



THE COURIER



Northeast Ohio Civil War Round Table



Tuesday October 11th, 2011 Meeting #119

Canteen: 6:00pm Dinner: 6:50pm

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

Guest Speaker: A. Wilson Greene

Topic: McClellan's First Campaign in Western Virginia, 1861

Reservations required Guests are Welcome Please call Steve Abbey

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



A. Wilson Greene is the Executive Director of the *Pamplin Historical Park* and the *National Museum of the Civil War Soldier* located near Petersburg, Virginia. Mr. Greene served as the first President of the Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites from 1990 – 1994. He worked as a National Park Service historian at Fredericksburg National Military Park and the Petersburg National Battlefield. He is the author of more than 20 works on the American Civil War including his most recent books: *Whatever you resolve to be, Essays on Stonewall Jackson*; and *Petersburg, Virginia 1861 – 1865: A Confederate City in the Crucible of War*.

On May 3, 1861, General George B. McClellan was appointed commander of the Federal Department of the Ohio, an area that included Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, western Pennsylvania and the western region of Virginia. He was charged with protecting the loyal counties of western Virginia and securing the all

important B & O Railroad lines that moved troops, food, weapons and ammunition to the Union forces gathering around Washington, D. C.

Colonel George A. Porterfield and a small Confederate force attempted to establish a foothold in the area around Grafton, Virginia. Porterfield believed that federal troops would soon be sent to that area so he ordered the destruction of all railroad bridges and moved his forces to Philippi, Virginia.

On May 26, 1861, McClellan received intelligence reports indicating that Confederates were burning critical B & O railroad bridges along the western corridor of Appalachian Virginia. McClellan dispatched Federal troops across the Ohio River at Parkersburg, Virginia and on the morning of June 3, 1863, Federal forces surprised Porterfield and his Confederates at Philippi. The battle at Philippi was the first major battle of the Civil War.

On July 11, 1861, Union regiments commanded by McClellan attacked and defeated Confederate forces at a mountain pass along the Staunton – Parkersburg Pike on Rich Mountain, near Beverly, Virginia. Newspapers throughout the North celebrated the Union victory over the Confederates in western Virginia and George McClellan was acclaimed the “**Young Napoleon.**” On July 21, 1861, the Union Army commanded by Irwin McDowell suffered its first defeat at the Battle of Bull Run, just 25 miles from Washington. McClellan was summoned to Washington by President Lincoln and offered command of the battered remnants of that army.

On September 12 – 15, 1861 Confederate forces led by **General Robert E. Lee** attacked the Federal position on the summit of Cheat Mountain commanded by General Joseph Reynolds. This was General Lee’s first offensive of the war and it ended in defeat. The defeat of Confederate forces at Rich Mountain, Laurel Hill and Cheat Mountain secured this area for the Union and George McClellan would go on to command The Army of the Potomac.

Map of Appalachian Virginia and the Campaign of 1861 from the Rich Mountain Battlefield Foundation



WHY THE WAR ?

Slavery...yes

States Rights...yes

A threat to the South's way of life...yes.

A threat to the plantation owner's profits...definitely yes.

Good against evil...no !

Slavery is the issue that comes to mind of just about everyone but for different reasons. For President Lincoln and the Northerners it was a moral issue. For the Southerners it was not only their way of life that was in jeopardy but also a threat by the Government telling them how they should run their business. The plantation owners saw their cheap labor costs being undermined and the potential of their operating cost suddenly skyrocketing. Even with the invention of the Cotton Gin the cotton plantation owner saw bigger profits with the slaves producing ten times the amount of cotton in a given period of time. But the thought of paying someone to operate the Gin meant less money in their pockets. The plantation owners had a capital investment in the slaves. They bought the slaves and thought that no one could suddenly tell them that they must release their farm equipment. What would take their place? To many plantation owners, slaves were nothing more than crop planters, pickers, weeders and free labor to serve them in any way they saw fit. Other plantation owners saw them more as family and maintained a much healthier environment.

Even though only 8% of the Southern population owned slaves, that percent of the population enjoyed most of the power in their states. They were the property owners. They are the ones that wanted to maintain the status quo. Their way of life was threatened. Their capital investment was threatened. Their profits were threatened. If we want to blame someone for that war, I'd go much further back in time and blame the greedy slave traders. The inhumane idea of stealing a black person or any person from their home to sell as slaves is appalling.

The North was more of an industrial economy not dependent on slave labor and during the war that economy aided the North's eventual victory. But some Northerners did own slaves.

To try to blame one item for the war is impossible. One can blame the "Power of the Dollar" just as much as the slavery issue. Slavery, State's Rights, the South's way of life and the threat to plantation owner's profits all enter the picture but President Lincoln's push to abolish slavery is the key trigger.

The above are the observations of Jim Skrocki

Volunteer at the Lake County Historical Society

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

John A. Sandy Editor

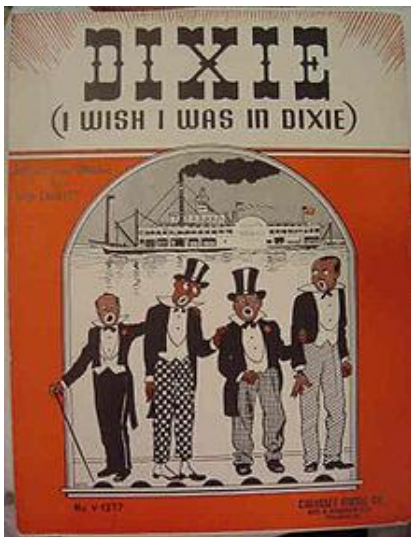
Staff Writers: Carl Dodaro Tom Horvath Franco Sperrazzo Joe Tirpak Norton London

Arlan Byrne Ted Karle Richmond Virginia Correspondent: Brent Morgan

Ohio's Civil War Songwriter by Arlan Byrne

On Saturday April 2nd 1859 Jerry Bryant, the owner, and director of Bryant's Minstrel Company ask his company's resident composer, Daniel Emmett, to write a new song for a walk around * to be added to Monday night's performance at the Mechanic's Hall in New York City. Bryant felt the show's ending wasn't strong enough. When Emmett returned Monday he gave Bryant a copy of a song he had written which he called "In Dixie's Land". Evidently Bryant wasn't very impressed because instead of using the song at the end of the show as he had intended; he stuck it in the middle. However, the audience that night was impressed; because "In Dixie's Land" immediately became a smash hit and spread like wildfire over the entire country.

Within weeks everybody was singing, dancing and marching to the new song. The songs popularity even spread overseas. It was a huge hit in London. Its debut in New Orleans resulted in eight standing encores. That fall Abraham Lincoln used it in his 1860 campaign for President; and although he couldn't carry a tune he loved music and for the rest of his life he said it was his favorite song.



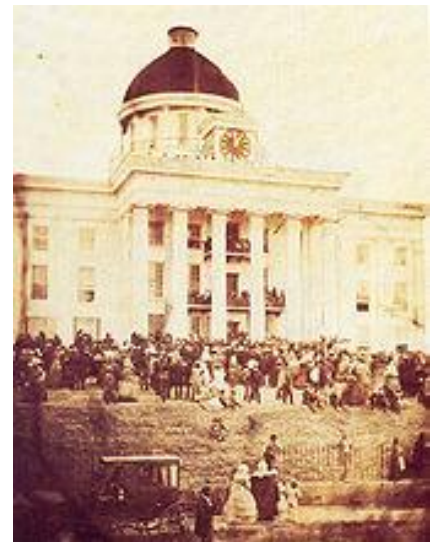
Emmett, unfortunately, had not gotten around to copywriting the song and immediately other would be composers popped up. So, on February 11, 1861, about a year after he had written it, he sold the rights to Firth and Pond Co., a New York City Music Publishing House, for \$300. They immediately turned their lawyers loose and soon gained legal possession.

But where was Dixie? There was no town or geographical place in the country named Dixie. New York City claimed the song might be about a wealthy Long Island farmer named John Dixie who could always be counted upon to give escaped slaves and poor Negroes a helping hand. Others said that since The First National Bank in New Orleans printed its bank notes in French, a \$10 dollar bill was called a Dix. As the bank grew, 'dixies' appeared all over the south; so maybe the entire Southern Confederacy was Dixie. At least that was what the Southern Secessionists of 1860 said. Emmett himself never said. Over his lifetime he gave many interviews about how he had written the song and each one was different. In some he said he had written it in a flash of inspiration. Sometimes he said it took him days, and sometimes he said it took him weeks. However during the war, when the South seemed to adopt "Dixie" as a semi official National Anthem, he did say, "If I had known what they were going to do with the song, I'd never have written the damn thing."

Jefferson Davis Inauguration photo below right, Library of Congress

The lyrics of Emmett's "In Dixie's Land", were written in the Negro dialect, and were mostly nonsense. Most minstrel show lyrics were. But some of the words in the first verse, "In Dixie Land I'll take my stand / To live and die in Dixie" seemed to strike a patriotic chord in Confederate hearts. With rewritten Southern lyrics it was performed between votes at the South Carolina Secession Convention in Charleston and at Jefferson Davis's Presidential Inauguration. It was also the most popular song for Confederate soldiers on the march, in battle, and in camp. "Dixie" soon became an integral and lasting part of the Southern lifestyle.

On April 10, 1865, the day after Lee surrendered to Grant to effectively end the Civil War; a crowd gathered at the White House for a few words from the President. As he concluded he asked if there was a band present. When assured there was, he said, "I propose now closing up by requesting you play a certain piece of music or a tune. I thought "Dixie" one of the best tunes I ever heard....I had heard that our adversaries over the way had attempted to appropriate it. I insisted yesterday that we had fairly captured it....I presented the question to the Attorney-General, and he gave his opinion that it is our lawful prize... I ask the band to give us a good turn



upon it.” Some historians feel that this was one of the actions Lincoln took immediately after the war to demonstrate his willingness to be conciliatory to the South and restore the Union as soon as possible.

Daniel Decatur Emmett was born in 1815 near Columbus, Ohio in the small town of Mount Vernon. His father was a farmer and blacksmith; and Daniel grew up doing the usual things boys in small towns in 1815 did. After a short stint in the army, where he got a rudimental music education, he joined the Minstrel Circuit where he remained the rest of his life, playing and composing music. Among the many songs Emmett wrote were “Turkey in the Straw”, “Blue Tail Fly”, “Jimmy Crack Corn”, and “Old Dan Tucker”.



Lincoln’s 2nd Inauguration photograph from the Library of Congress

When Emmett finally retired, he decided to go back to his roots. He bought some land in a woods in Mount Vernon and started to build a fancy retirement home all by himself. In about a year his wife visited him, took one look at the half finished cabin Emmett was working on, and immediately returned to Chicago. However, a few years later when she was finally persuaded to make a second visit, she liked the completed house and decided to stay. She remained with him until his death in 1904.

If you are interested in more information about ‘Ohio’s Civil War Songwriter’; every year Mount Vernon puts on the “Daniel Emmett Music and Art Festival.” This year’s Festival is August 11 – 14. More information can be found at [WWW. Daniel Emmet Music and Art Festival](http://WWW.DanielEmmettMusicandArtFestival.com)

- A minstrel show walk around can be compared to today’s musical production number, with the entire cast singing, dancing and performing.

14th President’s Civil War Journal by Franco Sperrazzo

Sept. 13th Meeting with Richard P. Muny: Four year NEOCWRT veteran Richard “Dick” Muny confided in me back on June 19th at the Lake County Historical Society that he had never given a presentation on his vast Civil War gun collection. He did not appear too apprehensive about giving one either. Dick always prepared, performs his due diligence. His impressive power point presentation was titled “Small Firearms of the Civil War.”



Judging by the turnout, of 32 members and a record setting 10 guests (a few soon to be members) his thorough effort went over with a big bang. His audience was able to see it, learn it, touch it and sense what it was like to imagine the time these weapons were commissioned for use. Kenny Godnavec conveyed to me recently how excited he was to be a “prop” for some of Dick’s demonstrations. Over 20 various firearms were displayed and enjoyed with explanations on screen. Rich Hudak (a collector) Pat Norris and Ted Karle contributed remarks during the Q&A.

My Fellow Cabinet Members and Guests: The NEOCWRT is truly a special breed of individuals that share the common bond of our guiding principles; education, fellowship equals quality. Many of you made valuable contributions to the success of Richard P. Muny’s program. The 9/11 commemorative with Joe Tirpak; John Sandy’s spring tour summary with Tim Barrett, Summer picnic and frolic with Mike Sears introducing the “2011 Jaegermeister Man, “Ted Karle honored by the E.O.U.V. German Gottscher Club. Steve Abbey presented the new membership information packets; Arlan Byrne with new Charter and Committee Members badges, Mike Driscole efforts at Office Max; Carl Dodaro and Terry Reynolds broke out the new 50/50 raffle; Lake County Historical inaugural Civil

War encampment by Tirpak & Muny, the treasurer's astute book work by Bill Meisner; and the itinerary and report of Norty London and Ted Karle on the Gettysburg Fall field trip. Our added appreciation to anyone whose name I may have omitted from our Sept 13th special gathering.

Thanks to the *Tibaldi family* at Dino's and their servers headed by *Doug Pennington* who did such a professional job-not to mention the great cuisine.

WRHS: On September 21nd, first Lady Cyndy & President Franco attended the "State of the Society" report hosted by Dr. Gainor B. Davis, President and CEO. She and board members highlighted significant accomplishments and challenges faced over the past fiscal year and the WRHS vision for the year 2012 and beyond. They are finally operating in the black and close to paying off their loan. Some of our members took advantage of the Genealogical recourses of the archival Library. We have a wonderful working relationship with Ann Sindelar, Reference Supervisor and Tim Beatty, Historical docent, willing to assist with your questions.



Gettysburg Fall Field Trip: October 21,22,23-

Everyone should have had the opportunity to examine the itinerary for our Gettysburg Field Trip. Our 14th excursion is on the horizon. Remember to RSVP with our delegated field trip coordinator, Mr. Ted Karle. Honorary NEOCWRT member **George Deutsch** will be our field leader. At this time, we have at least 12-13 members and spouses that have signed up along with members from Edinboro University of Pennsylvania and the Erie Civil War Round Table. This is a special weekend at Gettysburg and good hotel accommodations are at a premium.

Photograph of Scott Hartwig below right

Ted, Arlan and Pres Franco were privileged to met and hear D. **Scott Hartwig**, Supervisory Historian from Gettysburg, at the Erie Maritime Museum last month. He covered the events of Day Three like I have never heard them presented before. We mentioned to JET the need to schedule Mr. Hartwig on our venue for 2013. He is well worth the experience. **Stock Photographs of Gettysburg on the left above and below**

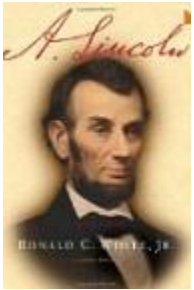


A Wilson Greene –Oct.

11th Meeting: Will Greene was our field guide at Pamplin Park in Petersburg, VA. in 2003 but a series of severe hurricanes ravaged the East coast and much of the South that year. As a result, we had to cancel our field trip since all National Parks and agencies were closed upon our arrival. Meeting Will was postponed. In spite of Hurricane Katrina and other tropical storms, we ultimately rendezvoused in the fall 2005. I worried that he would probe my understanding of what happened during the Battle of

the Crater, the underground tunnel explosion, and what were the decisive factors during the 1865 Petersburg Campaign . Mr. Greene put me at ease discussing the 2005 division winning Chicago White Sox beating out our beloved Indians. Will grew up on the south side of Chicago and attends minor league hockey and baseball games. I hope you will find him as bright, articulate, and engaging as I did. Next week he plans to bring copies of his book "Civil War-Petersburg". I hope that you have the opportunity to meet him in person. A. Wilson Greene ranks among the very best Civil War Historians and his lectures are both interesting and entertaining .

***A. Lincoln* by Ronald C. White, Jr. – a book review by Tom Horvath**



It's not often that a 680-page book can be considered an easy read, but this one is. A straight-up biography of Lincoln, the story is familiar, the writing is good and flows smoothly, and the author keeps the story interesting with some analysis and commentary. In addition to the standard sources, Mr. White had some newly discovered items and, for his analysis of Lincoln's thinking, uses hundreds of notes that Lincoln wrote for himself and kept in various places, including his hat.

Although the overall story is familiar, there are some differences. Mr. White generates more than normal respect for Thomas Lincoln, the president's father, and backs this up with facts and historical perspective. There is also clear evidence from Lincoln's notes that he was against slavery more firmly and earlier in his life than I understood.

Most volumes rely on Lincoln's speeches to determine his feelings on slavery. Those were political speeches, where the actions he proposed were limited by his understanding of the Constitution and moderated by what was acceptable to his constituency. What changed, during his administration, were his interpretation of the Constitution and his perception of the ability of blacks, as evidenced by his acceptance of them into combat and his moves to extend suffrage.

Another difference in perspective is the role that religion played in Lincoln's later life. Most volumes that I've read downplay religion in Lincoln's life. Mr. White, based somewhat on Lincoln's notes, proposes that religion and Phineas Gurley, pastor of the New York Avenue Presbyterian, had a definite impact on Lincoln's speeches, if not his thinking. Mr. White points to the increasing number of Biblical references in Lincoln's speeches as president.

As should be expected from the author of *The Eloquent President* and *Lincoln's Greatest Speech*, the author spends more time than others analyzing Lincoln's writings and speeches. From these analyses and other commentaries, it is obvious that Mr. White is a fan of Lincoln. Although his bias is there, it is not intrusive and he does acknowledge errors on Lincoln's part.

Obviously, this single volume is not nearly as extensive as Carl Sandburg's three-volume biography; nor is it as detailed as books that concentrate on small portions of Lincoln's life, such as *Team of Rivals*. For example, Mr. White spends very little time on Mary Todd Lincoln and her financial and mental problems – which had a significant impact on Lincoln. In discussing his choice of a cabinet, Mr. White does not even mention the offer of a cabinet position to Simon Cameron that was withdrawn and, ultimately, re-issued. Perhaps this telling and embarrassing incident was omitted on purpose to avoid reflecting negatively on Lincoln, or, perhaps, simply for the sake of brevity.

Despite omissions like these, Mr. White is able to present a good account of Lincoln's life. It was pleasant to read a more complete portrait of Lincoln after reading volumes that concentrated on portions or specific aspects of his life. This biography is not going to provide the reader with new, groundbreaking information about Lincoln, but it does provide a few new takes on portions of his life in an easy to read volume.

Published by Random House in 2009, the book is 796 pages long and includes notes, a bibliography, an index, and a number of illustrations scattered throughout. Amazon has a hard cover edition available for \$11.48, paperback edition from \$13.60, and the electronic Kindle edition for \$15.99. Barnes and Noble did not have the hard cover (\$35.00) available at the time of this writing, but the paperback was available for \$16.10, and their Nook ebook edition for \$15.99. Mentor Public Library owns two copies, while the ClevNet System owns thirty copies and has an electronic copy.