr. Moser, presented the bloody timeline of the events leading up to the 100 Anniversary of this monumental occasion. A special privilege was raising our glasses in paying tribute to our CWRT members who have served in the various armed forces. Mr. Moser, also brought along seven aspiring History major students from Ashland University who participated in our program.

**Mentor Public Library, Leaders & Legacies of the Civil War, Civil War Genealogy 101, and Digging up Your Roots:** Where does one begin to research their Civil War Ancestors on December 12, 2018, from high noon to 1 pm? Several online databases will be explored to expedite in locating Soldiers & Sailors in the Civil War. Take home handouts will be offered to those desire to journey into a lifelong hobby of genealogy. Location is the main campus on Mentor Avenue. Rangers from James A. Garfield NHS & volunteers from our NEOCWRT & elsewhere present these monthly programs. RSVP to reserve your spot for this free event by calling 440.255.8811 ext. 247. You may bring your snack or beverage.

**Edwin Cole Bearss @ Cleveland Civil War Table:** We have the opportunity to unite with our counterparts from the 1st CWRT that evolved on the North Coast back in the mid-1950s. Ed Bearss, legendary NPS Ranger, Historian Emeritus, World War 11 Hero & American History savant is back on the touring circuit at 95 years young. He will present his dinner program on Wednesday, December 12th @ 6:30 pm, Judson Manor. Several members of our NEOCWRT have signed up for this special event. Contact Norton J. London, by Thursday, December 6th if you wish to attend. Cost is \$30 — all inclusive.



### **New 2019 Speaker Programs & Meeting Schedule**

**Flyers:** Our new two-sided rack cards will be ready to distribute among our members and at various locations. These resource marketing tools are for you to share with others that have an interest in the Civil War & American History. The Speakers Schedule flyers are the result of the collaboration of our Speakers Committee and the professional assistance of Dale Fellows and his staff at Morgan Litho. The new club logo business cards will also be available for all when engaging in conversation with guest historians & prospective new members. Thanks for your due diligence.

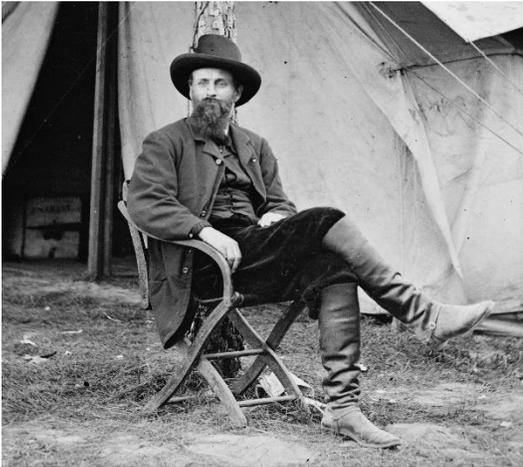
**Western Reserve Historical Society, Hale Farm & Village Holiday Lantern Tours:** Reserve your place at the village visiting the historic homes, set in a period time and speaking from personal experience. Enjoy sights & sounds of the season through a series of charming Holiday Vignettes. Early arrivals may check in by 5:40 pm nightly. Call 330.666.3711 ext. 1720. For more information: [www.halefarm.org](http://www.halefarm.org) Perhaps our December 11th WRHS Speaker, Museum Educator, Ashly **Buzzanca**, can address the hike on Hale Farm & Village as she enlightens her audience performing *Christmas in Cleveland*.

**Medical Updates on Members/Family:** We look forward to seeing many of you next week as the weather forecast projections are sunny & finally normal temps in the 40's. We add the names of Joe Tirpak's Wife Judy & Ted Karle's Wife Lee, to our thoughts & prayers list of those facing medical challenges. We off them & any other not mentioned member get well wishes as they deal with these difficulties during the Holiday Season. With the onset of our often unpredictable winter weather, I hope, that everyone exercises caution in your travels throughout the holiday season.

*All Articles appearing in the Courier do not necessarily state or represent an endorsement of the facts, conclusions, and opinions of the author(s) by the NEOCWRT or its membership.*

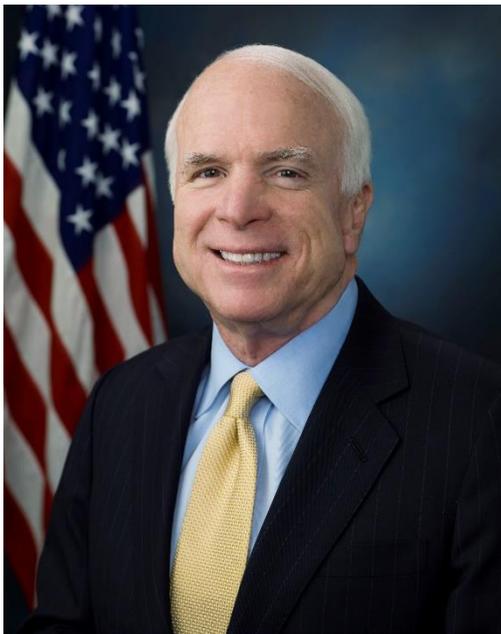
## The Strange and Obscure Facts of America's Civil War

**The American Colonization Society** was an organization founded by John Randolph, Henry Clay and Richard Bland Lee that supported the migration of all Free African Americans to Africa. The ACS founded a colony on the Pepper Coast of West Africa. Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and James Monroe supported the American Colonization Society. The ACS was popular among the slaveholders in Virginia's Piedmont area. The ACS can trace its roots to a coalition of opposing religious groups. Evangelicals supported slavery while the Quakers opposed it. Both groups believed that Free African Americans would be better off if offered freedom to live in their native continent rather than among segregated white society. Abraham Lincoln initially supported the deportation of all African slaves from the United States that is until Black regiments helped turn the tide and defeated the Southern Confederacy. The ACS helped to create Liberia, a nation founded by thousands of Free Blacks repatriated with their homeland.



**Charles Dana has been called Stanton's Eyes and Ears.** He served as the managing editor and foreign correspondent of the New York Tribune newspaper from 1847 – 1862. The Tribune was a strong advocate for the Abolitionist cause and garnered the support of the Radical Republicans. Secretary of War Edwin Stanton began corresponding with Dana because he too wanted a friendly voice in the press. Dana resigns from the Tribune in 1862 after a bitter dispute with Horace Greeley. Greeley resented Dana's unilateral management decisions while Greeley was recuperating from illness and surgery. Stanton hired Dana to be the eyes and ears of the Lincoln administration. He investigated fraud among Army and Navy contractors and corrupt quartermasters. Stanton sent Dana to investigate rumors of General Grant's drunkenness during the Battle of Shiloh. After spending much time collecting his notes on Grant, Dana came to admire the

object of his investigation. Dana found Grant to be modest, honest and fair in all of his dealings. Dana was so impressed with Grant that he recommends that Grant be promoted to General and Chief of all the Union armies. Dana served as Assistant Secretary of War from 1864 – 1865. In the 1850s, Dana hired an obscure writer named Karl Marx to be a regular contributor to the Tribune.



**The Courage to do the Right Thing.** During the 2000 Republican Presidential primary, the state of South Carolina was besieged by calls to remove the Confederate flag from atop the dome of the statehouse. Senator John McCain of Arizona was battling Texas Governor George W. Bush in the South Carolina Primary election. A win in South Carolina could put either candidate on the road to locking up the Republican Presidential nomination. McCain had already done the unthinkable by trying to nominate his best friend, Democratic Senator Joe Lieberman as his vice presidential running mate. The Republican Party's rules prohibited selecting a Democrat, but that didn't stop McCain from trying. During the South Carolina primary when asked how he felt about the display of the Confederate flag atop the state capitol, McCain said, that he had lived in South Carolina while his father was an admiral in the Navy and he believed the Confederate flag is a symbol of southern heritage. After having lost the primary and the Republican nomination, John McCain apologized for his lapse of courage. He then stated that the Confederate flag was a symbol of slavery and that it was offensive to many people, especially African Americans. It takes a courageous man to do the right thing and a greater

man to admit when he has made a mistake. John McCain was a great American and statesmen beloved by both Republicans and Democrats alike.