



# The Courier



## Northeast Ohio Civil War Round Table



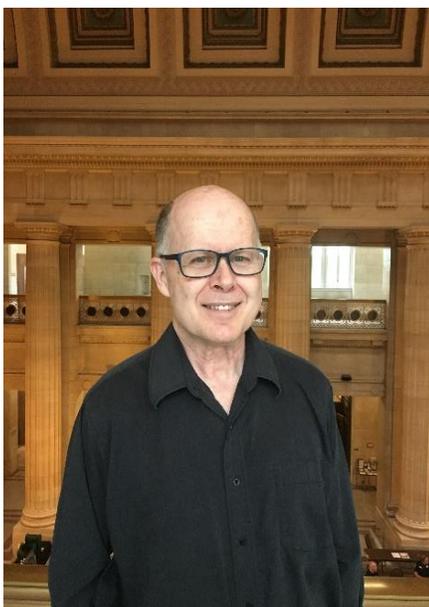
*Next Meeting: Tuesday, October 9, 2018, at 6 pm*

*Pine Ridge Country Club, 30601 Ridge Road, Wickliffe, Ohio*

*Speaker: Tim Barrett, Topic: "The Sacred Landmarks of Greater Cleveland, An Overview"*

*Reservations Required, Call Dave Lintern at 440 479 0890*

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



Nestled in Cleveland's historic Ohio City neighborhood is a large, century old, Victorian house. The owners have painstakingly labored for nearly four decades and spent a king's fortune in restoring this structure to its original turn of the century grandeur. **Tim Barrett and his wife Rebecca** raised two sons and a whole bunch of friendly cats in that old house. Mr. Barrett, a 1973 graduate of Kent State University with a B.S degree in Education, studied architecture and historic design preservation at the Cooper School of Art and Cleveland State University.

In 1979 he produced the first exhibit of the **History of Cleveland's Houses of Worship** for the Western Reserve Historical Society. For the past thirty-three years, Tim Barret has worked as a commercial architectural design consultant for the City of Cleveland's Department of Community Development, Storefront Program. He was instrumental in saving some of the fifty Catholic churches closed by the Cleveland Catholic Diocese.



Tim Barrett spent two years preparing a report and PowerPoint presentation, in which he identifies the priceless historic elements of Cleveland's Catholic Churches. "Before the 2009 announcement of the church closings, Mr. Barrett delivered his presentation to members of the former bishop, Richard Lennon's staff, the City of Cleveland's Landmarks Commission and the Cleveland Restoration Society. He also conducted several tours of the threatened sacred landmarks for the local chapter of the American Institute of Architects." *The photo on the left is an interior view of St. John Cathedral, located on 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Cleveland, Ohio.*

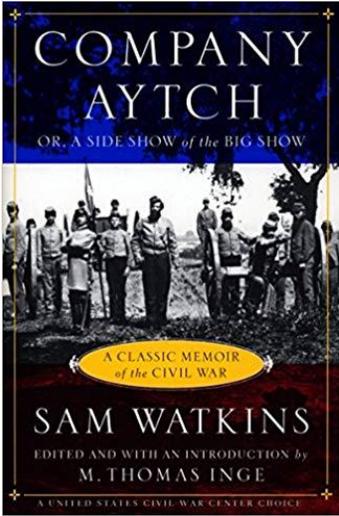
Tim Barrett has been a historic architectural design consultant for a number of publications including *The Encyclopedia of Cleveland History* by David vanTassel and John Grabowski, 1996, Indiana University Press.; *Those Wonderful Old Houses* by Alan Charles Foder, AIA Editor, 2003; and he co-authored *The Cleveland Neighborhood Commercial Rehabilitation Manual* by Frank Picirillo and Timothy H. Barrett, Cleveland, Ohio, 1989.

In May of 2010, Tim Barrett led our NEOCWRT members and guests on a tour of "**Historic Cleveland Churches.**" In May of 2011, we enlisted him again to introduce our club to the history of "**Cleveland's Ohio City and the Near Westside.**" This month, we invited Tim Barrett back to the NEOCWRT to make a presentation on the **Sacred Landmarks of Greater Cleveland.** Join us for this special presentation and remember to call Dave Lintern at 440 479 0890 with your reservations.

The amazing photograph on the right is a collection of images from Tim and Rebecca Barrett's Ohio City house decorated for Halloween.



## ***Company Aytch or A Side Show of the Big Show* by Sam Watkins – a book review by Scott Hagara.**



Many of you recall that Tom Hedge, a friend of our Round Table, donated a number of books to our group when he passed away. Included in his collection was a book that had long been on my reading wish list – “Company Aytch” by Sam Watkins. The book is “a classic memoir of the Civil War” (it even says that on the cover), and this edition was edited and with an introduction by M. Thomas Inge.

Sam Watkins’ book is a personal memoir of his experience in the Civil War. He was not a great leader of armies, did not plan great strategies, or even perform historic feats of bravery. He was just an ordinary, self-proclaimed “webfoot,” a private soldier that did what he was told to do, marched where he was determined to march, and did what he had to do to stay alive. He did not keep a journal, nor did he write many letters home. This book, in fact, was written many years after the war had ended and is based on his recollections first outlined in a series of articles written for his local newspaper in the early 1880’s. Mr. Watkins was quoted many times in Ken Burns’ television series *The Civil War*, and his story is entertaining and informative. It is a combination of history and a

little fiction.

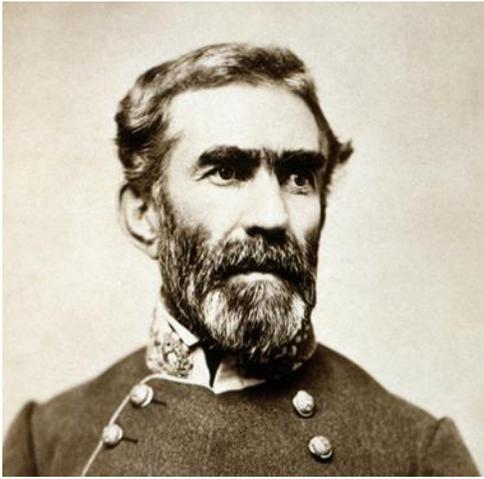
In the spring of 1861, when it appeared that war was certain and that Tennessee would secede, twenty-one-year-old Sam Watkins joined his neighborhood friends and enlisted in the local militia, the Bigby Grays in Mt. Pleasant, Tennessee. This group soon became the Maury Grays, and in May, 1861 was organized as Company H of the First Tennessee Infantry Regiment. They were outfitted and drilled, celebrated and honored by their fellow citizens, and then rushed to Virginia. They arrived after the battle of First Manassas, with Watkins and his comrades feeling that they had missed the war, envious of those that had fought and been wounded, for the wounded could return home as heroes.

First Tennessee first saw action in September, 1861 at Cheat Mountain in West Virginia, serving under General Robert E. Lee. That December, the unit was transferred to Virginia and the command of General Stonewall Jackson. The regiment fought in many of the most horrific battles of the Civil War, including Shiloh, Corinth, Perryville, Murfreesboro, Chattanooga, Missionary Ridge, the Hundred Day’s Battles, and the Atlanta, Franklin, and Nashville campaigns. Sam Watkins fought at all these battles and was wounded three times, always returning to his unit. Out of the 120 men who enlisted with the Sam Watkins in with Company H in 1861, he was one of only seven still serving at the end of the war.

*Sam Watkins is shown on the right.*

“Company Aytch” is written in a rather unorthodox style. It is a compilation of a number of stories. Watkins is an amazing storyteller and in his own words does “not pretend to write a history of the war” but tells the story of the common soldier. He offers a firsthand glimpse of the horror and brutality of war, with a vivid portrayal of the terror of battle and graphic descriptions of the carnage involved. The reader feels like he is at the front line, witnessing the death or injury of not just fellow soldiers, but beloved friends. One of my favorite parts of the book involves the touching tributes or eulogies that the author writes for his fallen comrades. Much of the book involves stories about the day to day experiences of the soldiers. It is almost like your grandfather recounting his adventures in a “homespun” manner. Watkins and his comrades in Company H enlisted for a term of twelve months. He describes the joy that his unit shared as they neared the end of that term and how they looked forward to going home.





They made fun of another unit that was foolish enough to sign on for the duration of the war. Much to the dismay of Company H, in April, 1862 they were informed that their enlistment had been extended for the duration of the war. With that action, the soldiers felt that they had become “conscripts” and not soldiers, with no rights and treated worse than slaves. From that time on, desertion was rampant, and the soldiers resigned themselves to a life of suffering, knowing that the war was going badly. Watkins describes the overall boredom, as well as the desperate condition of the soldiers as they endured brutal living conditions. The Confederate soldiers lacked supplies and much of their time was spent just trying to get rations and not starve, especially under the leadership of General Bragg, who was despised. Watkins writes that Bragg was hated more than the enemy. Photo of *General Braxton Bragg* is on the left.

I thoroughly enjoyed reading “Company Aytch.” Watkins writes in a style that makes it very readable and entertaining while taking the liberty to embellish a great deal. Much like my grandfather would do, showing compassion for comrades and the enemy, telling a tale many years after the fact. The book is more fiction than history, but I really appreciated a break from the typical civil war book. I guess I am, and always will be, a “webfoot” at heart.

“Company Aytch” was initially written in 1882, and this edition was printed by New American Library, edited by M. Thomas Inge, in 1999. Mr. Inges’ introduction is excellent with the background of Sam Watkins and the book. It includes a discussion of this work compared to similar works by Stephen Crane and Ambrose Bierce. The book is not available at the Mentor Public Library but can be ordered through SearchOhio or purchased through Amazon.



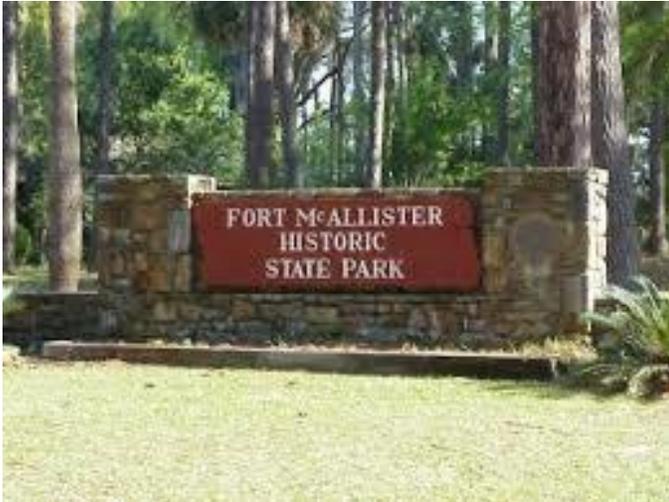
*All articles appearing in the Courier do not necessarily state or represent an endorsement of the facts, conclusions and opinions of the author(s) by the NEOCWRT or its membership.*

# Ft. McAllister, The Key to Georgia's Civil War

## Coastal Defenses by Paul Siedel

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During the U.S. Civil War, it became quite evident that the old style masonry type of fortress could no longer be counted on to protect coastal areas effectively. In response to this, the Confederacy built several earthen type fortifications to protect its inlets, rivers, and coves. Ft. Fisher, and Ft. Donaldson, are two examples. One such fortification was known as Ft. McAllister just south of Savannah, Georgia at the mouth of the Great Ogeechee River. Begun in 1861 the fort rose out of the rice fields and swamps of the McAllister Plantation in Bryan County. The walls of the fort were made from earth molded between timber embankments and covered with sod. Known initially as Genesis Point Battery the name was changed to Ft. McAllister shortly after completion.



Fort McAllister's significant part in the War came in January 1863 when Admiral DuPont of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron ordered Captain Thomas Drayton to test the new type of Monitor Class ships by attacking Ft. McAllister. If the fort could be taken the backdoor to Savannah would be opened. Federal troops could land at the mouth of the Ogeechee River and march north to the very defenses of Savannah. For three days the Ironclads, "Montauk," "Nahant," "Passaic," and "Patapsco" pounded the fort with eleven and fifteen-inch shells. The fort in return delivered her 32-pound shells with complete accuracy. In the end, neither side suffered any casualties excepting the fort's mascot "Tom Cat." Damage to the Ironclads was minimal, but it was proven that they could withstand a fire that would have destroyed any wooden ship. The fort, on the other hand, suffered much damage but because of the construction type it was quickly repaired during the night and was ready for action the next morning. It was

however because of the success of the monitor type ships that the U.S. Navy went ahead with the construction of several others. This engagement also paved the way for the assault on Charleston, South Carolina later that year.

Ft. McAllister played no significant part in the war after this. She unsuccessfully defended the blockade runner "Nashville" when the ship sailed under her guns for protection in 1863. The ship was destroyed, and the Fort's guns were useless against the monitor type warships of the U.S. Navy.

In December 1864 as Sherman closed in on Savannah, he needed to establish contact with the Atlantic Blockading Squadron, and Fort McAllister stood in his way. It was the key to Savannah and as the Georgia countryside had been "picked clean" Sherman needed to reduce Ft. McAllister in order reach the coast and supply his army.

The approaches to the fort had been lined with "torpedoes" or landmines, and Sherman considered this a criminal type of warfare. He, therefore, had captured Confederate soldiers proceed before his troops and disarm the mines. The fort was taken with little trouble and contact was made between the army and U.S. Navy off the coast. Shortly afterward Savannah fell to Sherman just before Christmas 1864.

Today one can visit the fort which is in pristine condition by taking Rt. 95 south and get off at exit 87 follow Rt. 17 and then County Rd. 144 to the Fort McAllister State Historic Park. About 10miles from Savannah and well worth the time to visit this historic and well maintained Civil War fort.



## CIVIL WAR JOURNAL of Franco M Sperrazzo

**September 11th Meeting, Keith A. Rocco:** When looking ahead to anticipating a historical art slide presentation, a musical concert, major sporting event, the festive holiday season or a special milestone occasion, a positive uplifting feeling one realizes is if the advanced billing lives up to the projected expectations. In the case of Keith A. Rocco, the lead up to our September 11, fall kickoff dinner gathering far exceeded what many members and guests believed would actually occur.



Northeast Ohio CWRT.

No need for me to restate the accomplishments of Mr. Rocco, or how he is revered by his peers and the scholars of the art and history world. Keith, as he reminded to refer to him is quite humble, rather engaging and truly delightful to share a dinner table with. President Dave Lintern, remarked about Keith to me when we formed our NEOCWRT program committee over 18 months ago. Dave stated how he was projecting forward to September 2018 because he had researched Keith's background and perused his body of work. It was 2011, when the honor of being our club's #14 President was bestowed upon me. Keith was our guest speaker that April through the recommendation of Ted Karle and George Deutsch. Keith did not disappoint us. John Sandy and I recently spoke with Cleveland Civil War Round Table Vice President Ellen Connally, and she thanked us for building the 3rd portion of his tour for their club and how well Keith was received following the Mahoning Valley CWRT and our group. One promise from me, it will not be 7 and a half years before we invite Keith Rocco back to

**Mentor Public Library: Leaders & Legacies of the Civil War, Life of Admiral Farragut:** Main Mentor Avenue campus, Wednesday October 10th at 12:00-1:00pm in the Village room. Hard to imagine David G. Farragut, served on active duty for 60 years in the United States Navy. A PowerPoint presentation will reflect on his personal life and examine his incredible career. You may bring snacks or a beverage. Reservations requested phone ahead: 440.255.8811. James A. Garfield Park Rangers & Lawnfield Site Volunteers will facilitate the program.



name of our featured speaker; program content & topic; times, location, agenda, 4-5 day RSVP notice, price & our organization website. These flyer will be displayed in Cuyahoga/Lake & possibly Geauga Regional Libraries. Also hotels, bookstores and whoever you (our members hand it over to promote & cultivate future membership growth & potential speakers). We encourage your participation & volunteerism!

**New NEOCWRT Business Cards:** We are overdue for new business cards. They will have our obvious outstanding club logo on front; established date 1997 & website. The back will have more room to list your name and other pertinent information to help recruit outstanding authors, historians, speakers, members & guests. Thanks for your distribution efforts in previous years. This method works.

### **Membership Directory/Roster Request for Final Quarter of the Calendar Year:**

We ask our members to respond by helping our stellar organization develop an updated **Membership 2019 Directory/Roster**. Steve Abbey, George Maier and this writer will have a sign up pad on the front entrance table for our next 3 meetings. We ask for your full name; address; land & cell phones; wife/partner; occupation/retired; member year; **Important accurate Email address. This is important data that will allow everyone to receive the Courier Newsletter & relevant added event notices.**

### **2019 Calendar Year Monthly Program New Flyer:**

We intend to incorporate a new monthly lecture series program information flyer pass out that will list: NEOCWRT logo; dates &

## The Strange and Obscure Facts of American Civil War History

In July 1861, President Lincoln ordered 18,000 poorly trained Union forces under General Irwin McDowell to invade the Southern Confederacy without a declaration of war as required by the US Constitution.



In March 1861, the Arizona Territory voted to join the Confederacy.

On April 27, 1861, President Lincoln suspended the writ of Habeas Corpus without the consent or approval of Congress as required by the U S Constitution.

President Lincoln closed down scores of newspapers, confiscated printing presses and imprisoned hundreds of newspaper editors without trial or due process, for writing articles that criticized the Lincoln Administration and the Union war effort. This violates the First Amendment of the U S Constitution.

In April of 1861, when the state of Virginia seceded from the union and joined the Confederacy, delegates from the northwestern counties of Virginia formed the Reorganized Government of Virginia. The new government of Virginia was recognized by President Lincoln as the official government of Virginia. It then permitted itself to form the state of West Virginia on June 20, 1863. President Lincoln approved the new state. He then gains two new Republican senators to help pass his legislative agenda. The US Constitution does not authorize a new state to be created without the consent and approval of the original state.

- On September 26, 1864, Union General Phil Sheridan's men began the systematic burning of a four countywide swath of farms in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley. Sheridan's men burned hundreds of barns, grist mills, fields of grain and slaughtered the livestock. The homes of most of the farmers were spared, but the people were left with virtually nothing to eat. Would Lincoln have been tried for war crimes if the South had won the war? Did the burning of the Shenandoah compel John Wilkes Booth to murder Lincoln?

