



Northeast Ohio Civil War Round Table



October 13th 2009 Meeting #102

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

Guest Speaker: Dr. Bob Stabile

Topic: "The Cause Was Just"

Canteen at 6:00 pm Dinner at 7:00pm Guests are welcome

Reservations required Please call Steve Abbey

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

Bob Stabile is a 1998 charter member of the Northeast Ohio Civil War Round Table and although retired, he and his wife Rebecca never run out of things to do. They especially enjoy weekends and summers at their home at Lake Chautauqua, New York. Bob Stabile was born in Rayland, Ohio and moved to Hubbard, Ohio after his father died when he was 7 years old. He has a daughter Anne who is married and teaches in the Akron, Ohio Schools. He also has a son, Robert who is married, works at Bank of America and resides in Broadview Heights, Ohio. Bob Stabile has 3 grandchildren: Tommy age 11, Paige age 9 and Danny age 6.

Mr. Stabile earned his BA from Miami University. He received his Masters in Education and his Ph.D. from Kent State University. He taught for 5 years in the Bedford, Ohio Schools before accepting the job of Superintendent of the Manchester, Ohio Schools. He was Superintendent of the Mayfield, Ohio Schools for 20 years before accepting the same position in Berea, Ohio. Dr. Robert Stabile is the author of four books on school administration, including "*The Ohio School Finance Blue Book*," which is used by most school districts and many universities in Ohio. He served for ten years as Professor of Business and Finance at Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio.

Dr. Robert Stabile will be presenting a talk to the Northeast Ohio Civil War Round Table on Tuesday, October 13, 2009 entitled "The Cause Was Just." He will examine the historical basis for the right of secession along with the social and political conditions in the United States prior to 1860. Why was the Southern Confederacy unsuccessful in forming its own government? What was the role of Abraham Lincoln? Dr. Stabile will further examine the aftermath of the war, the economics, and sociology of reconstruction. Do we have one nation indivisible or 2 independent nations? This is a topic that everyone will find stimulating and you will not want to miss this special presentation by a gifted professor and author, our own Dr. Robert Stabile.

A LETTER TO MY DAUGHTER

10-07-09

Becky,

Here's what happened on the NEOCWRT 2009 fall field trip. We left my house last Thursday at 7:30AM and arrived at the hotel in Richmond at 4:30 PM. We stayed at the Virginia Crossings Hotel which is a very elegant place. It is run by the Wyndham Hotel chain. I took a picture of it that I will send to you when they are developed. At 8:30AM Friday morning after breakfast we left the hotel in a 40 passenger greyhound-type tour bus, as opposed to a school bus type. The first stop was right around the corner from the hotel at the battle of Yellow Tavern.



Virginia Crossings Resort Hotel

Then he tried to slip around Lee's right, but Lee was too quick for him and Grant, trying to get past him at Spotsylvania, fought another battle losing another 18,000 men. Grant was still trying to get around Lee's right, and headed for the North Anna River crossings. Again Lee got there first and this battle [which was never fought] was where we started our 2009 Fall Field Trip. Grant's cavalry commander, General Philip Sheridan talked Grant into letting him go after Gen JEB Stuart, the South's legendary cavalry commander. Sheridan was positive he could whip Stuart, but Mead wasn't so sure. Grant settled the whole thing by telling Mead, "If he thinks he can, let him try it. He usually does what he says he can". So Sheridan, with 12,000 troopers, swung around both armies and headed for Richmond. Lee sent Stuart after him; but probably remembering how Stuart had taken all of the southern cavalry before Gettysburg and what happened there, only gave him 4,000 of the 8,000 available horsemen. Sheridan was really faking heading for Richmond and he puttered around until Stuart, who was frantically trying to get ahead of Sheridan and between him and Richmond, got to the crossroads at Yellow Tavern. Then Sheridan attacked. By this time in the war, the cavalry always fought dismounted, like infantry, instead of riding into each other swinging their swords like they did at the beginning of the war. We followed the battle ending at the spot where Stuart was shot from his horse and died. According to eyewitnesses, when Stuart was shot from his horse he was unconscious for a few minutes but when he opened his eyes there was his faithful steed standing over him watching him. Then the horse leaned down

At the beginning of 1864, Grant, who was now overall commander of the Union forces, ordered William T. Sherman to attack Atlanta and destroy Joseph Johnson's Confederate army. A naval force under Rear Admiral David Farragut was to attack and capture Mobile and close the south's last open blockade-runner port. Benjamin Butler was to start at Bermuda Hundred and destroy P.G.T. Beauregard's army. Nathaniel Banks was to occupy the Shenandoah Valley, Virginia's breadbasket, and prevent any food supplies from getting to Robert E. Lee and the other Southern armies. U.S. Grant - using Mead's Army of the Potomac - was to start south overland from Washington and pin Lee back against the Allegheny Mountains and not let him get into the Richmond defenses. Grant was to destroy Lee's army, capture Richmond and end the war. Last weekend we came in on the 2nd half of Grant's overland campaign. He had already fought the battle of the Wilderness near Fredericksburg where he lost 18,000 men.

and licked his face. Do you believe that? I bet you never heard that story before.

After visiting Yellow Tavern we went to the North Anna River where Lee tried his famous inverted V trap with the tip of the V on the North Anna. Grant wouldn't bite [thus the battle that never was] and instead he slipped around Lee's right and headed for Totopotomoy Creek. Lee got there first, of course, and after looking over the creek, with its high and steep southern bank, Grant decided to skip the whole thing and sent Sheridan around Lee's right again to grab the Old Cold Harbor crossroads where 5 roads came together. The Southern cavalry, now under Wade Hampton, got there in time to slow up the Union until Lee's infantry could arrive and dig in a few miles up the road at New Cold Harbor. You know all about the famous battle of Cold Harbor so I won't bother you with it; except it was here that General Byrnes [I never heard of him, do you think he was a relative?] was killed.



Pontoon bridge across the North Anna River at Jericho Mill

I stood on the exact spot where in 1862 at the battle of Gaines Mill the defensive and offensive lines were east and west, and in 1864 the lines were north and south. To end our tour we visited Fort Harrison in the Richmond defense line and Drewry's Bluff. At Drewry's Bluff, which is about 90 feet above the James River a couple of miles south of Richmond, the rebels had put some big cannon. In 1862, the Union Navy tried to force their way up the James River to capture Richmond. There is a straight stretch of the river for about 1/2 mile before Drewry's Bluff; and when the ironclads turned into it, the Southern cannon sent cannonballs plunging down on the decks of the armored vessels. Probably remembering Fort Donelson, the ships turned around and got out of there. The admiral in charge basically said "That's it. If they want to capture Richmond the army will have to do it."



Drewry's Bluff overlooking the James River

I made T-shirts for the club that said "Northeast Ohio Civil War Roundtable Fall Field Trip 2009. Then some crossed muskets. Then "The Overland Campaign 1864" then a cannon Then a quote "...whatever happens, there will be no turning back" Everybody said they liked them and I think they looked pretty sharp myself. As you know the quote was one of several from Grant that has become famous. "We will fight it out on this line etc, etc, etc." is probably the most famous. The one I used occurred after the battle of Spotsylvania when a reporter told Grant he was returning to Washington and was there anything Grant wanted him to tell the president? Grant thought a minute and said, "Tell the President that whatever happens, there will be no turning back."



Heavy cannon protecting Drewry's Bluff



Hancock's II Corps sector at Cold Harbor

The weather was perfect, not too hot nor too cold, just right for walking over a battlefield. We saw a lot of entrenchments that the soldiers built. We even walked through some of them. Our guide Robert E. Lee Krick [how's that for the name of a civil war battlefield guide] was outstanding. He knows everything about the battles, was easy to understand, and is very friendly and personable. He explained the battles in a way that left even a novice like me, with an understanding of how and why each battle was fought. Finally, I ended each day with a good meal and some **Irish whiskey and Single Malt Scotch**. Add in the fact that everybody in the club gets along really well together and it made for an outstanding trip.

Give little Stephanie a kiss for me
Love Dad

Editor's note: The above letter was written by Arlan Byrne, President of NEOCWRT to his daughter, Becky

THE CIVIL WAR and the HORSE

Compiled by Carl Dodaro

Last weekend (Sept. 19-20) my son Dominic and I went to the “Civil War at Zoar” which was a pretty good show, but during one of the cavalry demonstrations, an officer of the 6th Ohio Volunteer Cavalry, Co. B., announcing the show gave a short history of the horse in the Civil War and being something I know nothing about, gave me a topic to research for this month’s Courier.

Major General William T. Sherman – “Every opportunity at a halt during a march should be taken advantage of to cut grass, wheat, or oats and extraordinary care be taken of the horses upon which everything depends.”

The horse in the Civil War was everywhere and did everything that was asked of it. It hauled everything imaginable to the front and brought back the wounded, the dying, and the dead. It dragged naval gunboats up river and barges down canals. It was the dispatch and messenger service and if a cavalry man was caught out in the open, it became his shield against bullets. A few became famous, but like the soldiers they served, most were just a number on a roster list. Estimates vary but everyone agrees that at least a 1,000,000 and maybe as many as 1,500,000 horses died in military service during the Civil War.



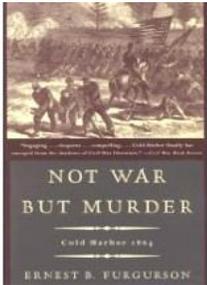
Early in the war, Confederate cavalry was superior. The theory was that in the South, the lack of good roads had forced Southerners to travel by horseback from boyhood, while in the North; a generation had been riding in carriages and other wheeled vehicles. Although this may have been true, rural young men in the North were also horsemen by necessity, but unlike many of the Southern boys who had slaves to take care of the horses, they had to bear the tedious burden of caring for their own animals after plowing behind them all day. Young Northerners who knew horses seem to have little desire to assume the responsibility of taking them to war, and instead joined the infantry. In the South, long before the war, young men organized themselves into mounted militia companies, often to deal with perceived slave insurrections, and even though most were more social, than military, the men learned how to drill, ride daringly and charge with the saber. Southern cavalry horses were also superior to Northern horses, largely because of the Southern love for horse racing. Nearly every Southern town had a track, and the sport developed a superior stock of pure-blooded, fleet-footed animals. In the North, the stocky, strong draft

horses were preferred because of their ability and willingness to work long hours. In the South, the Tennessee Walker and American Saddlebred were favored cavalry horses because their gaits were smooth and comfortable to ride and they had tremendous endurance. The North used ordinary carriage and riding horses, and Morgans may have been widely used on both sides.

As the war dragged on, Southern cavalry started to show the strains of a limited supply of horses due to the war being fought mostly on Southern soil and the confiscation of all horses by the Union army in the area. A Southern cavalryman, after having his mount shot from underneath him was given a furlough to go home and get another horse, if he could not bring a horse back with him, then he was sent to the infantry and the South lost a lot of talented cavalrymen in this manner. Union horses had to prove they were fit for cavalry battles. Supposedly, the horses went to what would now be called a boot camp where they were taught to react to various commands and cues from the rider. They were also taught how to react appropriately to certain situations they might encounter on the battlefield. One training exercise included incoming gun fire at body level. At a physical and verbal command from the rider, the horse was supposed to lie down and stay down, thereby eluding bullets and creating a breastwork for its rider. At the conclusion of the training, the horses had to pass one final test that determined if they would become army horses. On a signal, the riders dismounted and directed their horses to lie down. Gunners at the other end of the field would open fire, scattering bullets over the prone men and animals. The horses that panicked and jumped up were killed promptly and released from duty.

References: *VARIOUS INTERNET SOURCES INCLUDING “THE HORSE IN THE CIVIL WAR BY DEBORAH GRACE”.*

***Not War But Murder* by Ernest B. Furgurson Book Review by Tom Horvath**



In the introduction of *To the North Anna*, Gordon Rhea wrote that very little had been written about the Overland Campaign. Based on searches of the Mentor Library index and the ClevNet System, he is correct. The only other book in the Mentor Library written entirely about the Overland campaign, or one of its battles, is *Not War But Murder* by Ernest B. Furgurson, the story of Battle of Cold Harbor.

As I read this volume, I found myself comparing it to Gordon Rhea's *To the North Anna*, which I had just completed. On the surface the two books are very similar. Both deal with a single battle in the Overland Campaign: Mr. Furgurson's with Cold Harbor and Mr. Rhea's with North Anna. They are about the same length, about 300 pages, and both contain an order of battle, index, bibliography, notes section, and several pages of photographs and prints. Both are illustrated with approximately the same number of maps.

Yet the two books are very different. They both begin with a brief history of the campaign leading up to the battle. Mr. Rhea set the scene in a chapter or two. Mr. Furgurson spent much more of his book setting the stage. True, Furgurson had more action to recap between the Wilderness and Cold Harbor, but for a volume centered on a single battle he seemed to go more deeply than necessary into the political situation and other aspects of the war. I became somewhat impatient to get to Cold Harbor.

The obvious structure for a historical volume is chronological, and both books adopted this approach. Unfortunately, Mr. Furgurson tends to jump around in time, often stepping back to McClellan's 1862 campaign that occurred over some of the same ground, but also jumping around in 1864 to reference events that occurred earlier or later. He included information about the future of some of the participants. Adding more chronological disruptions is a smattering of footnotes. These supplement the information in the text, as opposed to the Notes section that identifies the source of information. Rather than add to the narrative, these additional bits of information disrupt the flow of the story. My overall impression is that Mr. Furgurson could not resist the temptation to include information whether it directly bears on the story or not.

Both books include anecdotes and quotes from official records and soldiers' diaries and letters. Where Gordon's Rhea's inclusions provided a better understanding of the common soldier's experience, Mr. Furgurson's were less cohesive. His style, too, worked against the flow. It is difficult to explain, but his transitions from one section to another and one chapter to another often diminished my interest in what followed rather than increasing it.

Mr. Furgurson, to his credit, spent more time on the relationship between Grant and Meade. This was an important and unusual military relationship. In Furgurson's opinion, that relationship played a key role in the Federal tragedy of Cold Harbor. However, I think Mr. Furgurson should have presented this opinion earlier in the volume and built his case as the story progressed. It would have been more convincing. Instead, he left almost all of his analysis to the last two chapters where he had to rehash the story in order to make his point.

In summary, the story and analysis of Cold Harbor is there, but Mr. Furgurson's style makes it more difficult to extract and less enjoyable reading.

This volume was published in 2000. The ClevNet system has twelve copies while the Mentor Library has one. Amazon has the paperback edition available for \$15.95. A new hard cover copy was not available from either Amazon or Barnes & Noble.

CIVIL WAR MINUTES by **Franco M. Sperrazzo** **Special Events Coordinator**

Photographic images by Frank Moore

Field trip commander **Norton London** gave an impressive overview of the second half of the Overland Campaign to a group of three dozen troopers. **Norty** covered North Anna, Totopotomy Creek, and Cold Harbor with a slide show featuring troop movements. Interpreting these maps is one of **Norton's** strong suits. A surprise cameo appearance by **Ted Karle** to emphasize military strategies was a highlight.

WRHS: Western Reserve Historical Society will unveil the exhibit “**Do You Know Your Lincoln?**” Saturday, October 17th. Do not panic - these items will be on display into year 2011. I have passes available to distribute among our members upon request when you plan to use them. Ask me for details.



Battlefield guide Robert E. L. Krick



Union Cemetery at Cold Harbor

Ted Karle Collection: This past week the Civil War Times Illustrated magazine issue featuring **Ted's** Personal **83rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry artifacts** hit the news stand. We announced this on the field trip to an arousing applause. **Ted** has spent almost thirty years researching this brigade that his great great grandfather **Peter Karle** served under **General Strong Vincent**. I have seen this wonderful accumulation of rare items. Congratulate our peer when you see him.

Frank Moore: On our recent excursion to Richmond Va., Frank took some terrific photos of people and places. He gave a photo memory card to **Editor John Sandy** to use for the newsletter wrap up. **Frank** will be having a second knee replacement on October 12 and will be absent for our meeting. Here's a word for good health and a complete recovery to a real trooper who contributes a great deal to our club.

Photographic images by Frank Moore



Fall Field Trip: 17 NEOCWRT members from the north invaded several southern battlefields recently. We bonded together with the likes of **Abazzio, Abbey, Baucher, Byrne, Dodaro, Grim, Karle, Kowell, London, Meissner, Moore, R. Morgan, Reynolds, Sandy, Sears, Sperrazzo, and Tirpak.** The accommodations at Virginia Crossings Resort were again outstanding as was the breakfast bar and dinner buffet. Editor **John Sandy** discovered a round of night golf. Some of us enjoyed the amenities of the fitness center and the pool. Field General **London** assisted **park ranger and tour guide Robert E. Lee Krick** who performed admirably from beginning to end. Besides our pre-mentioned destinations, on the end of day two was a visit to Fort Harrison and Drury's Bluff.

Jet and Bill Meissner locate the path

Perhaps the only regret I heard from a few soldiers was not returning to the Museum of the Confederacy. **Brent and Sharon Morgan** did their usual dependable job. Son **Rod, Paul and Jan Foley** and **Peg Morgan** joined our company, along with **George Deutch.** Entertainment was provided nightly from comedy central in the form of the "Bill and Ted Show." They did their gig to a standing room only audience in the parking lot!

See you all October 13th when member **Robert Stabile** presents **"The Cause was Just."**



OK- when do they bring lunch?



Mike Sears and Peggy Morgan



Confederate Marines at Dewey's Bluff



The men of the 2009 Fall Field Trip

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

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Special Thanks to Frank Moore