



THE COURIER



Northeast Ohio Civil War Round Table



Tuesday March 8th, 2011 Meeting #115

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

Canteen at 6:00 Dinner at 7:00 Guests are Welcome

Speaker: Dr. Edward Jay Pershey

Topic: "Cleveland, Ohio in 1861 and the coming of the Civil War"

Reservations required Please call Steve Abbey

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

Dr. Edward Jay Pershey is Vice President for Special Projects and Exhibits at the Western Reserve Historical Society. Pershey joined WRHS in 1995 as Director of Education and Curator of Urban & Industrial History. From 1987 to 1995 he was the founding Director of the Tsongas Industrial History Center, an innovative hands-on museum education program in Lowell, Massachusetts. From 1981 to 1987 he served as Supervisory Museum Curator at the Edison National Historic Site, the home and laboratory of the American inventor Thomas Alva Edison in West Orange, New Jersey. In 1982 he received his doctorate in the History of Technology from **Case Western Reserve University** in Cleveland, where he also served briefly as Associate Curator at the Dittrick Museum of Medicine. Dr. Pershey has taught at the New Jersey Institute of Technology, Rutgers the State University of New Jersey, the University of Massachusetts, Cooper Union in New York City, and CWRU.

The Western Reserve Historical Society has manuscripts, photographs, archival, and maps that document the history of the Civil War. As we celebrate the sesquicentennial of the Civil War, we can find new ways of thinking about that history. One way is to view the Civil War from the perspective of Cleveland, Ohio. What was the city like? What were its residents like? What did they know about the impending crisis in the South and how did they react to the spark of war in April, 1861? This talk will explore the early months of 1861 from that viewpoint, as well as highlight the many collections at WRHS that provide the ammunition for new historical understanding of the war.

14th PRESIDENT'S CIVIL WAR JOURNAL by Franco M. Sperrazzo

February 8th Meeting, Norton J. London: Was it a Jefferson Davis talk, Norty London pinch hitting for ailing **Phillip Price** or 34 members and 3 guests with mid-Winter cabin fever? Whatever the reason we have 46 current members, including 4 snow birds, so only 42 known in town and over 80% turnout. That is quite impressive and representative of what we do as a strong club membership. Way to go troops! Member London did a superb job on short notice offering new perspectives on the life of the only Confederate President Davis. Norty has generated another gem on his vast body of work. We can always count on him to come through, which is why he is our field commander.

Membership Dues 3rd & Last Call: The \$55 cost is due this month or beware of the Ides of March. March 15th. Please keep payments separate from your monthly dinner money. **Treasurer Bill Meissner**, will accept your check at or March 8th meeting or by mail at 9571 Headlands Road., Mentor, OH 44060.



Edwin C. Bearss & George E. Deutsch: Both authors and historians were keynote speakers at the Forever Free: Abraham Lincoln's Journey to Emancipation Symposium sponsored by the Baron-Forness Library of Edinboro University of PA. Young Ed spoke on "Southern States Succession" leading to Fort Sumter. Brother George discussed "President Lincoln and Chief Justice Taney: The Great Antagonist." Mr. Deutsch will be our distinguished guest on May 10th to present this intriguing topic. **Theodore J. Karle** and **President Franco** were honored to be present for the February 11th portion of this impressive Lecture series. After the program we enjoyed having dinner with Bearss, Deutsch, **Jack Braun** (Edinboro Prof.), **Walter Rybka** (Maritime Museum Dir.) at Rum Runner's Cove. In his

cerebral manner, Mr. Bearss managed to break into an impromptu series of stories, highlighting our evening.



George Washington turned 279 Years Old: In spite of TV 8 weatherman **Dick Goddard's** erroneous report of 297 years, the "The Father of Our Country" was born on February 22nd, 1732. The Sons of the American Revolution Club celebrated his life at Shaker Country Club on Saturday February 19th. Our own **Frank Moore**, as a new color bearer replaced the late **Ronald Morgan**, was in step like the veteran he is. Also on hand were **2nd Vice Pres. Chuck Richards, Dick Fetzer, Steve Abbey** and **Pres. Franco** to represent the **NEOCWRT**. Their guest was **Patrick Henry Jolly** in period costume.

Webmaster Tom Horvath: Our IT man is working diligently having listed a website from Oberlin, OH. **Karen Norwood** heads a group titled Civil War 150 Leadership Corps that works in conjunction with the programs celebrating the Civil War Sesquicentennial Anniversary. Tom will shed some light and information on the subject at our meeting. A contingency may travel to visit and learn from them.

Medical Mentions: We hope to see **Phillip Price, Hudson Fowler 111, and Arlan Byrne** back to our meetings soon. They have been dealing with personal and family medical issues. All three are important contributors to our club. The **NEOCWRT** expresses well wishes to those involved.

Cabinet Short Meeting: We will convene after our regular dinner party at Dino's. We need to address our Spring One Day outing in May. We have a handful of terrific options, but they need to be discussed.

WRHS Update: New Spring programs and "The News" calendar of events for members should be available at Tuesday's meeting. Ask for passes to enjoy various lectures and fabulous exhibits on display like A Fugitive's Path: Escape on the Underground Railroad at Hale Farm & Village. Flags in April???

March 8th Meeting: Dr. Edward J. Pershey, Director of Museum Services, for Western Reserve Historical Society is our guest and keynote speaker. His profile biography and credentials (too numerous for this column) have been forwarded to **Editor John Sandy**. We planted the seeds for his visit on June 8th, 2010. Dr. Pershey will do a power point program on the social and economic climate of Cleveland and Northeast Ohio at the start of the Civil War, and how Ohioans became involved as the war progressed. Dr. Edward is knowledgeable, enthusiastic and will convey life experiences. God's Speed, President Franco

General George Sears Greene, The Unsung Hero of Culp's Hill

The Battle of Gettysburg, July 1st -3rd, 1863, was fought on the farmland and along the rocky ridges outside of the Adams County, Pennsylvania college town. The three day battle resulted in more than 52,000 combined casualties for the Army of Northern Virginia and the Army of the Potomac. The officers and enlisted men of both armies fought bravely in a desperate effort to destroy the opposing army. Bravery and determination on both sides contributed to the intensity of the battle and no doubt added to the enormous number of the dead. Gettysburg produced many heroes, especially for the Federal Army. Officers like Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, Dan Sickles, John Buford, Patrick O'Rourke and Winfield Scott Hancock were among those recognized for their gallantry and devotion to the Union cause. Chamberlain became a national hero for his steadfast defense of Little Round Top, a prominent hill located on the extreme Union left. The civil war novel: "The Killer Angels" and the movie: "Gettysburg" contributed to Chamberlain's reputation and mystique.

However, on the other end of the Federal line, a sixty two year old general, George "Pap" Greene managed to command his undersized brigade of less than 1400 men, against repeated assaults by more than 5,000 Confederate troops. The Federal defense of Culp's Hill was no less important than the defense of Little Round Top, but Chamberlain was an American hero. Chamberlain got national newspaper coverage and the lion's share of the glory.



George Sears Greene was born in Warwick, Rhode Island on May 6, 1801. His father Caleb was a merchant and owned a merchant ship. Caleb managed to earn a handsome living for his family until the passage of the Embargo Act of 1807. The Embargo Acts prohibited U. S. ships from trading with foreign countries. The United States hoped to avoid becoming involved in the war between France and England. However, the U. S. soon found itself in the War of 1812 and Caleb Greene lost most of his business and the major source of his income.

George Green attended Wrentham Academy and later moved to New York City. He planned to enroll in Brown University but the depleted family resources meant that he had to work and pay for his own higher education. He managed to get a job in a dry goods store in New York City and by chance, met the Superintendent of the United States Military Academy, Major Silvanus Thayer. Major Thayer was impressed with the young George Greene's knowledge and deportment. Thayer managed to secure an appointment for Greene to West Point in 1819.

General George S. Greene Library of Congress photo. Greene was an excellent student and ranked second in his graduating class of 1823. The West Point class of 1823 included Albert Sidney Johnston, David Hunter, Dennis Hart Mahan, Joseph Mansfield and Lorenzo Thomas. After graduation, Greene was commissioned a second lieutenant and was selected to remain at West Point. Greene was appointed assistant professor of mathematics and engineering. While at West Point, George Green befriended David Vinton whose younger sister was the talk of the academy. George was smitten by the lovely Mary Elizabeth Vinton and they married in 1828. His wife gave birth to three children: Mary, George Jr. and Francis. In a tragic turn of events, Mary Elizabeth and the 3 children all died from tuberculosis in 1833.

In 1836, George met Martha Barrett Dana, the daughter of Samuel Dana, a former Congressional Representative from Massachusetts. Martha and George were married in 1837 and George resigned his military commission to become a civil engineer. George Greene helped design the water systems for a number of growing northern cities. The demand for clean drinking water had become a major issue for cities like Washington D. C., Detroit, Michigan and New York City. Greene was instrumental in designing the Croton Aqueduct and reservoir system for New York. He was one of the founders of the American Society of Civil Engineers and Architects.

With the coming of the War of the Rebellion in April 1861, George Greene was 60 years old, but experienced military officers were much in demand. He was offered the rank of colonel of the 60th New York Volunteer Infantry Regiment by Governor Edwin Morgan and he accepted. The officers and enlisted men of the 60th New York were not happy to learn of Greene's appointment. They wanted one of their own officers to be in command not a 60 something, old "Pappy." However, in time, the men of the 60th N.Y. came to admire and respect their colonel. He was a professional soldier who did things by the book. He treated his men fairly and valued their commitment and sacrifice.

In the spring of 1862, Confederate General Thomas Jackson was routing Union generals in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley. President Lincoln was worried that Jackson would attack Washington. George Greene was assigned to the staff of Major General Nathaniel Banks. Banks who was ordered to destroy Jackson's army. Greene was promoted to the rank of brigadier general and gained the reputation of an aggressive brigade commander. General Greene's 3rd Brigade, 2nd Division of the Second Corps of the Army of Virginia, saw action at Cedar Mountain and managed to hold their position, despite being outnumbered by Jackson's forces. Greene's 3rd brigade was engaged in the heavy fighting near the Dunker Church during

the Battle of Antietam, September 17, 1862. Greene's brigade managed to penetrate Stonewall Jackson's defensive line, but his attack was unsupported and he was forced to retreat.

On July 1st, 1863 Confederate General Richard S. Ewell's Second Corps of Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, failed to capture the "high ground" along Cemetery Hill and Culp's Hill, just south of Gettysburg. Ewell received reports that a large Federal force was approaching from the east and might attack his left flank if he did not break off his assault for the ridges south of the town. In the early morning hours of July 2nd, 1863, the Union 12th Corps commanded by Henry Slocum took up position on Culp's Hill. General Greene's 3rd brigade was part of the 2nd Division assigned to the 12th Corps. He ordered his men to cut down timber, dig trenches and collect rocks to construct a series of breastworks and fallback lines for the defense of Culp's Hill. Greene's division commander, Maj. Gen. John Geary was less than supportive of Greene's trench building effort. Geary believed that the entire 12th Corps would be moved soon, and that Greene was wasting time trenching.



Late in the afternoon, General Meade ordered Slocum's 12th Corps to move to the union left and support Sickles embattled 3rd Corps. However, Slocum left George Green's 3rd brigade on Culp's Hill. Despite repeated Confederate attacks, Green's brigade rallied and held off each assault. While Longstreet's 1st Corps was finally halted on the Federal left, "Pap" Greene's brigade was giving a good account of itself on the Federal right. The breastworks and the line of trenches enabled Greene's 3rd brigade to hold off the attacking rebels. Moreover, Greene's troops massed their firepower and inflicted thousands of casualties on the attacking rebels.

George Greene was transferred to the west in the fall of 1863. He was severely wounded in the face at the Battle of Wauhatchie, which is located near Chattanooga, Tennessee. His jaw was crushed and he required a number of operations to restore it. He wore a full beard to hide the scars from the trauma. After the war, he returned

General Greene's breastworks along Culp's Hill. Library of Congress Photo

to civil engineering in New York City. Greene never received credit for his excellent defense of Culp's Hill. General Meade did not mention it in his Official Report on the battle because of some confusion with 2nd Corps Commander Henry Slocum's report to Meade. In 1892, Greene petitioned the U. S. Congress for a captain's pension and sought the help of New York Congressman Dan Sickles. However, he was told that he was only eligible for a first lieutenant's pension because that was his highest rank in the regular army. According to historian Paul Kuhl, "George Sears Greene became the oldest lieutenant in the history of the United States Army." He was 93 years old. He died of old age, on January 28, 1899, in Morristown, New Jersey.

References: Eicher, John H. and David Eicher. "Civil War Commands, Stanford, California. Stanford University Press. 2001

Kuhl, Paul E. "George Sears Greene" The Encyclopedia of the American Civil War: A Political, Social and Military History. New York.

W. Norton & Company, 2000

The New York Times, January 28, 1899.

Washington's Birthday Celebration photographs below featuring: Left, Frank Moore, Patrick Henry Jolly, and Norma Kingsmill.

Group photo on the right: Dick Fetzer, Chuck Richards, Frank Moore, Patrick Henry Jolly, President Franco Sperrazzo and Steve Abbey.



Ups and Downs of a Confederate Soldier

The Second of a two-part book review and perspective by John Krouse

This article first appeared in the October 2008 edition of the NEOCWRT Courier. We present it again in honor of our friend and brother, John Krouse.

In his book **“Ups and Downs of a Confederate Soldier.”** James Huffman gives a first-hand account of his experiences as a private in Company I, 10th Virginia Infantry Regiment of the Confederate States Army, from the First Battle of Bull Run in July 1861 to the Battle of Spotsylvania in May 1864 when he was wounded and captured. After the battle, Huffman and many other Confederate prisoners were held for a time and then taken by Federal soldiers on a long march north. “To the rear, the whole earth seemed to be alive with Yankees. The road, creeks and branches were a thin loblolly of mud and slush through which we were forced, sometimes up to our knees, while there was crossing on the side of the road.”



Confederate prisoners captured in the Shenandoah Valley From The National Archives

After several days of marching with his wounded leg, he wrote that prisoners were put on a boat and taken down the Potomac to a camp on a barren peninsula of the Chesapeake Bay called Point Lookout, Maryland – the largest Union prison camp established after the battle of Gettysburg to incarcerate Confederate prisoners. “Here I was reminded of a large flock of sheep, taken from a ranch and put in a pen, standing around looking at each other not knowing what to do.” Finding themselves in this situation, the men soon organized into companies and divisions, and even established a school in a large building with books donated from the surrounding area.

Huffman and the others detested being under the control of Union guards he described as heartless, ignorant brutes and he said the drinking water was

contaminated and the food covered with maggots. He also recalled the irony of being guarded by Negro soldiers. “Many times while on the top of the wall or fence, they would recognize their former masters and talked to them saying, “The bottom rail on top now.”

After three months at Point Lookout, he and a large group of fellow prisoners were transferred to a camp in Elmira, New York. The Elmira Prison was a 45-acre camp on the banks of the Susquehanna River, with grass, green trees and adjacent mountains that softened the landscape. The prison was well organized, with barracks, hospital wards and a large cookhouse.

“This camp, at first sight, seemed a very healthy place, but it proved to be sickly for our men. The death rate was much higher than in the army during active hostilities. Half of us Virginians and I think three-quarters of all Southerners died here in eight to ten months. The well water looked pure but was deadly poison to our men, with thousands having chronic diarrhea and all kinds of bowel and kidney trouble, from which they died,” he wrote.

Of the prisoners that escaped disease, many died just wasting away. “There were lots of drones or lifeless, do-less persons who moped about, pining away for want of sufficient food to eat, losing their humanity, eating almost anything – rats, gangrene poultices and the like. They were known by their pallid color and lifeless movements. Most of them died there, growing so lean that they seemed to have no flesh at all before their spirits finally left their bodies.”

Huffman said some of the more industrious and resourceful prisoners soon realized that it was no good to be mopping around doing nothing, so they would craft jewelry and other small items out of scrap wood, metal, bone, and horsehair. Guards would buy these items and re-sell them as souvenirs to townspeople. For his tools, Huffman drove a big six-inch spike through a stick for a hammer, made a pair of pincers from some other filed-down nails, and made a small drill made with broken sewing needles fastened to a rod twirled around by a “bow and sweep.” With these tools and part of a broken pocket knife, he made rings and carved picture albums that sold for 75 cents to \$1.25. He said half the men at Elmira had some kind of business like this going on, not only providing them with extra money for food and supplies but also making them feel productive and occupying their time.



Wooden picture album carved by Huffman at Elmira Prison Camp

With this in mind, Huffman had some wise advice that applies even today. “Here is one of the most important lessons of life. Have confidence and patience. If at first you don’t succeed, try again and put the whole mind, being and soul into your work. Have faith and confidence in yourself, even under the most unfavorable circumstances. In this way, mind says to nerves and muscles “Get a move on and try.”

This attitude got him through his ordeal as a prisoner of war, and prepared him for still more challenges he faced as the war ended and Southern soldiers returned home to find their towns, farms and countryside laid waste. Homes and buildings were burned, fields bare, crops destroyed, livestock confiscated, fences burned by troops for firewood. Roads, bridges and railroads were decimated. Confederate currency was worthless, companies were bankrupt, and entire villages were without young men to do the hard work of reconstruction. “Hopes were blighted, fortunes ruined, plans frustrated and all now subjected to the swarm of hungry carpetbaggers that came south to devour what little the war had left,” he wrote.

In spite of the war’s destruction and the aftermath of reconstruction, Huffman got the home place working again, with former slaves all staying on the land and working for the family doing much the same jobs they had before they were freed.

Huffman married Mary Henton on March 8, 1866, and they raised nine children at Naked Creek.



James and Mary Huffman shortly after their marriage

From Huffman’s book

Huffman wrote the book when he was 72 years old as a family record. It’s amazingly well-written, considering that his education consisted of only a few months in a country school for several years, where he learned to read and write and, as he states, “do a little ciphering.” The balance of his education came later in life from reading newspapers, periodicals and the Bible. A portion of the original manuscript was published after his death in the April 1939 issue of the *Atlantic Monthly* magazine under the title “Prisoner of War – a Confederate Soldier’s Story.”

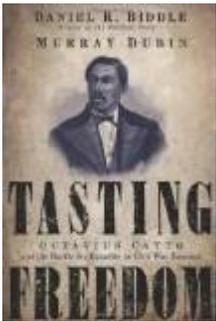
He died at Naked Creek in 1922 at age 82 and is buried in the Confederate section of Arlington National Cemetery beside a bronze monument erected by the Daughters of the Confederacy.



First Confederate
Flag



Tasting Freedom by Daniel R. Biddle and Murray Dubin – a book review by Tom Horvath



I've known for a long time that expectations have a lot to do with the level of enjoyment one receives from a book. Read a good book without any prior knowledge of the material and it's a good experience. Read the same book expecting a great piece of literature, and even a good book is disappointing. For that reason, the authors should have taken more care in selecting their sub-title, *Octavius Catto and the Battle for Equality in Civil War America*. That sub-title led me to believe that the main topic of the volume was Octavius Catto. In fact, it took almost 200 of the 500 pages of narrative to get Octavius Catto to manhood – and there weren't 200 pages of information about his childhood. Nor were there 300 pages of information about his adult life, though his life did provide something of a thread around which the story evolves. The book didn't match my expectations.

The real topic of the volume is the black people's battle for equality in America in the 1800s, with the center of the story in Philadelphia, the home of the authors. I had two problems with the narrative. First, the authors ranged all over the country to bring in related incidents. The story actually begins in Charleston, South Carolina, with Catto's father and ancestors, spends a good deal of time there and often returns to cover events or situations relating to, not Catto, but the struggle for rights. Later in the volume, Washington, D.C. becomes another center of developments. The second problem relates to the sheer number of individuals involved. I had a great deal of trouble tying individuals to earlier references and incidents. Some of the impact may have been lost because I couldn't remember the color of the individual's skin. As a result, the book didn't keep my interest and would sometimes sit for days before I'd pick it up again.

That being said, there were points, especially when more detailed information was available, that the story drew me back. One example is a chapter on Catto's baseball team, the Pythians, and their quest to compete with white teams and to join the National Amateur Association of Baseball Players.

The writing is good, as would be expected from Pulitzer Prize winner Biddle, and within each section flows well. The perspective is not single-sided. The authors point out that freed blacks in the south sometimes owned slaves. They relate how conventions of blacks and white supporters would sometimes degenerate into personality clashes and bog down in debates over trivial matters. The faults of Frederick Douglas and lesser known rights advocates are discussed along with their strengths and achievements. And though they do not shy away from mentioning the atrocities performed upon slaves and free blacks, they don't dwell on them, nor do they seem to revel in their telling.

In fact, though the atrocities performed by mobs and fanatical individuals are more gruesome, I somehow found the reasoned, carefully planned acts harder to accept. In 1844, Secretary of State John C. Calhoun concluded from a study and announced to the nation that freedom literally drove blacks crazy and that southern slaves were better off than free northern blacks. In 1859, the state of Arkansas determined that approximately 600 free blacks living in the state (there were around 47,000 slaves) were potential trouble and had to leave the state by January, 1860. (Illinois and Indiana passed laws forbidding the immigration of blacks into their states, so Ohio became a safe haven.) One place that accepted blacks without significant prejudice was the sea, yet Charleston, South Carolina laws ruled that a free black seaman must be imprisoned upon entering the port and must remain imprisoned until his ship left port.

There is a great deal of new information in the book and, with the exception of the problems I noted, the writing is very good. If you can stick with it, there is much to be learned from this volume.

“Proclaim liberty throughout the Land unto all the inhabitants there of”

Leviticus 25:10

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

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