

THE COURIER

Northeast Ohio Civil War Round Table



May 2008 Meeting #91

Date: May 13th, 2008, Ladies Night

Place: Dino's I90 & Rte. 306 exit Mentor, Ohio

Canteen: 6PM

Rations: 7PM

Speaker: Hank Arbaugh

Topic: "Ohio History, a Celebration in Music"

**Reservations required please Call Steve Abbey
phone 440 255 8375**

E-mail: abbeysr@webtv.net

Hank Arbaugh is a seasoned entertainer who has been performing Anglo-American ballads, the blues, swing, and Appalachian folk music to audiences throughout the United States for the last forty years. Besides being an accomplished musician, Mr. Arbaugh has mastered eight different instruments; and is a renowned scholar and educator of traditional music. He has taught at the high school and college level and has published books on traditional English and Folk music.

Our guest speaker/performer will present a "History of Ohio" using authentic ballads that focus on the common men and women who struggled to survive and carve out an existence against the hostile forces of nature and man.

Ladies night is a special event that everyone is sure to enjoy and our presenter, Hank Arbaugh is sure to make this a memorable occasion. So bring your "lady fair" and join your fellow mates at Dino's. Hank Arbaugh will be appearing at the **NEOCWRT** through the assistance of the Ohio Humanities Council, a state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.



Hank Arbaugh has performed in coffee houses and festivals throughout the country and acquired a vast knowledge of American music and folk traditions. He has a M.A. in Folk Studies and he developed his musical interest listening to 50's rock, ragtime and Dixieland music. Hank listened to such artists as Brownie McGhee, Sonny Terry, Mississippi John Hurt, Leadbelly and John Lee Hooker. Hank can be classified as an eclectic artist but one with a persistently reoccurring bent toward the blues and folk genre

In 1969 Hank Arbaugh attended the Festival of the Smokies where he met Sparky Rucker and Elizabeth Cotton, the legendary guitarists who wrote "Freight Train." Sparky is a second generation blues great, historian, black studies activist and a former school teacher. Hank was invited to the John Henry Memorial Blues festival in West Virginia where he performed with early blues legends Johnny

Shines and Buddy Moss. The May 13th Ladies night program will include music and storytelling with such traditional folk tunes as "Ginny's Gone to Ohio, St. Clair's Defeat, Erie Canal" and Civil War songs "Dixie, In the Year of Jubile and Lincoln's campaign song."

The New Membership Corner ----- by Arlan Byrne

One of the newest members of the NEOCWRT is **John Krouse**. John and his wife Louisa live in Concord and have two grown children. Although new to our club, John is not new to the Civil War experience. He was born and raised near Hagerstown, Maryland in the heart of Civil War country and thus is very familiar with Civil War history. He has visited many historic battle sites such as Antietam , Harpers Ferry, First Manassas and the Shenandoah Valley. John has ancestors who fought for the Union and others that fought for the Confederacy which is not unusual for residents of the Border states. John's background and experience will make him a vaaluable member of our club.

Another new addition to our membership is **Carl Dodaro**, a lifelong resident of Lake County and a graduate of Willoughby South High School. Carl became interested in World War II and military history while in high school that interest later included American History and the Civil War. His love of history led him and his family to visit many Civil War battlefields and historic sites. Carl is a member of the Civil War Trust Fund. He is also a collector; having acquired over 400 military books and 200 shot glasses. It might be interesting to find out under what circumstances he acquired those shot glasses! We look forward to getting to know Carl , his wife Carol and their four talented children.

CIVIL WAR MINUTES: By Franco M. Sperrazzo, Special Events Coordinator

Our April 8th meeting speaker was **2004 President Ted Karle**, a draftee pinch hitter, filling the rank of our originally scheduled speaker. **Karle** pointed out that the American Civil War period produced little in meritorious American fiction. One better known exception was that of soldier turned author **Ambrose Bierce**. Born in 1842, this highly decorated Yankee Civil War veteran joined the 9th Indiana Volunteers at 19 years old and engaged in combat at Shiloh where he suffered one of his several war injuries. He was said to have a cynic personality, as demonstrated in one of his outstanding works “Devil’s Dictionary.” **Ted’s** presentation focused on “An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge.” This rather complicated story is a psychological study of southern planter **Payton Farquhar’s** last thoughts prior to his execution by a Union company of soldiers for his attempt to burn a bridge over an Alabama creek. Modern authors, directors and producers like the late Alfred Hitchcock and Rod Serling have adopted **Bierce’s** masterpiece. **Karle** showed an award winning French film production of the story. This version won critical acclaim for best short story subject at the Cannes Film Festival and the American Academy Awards in 1962 and 1963 respectively. The surprise and abrupt ending left our group numb and speechless.

Karle is working on final arrangements for the **NEOCWRT Spring One Day Trip**.

Ted and **Franco** will lead an excursion to Erie and nearby Waterford, Pa. on May 17th. We will provide simple directions for our car pool train and cell phone numbers at our departing familiar location Dino’s Restaurant at 8:30am. Further details and itinerary are featured with full page colored photos on the back page. Call us or sign up at the May meeting if you can come along.

Copo and future **el Presidente Arlan Byrne** came forward to brainstorm, share his progress and get ideas regarding the 4th Annual **NEOCWRT Picnic**. This special event takes place on Sunday July 13th. The afternoon and evening open farm gathering will invite married, single members, ladies, families and friends. We anticipate our best turnout ever to welcome The **51st Ohio Volunteer Infantry Company B**. They will form an encampment, demonstration and historical teaching in Civil War period costume.

Our 2005 **President Brent Morgan** was recently in town so we called an impromptu meeting on April 15th. Members **Norton London, John Sandy and Franco Sperrazzo** ironed out a blueprint for success to make the **NEOCWRT 2008 Fall Field Trip** to Richmond, Va. and surrounding area a rewarding exploration of the former Confederate Capital. Stay tuned for more info on the September 18 through 21st journey as it develops. Richmond not only has the Seven Days Battles to study, but a huge plate of diverse historical sites to experience.

Finally the **Borders Civil War Book Club** will meet at the usual La Place Beachwood location Tuesday May 20th at 7:30pm. This month the book is “Lee and His Army in Confederate History”, by Gary W. Gallagher. This will be our last gathering until we convene again next fall. You can order the book at the Beachwood store for a healthy discount. Check with **Bruce Beale** or **Norty** to confirm.

Heroes: Should we have them? An article by Joe Tirpak

A Hero is: “An Individual admired for his/her achievements and qualities.”

However, in my opinion, there are two kinds of heroes: The first is what I call “Short-term.” The pitcher who pitches a “no hitter” in baseball, the kicker who kicks the last second “field goal” to win the football game, or the college basketball team that goes all the way during “March Madness” and wins the sixth game for the National championship. Yes, we admire their skills but soon move on to something else. How many of us can remember the two teams that played each other in 2004 for the sixth game during “March Madness?” I can’t! And yet I’m sure I watched that game like millions of other fans.



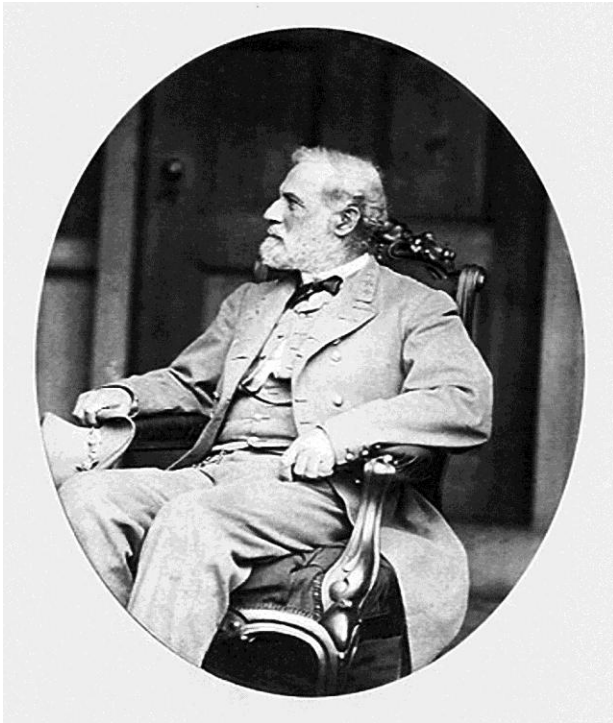
The second type of hero is what I call “long term.” These are heroes that we study and admire throughout a lifetime. As some of you know, I have been interested in American History since early childhood. My Mother instilled this interest in me when I was about 10 years old with a library book from our branch library in Cleveland. The book was a pictorial history of the Civil War with a picture of a magnificent looking Confederate General with a yellow sash, sitting proudly astride a gray dapple horse. This picture is etched in my mind like a majestic painting of some great artist.

Now whom am I talking about? Of course, it is Robert E. Lee! General Winfield Scott once said this of Lee: “He is the finest soldier I have ever seen on the battlefield.” This is indeed

high praise from one great soldier to another great soldier.

Why this endless fascination with Lee? There are many reasons, here are several:

- First, he comes from one of the most distinguished families of the 17th, 18th and 19th century America.
- His father was a hero of the American Revolution and a three term Governor of Virginia.
- Two of his uncles were signers of the Declaration of Independence.
- His wife, Mary Ann Randolph Custis Lee was the adopted Grand Daughter of George and Martha Washington.



I have visited Lee's ancestral home and birthplace called Stratford Hall. I have visited his boyhood home in Alexandria; and I have visited his home called Arlington House where he and his wife Mary Ann Randolph Custis Lee were married and raised seven children. I have also visited each of the major battlefields where he and his soldiers fought.

I have also visited his home at Washington College in Lexington, Virginia where he served as President from age 58 until his death at age 63 on October 12, 1870. This marked the happiest five-year period of his life. His body rests in the mausoleum in the basement of the Chapel that he labored so hard to finish prior to his death. This College was subsequently renamed Washington and Lee in honor of both heroes.

Robert E. Lee faced many disappointments and hardships in his life, beginning with the fallen fortunes of his father who had ventured into land speculation and squandered the family fortune. Other disappointments included caring for an invalid mother and subsequently his invalid wife; the tardy promotions of his military career, the loss of Stratford Hall; the loss of Arlington House, (now Arlington National Cemetery); and finally his eventual defeat during the Civil War.

Think of the burdens he was asked to carry, the decisions he was asked to make, and the price he was asked to pay? How many of us could cope with such a burden or be willing to pay such a price? I have been on a quest for more than 60 years and I have never once found a trace of scandal about him. He did nothing at all to disgrace himself. This was not true of others in his family. J. Steven Wilkins, the author of my favorite book about Lee entitled "Call to Duty" states that Lee thus describes himself: **"I am a poor sinner, trusting in Christ alone for salvation."** Here are some thoughts of mine and others based on this great American icon:

- **He was a calm presence in turbulent times! Always the voice of reason.**
- **He was a man of few words. "Say what you mean and mean what you say."**
- **He felt strongly that no mere mortal was above decency.**
- **He believed that compassion was not a weakness but the test of true men.**
- **He believed that if you controlled yourself, you helped to control your fate.**
- **He exemplified "fortitude" and his Army responded in kind.**
- **He believed that with forgiveness you could change the lives of others.**
- **He had humility! "For while my military knowledge may have brought victory in battle to my soldiers, the chinks in my army brought death and destruction to those in my service."**

It was this awareness of his insufficiency and his need for grace and mercy that formed the foundation of his extraordinary character. Heroes, should we have then? Absolutely!

We desperately need one today!

J.E.T.

***Crazy '08* by Cait Murphy book review by Tom Horvath**

What is the greatest baseball season ever? Cait Murphy believes that 1908 is, and her new (2007) book attempts to prove it. It certainly was one of the hottest pennant races. With two days left in the season, six teams were in contention – and this in an era with no divisions or wild cards, just two leagues and one winner from each. Each league had a 3-way race, with the Cleveland Naps one of the three in the American League.

And even though it took place 100 years ago, many of the names are familiar to even the casual baseball fan: John McGraw, Cy Young, Christy Matthewson, Honus Wagner, Ty Cobb, Connie Mack, Napoleon Lajoie, Mordecai “Three Fingers” Brown, Joe Tinker, Johnny Evers, Frank Chance, and Fred Merkle.

If Fred Merkle is not a familiar name, then you probably are not familiar with one of the most controversial baseball games ever played. In this extremely tight pennant race, the game between the Cubs and Giants, both contenders, had a deciding effect on the pennant. With the score tied, two out, and men on first and third, Al Bridwell hits a solid single into center, scoring “Moose” McCormack. But, then, the Cubs claim that Merkle, the man on first, never touched second. And where is the ball?

There are plenty of unusual happenings, some not uncommon in those days (fans on the field) and some considered weird during any baseball era (summoning a pitcher to relieve who’s already started his shower). Ms. Murphy covers them all. She relates them as commonly known, then, in this well researched and documented volume, as they actually occurred. The book provides enough background (individual, historical, social, legal, and business) to make the machinations understandable.

That is not to say that the book is all facts and figures and simple retelling of the game. There is humor sprinkled throughout – from Ms. Murphy, the players, coaches, umpires, and the press. There are opinions aplenty. Ms. Murphy leaves little doubt where lies her opinion of the Merkle game -- and of many other subjects.

The book does not read like fiction, because it is not. It takes some time to get going, and the games are only as exciting as the facts can make them. If you have any interest in those early stars of the game, it will probably add some depth to their characters. And there certainly are enough characters to go around.

Do not be concerned because the book is written by a woman. The final line of the little biography on the book cover says, “She does not throw like a girl.” Nor does she write like one.

At 368 pages, the book is well foot-noted, indexed, and contains a small section of photos. The hard cover version retails for \$24.95 and is available on Amazon for \$16.47. A soft cover version became available in February, 2008 for \$14.95, available on Amazon for \$10.17. The Clevelnet systems has 21 copies, with 4 more on order, while the Mentor Public Library has one.

Be sure to attend the NEOCWRT’s annual Summer Picnic on July 13, 2008. Hosted by Pat and Arlan Byrne The 51st Ohio Volunteer Infantry Company B will be holding an encampment there and will conduct drill and firing demonstrations.

Richmond Field Trip

The Confederate Capitol and the Seven Days Battles

Plans are well underway for another exciting field trip. This year we will be staying at a resort – Virginia Center Crossings. This place has an Ohio connection in its history. Does anyone know what that might be? We have negotiated a very competitive rate of \$130 per room including the daily breakfast buffet. A room block has been set aside so please make your reservations promptly by calling 1-888-444-6553 or 804-727-1400. You can check out their website at virginiacrossingsresort.com. Please identify that you are with the NE Ohio Civil War Roundtable when making your reservation. If the block fills we will reserve more rooms on an as needed basis. Please email me when your room reservation is made at brentster1@comcast.net

Presently we are figuring out the other meals. Some good Southern cooking will be included. As usual, the box lunches on the field trips will be included in your check that is paid to the club. Please give or send your check for \$100 to Mike Sears. There may be a second request for funds needed but for now we will try to cover expenses. Also, at least, one of the evening meals will be included as well. On Thursday night we will be going to the famous Buz and Ned's barbecue for some authentic Virginia barbecue. We will have one of our evening meals at our hotel which is famous for their gourmet buffets.

Our Friday activities will deal with the Confederate Capitol and much of this will take place right in Richmond. Some of the things on the list will include the state Capitol, Chimborazo Hospital, the Southern White House and the Museum of the Confederacy, Monument Boulevard, and Hollywood Cemetery.

On Saturday we will cover Seven Days in eight hours. Our guide will be Mike Gorman of the National Park Service. Mike will also be in Cleveland to make a presentation to our September Roundtable meeting. We are fortunate to have another great guide.

Okay, troops, you have your orders. Write your check for the field trip and make your room reservations and email me today.

Brent Morgan

Onsite Coordinator in Richmond

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

John Sandy.....Editor

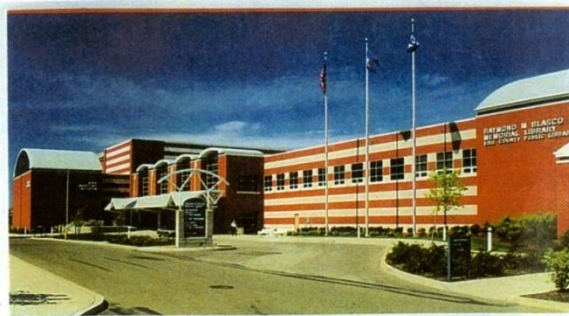
Staff writers: Ted Karle Franco Sperrazzo Joe Tirpak Tom Horvath
Arlan Byrne Brent Morgan

**SPRING FIELD TRIP “A DAY OF HISTORY”
SATURDAY MAY 17, 2008
Members, Wives, Ladies and Guests Welcome**

Itinerary:

- Visit:** Fort LeBoeuf Museum at Waterford, PA... a French & Indian War Fort. Learn of Geo. Washington’s historic mission to the fort in 1753.
- Lunch:** Dine at the historic Eagle Hotel (Built in 1826) featuring Amish cuisine.
- Tour:** The Erie Maritime Museum featuring videos and exhibits on the War of 1812, Perry’s Victory at Battle of Lake Erie, early Erie, and the *USS Michigan* (1st Iron hulled steamer in the US Navy.) Admission Charge: \$5.00 each.
- Board:** The tall ship *Brig Niagara*, Commodore Perry’s flagship 1813.
- RSVP:** Contact: Franko at: (440) 442- 4824 leave a message or sign-up.

We anticipate leaving from Dino’s Restaurant at 8:30am by car pool; return in the afternoon (some may wish to visit the casino at Presque Isle.)



**___The Northeast Ohio Civil War Roundtable’s Summer Picnic
Sunday July 13th2008 1:00pm -? 12611 Madison Rd.**

Hosted by Pat and Arlan Byrne, located just off State Route 508, Middlefield, Ohio

Fishing.....hay rides.....food.....wine.....beer.....call 440 636 9816 to reserve your table!