



THE COURIER



Northeast Ohio Civil War Round Table



Tuesday, February 14th, 2012 Meeting #119

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

Guest Speaker: Dr. Phillip Price

Topic: "The Oberlin – Wellington Rescue"

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

Reservations required Please call Mike Sears

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Dr. Phillip Price will introduce the Northeast Ohio Civil War Roundtable to a little known event that occurred nearby in the college town of Oberlin, Ohio, a stop on the Underground Railroad. In the 1850's slave hunters incurred the resentment of Oberlin's antislavery townspeople by kidnapping escaped slaves and freeborn blacks in northern Ohio, a wrath that came to a boil one day in August of 1858 when a runaway slave named John Price was abducted by southern bounty hunters and a U. S. Marshall acting under the provisions of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. Outraged, Oberlin college professors and students, in company with white and free black townspeople, rescued Price and hid him in a faculty home on campus. Later, 37 of the liberators would be indicted for violating the Fugitive Slave Act. They were eventually freed after a protracted and heated hearing but the "Rescue" and the arrests thrust the issue of states rights vs. civil rights and the ethical issues with the Slave Act into the forefront of national politics and conversation. The events in Oberlin were on the front page of almost every northern and southern paper pushing the nation toward a "tipping point" where war would indeed come.



Dr. Price has served as a Superintendent in both Ohio and Illinois since 1978 and has been an educator for 43 years. Prior to becoming a Superintendent he worked as an Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Business and prior to that served as a principal and teacher. He received his Ph.D from Miami of Ohio and has served as an adjunct professor at several universities in Ohio and Illinois throughout his career, teaching graduate level courses in leadership, school law, curriculum, administration and research. Dr. Price has served as the Superintendent of the Mayfield City Schools for the last 14 years. His professional activities include multiyear work with ETS Advisory Committee at Princeton University on the development of the latest version of the SAT test, being named as a U S Department of Education Representative to China and Japan, serving as an advisor to the Admissions Board at Miami University, being named Program Chair for a national superintendent's association and being qualified as a Baldrige Examiner. He was given the Vaughn Award for Excellence in Educational Leadership by the North Central Assoc. of Schools and in 2011 was named the Ohio Superintendent of the year. Dr. Price does many presentations each year at national conferences and historical societies on educational leadership, leadership lessons in film, Presidential leadership and on Abraham Lincoln.

CIVIL WAR JOURNAL by Franco M. Sperrazzo Events Coordinator

January 10th Meeting William Koeckert and Theodore Karle: Ted opened the meeting with a condensed version of the memorial program for our six previous comrades that had passed away from 2003-2010. We gained six new members in 2011 that were not present last January when Ted tastefully memorialized our friends with a “Tribute of Remembrance”. Unfortunately, Dr. Leslie West left us last May, so we added a streamer to our American Flag in his honor. Ted Karle once again brought a teacher from Mayfield Senior High School to play taps on trumpet at the appropriate moment. Music teacher, Brad Allen had the privilege and donated his stipend to his school’s band fundraising drive.

Bill Koeckert raised the roof and brought the house down with one of the most inspiring and compelling presentations we have ever had. His initial 30 minute talk ran approximately 1 hour and 40 minutes, filled with 68 years of committed service to America in WWII & the Korean Conflict. His war experiences recalled memories of stories he conveyed to his audience with vivid detail and fervor of spirit. Veteran Bill used no notes and only one prop- a 300 year old Japanese ceremonial sword that was given to Bill by a Japanese worker he had befriended . Bill is both proud and humbled by his professional and personal life adventures. Although his talk was a lengthy presentation, not a single person closed an eye. We are indeed fortunate to have this dedicated man in our organization. We salute him for his service to the United States of America and for the freedom he fought to preserve for all nations. God Bless You Lt. Col. William Koeckert!



Photographs from our December Holiday meeting provided by Cyndy Sperrazzo

2012 NEOCWRT Membership Dues: Second notice reminder to those who have not forwarded Treasurer Bill Meissner, with a separate check for \$55. You can mail William a check made out to NEOCWRT and mark 2012 club dues on the memo check line. William will be at the entrance door with Mike Sears, at our Feb.14th meeting. We have only raised our organization’s dues one time in 15 years. Fees help defray the cost of our numerous events, outside activities and charitable offerings.

WRHS and LCHS: Donations have been made to Western Reserve Historical and Lake County Historical Societies in the name of NEOCWRT. The funds we contribute are used at the discretion of both museums for their annual fund raising campaigns. We have tried to build solid relationships with both of these historic organizations through the efforts and support of our Membership & Executive Officers. Many of our renowned speakers, authors and historians enjoy visiting these enriched resources during their time with us. And many of our members have taken advantage of the free admission passes to WRHS. Do not hesitate to ask me when you wish to utilize them.

James A. Garfield at Mentor Public Library: The National Park Service in collaboration with the Mentor Library System will engage us with lecture 2 of their “Major Battles of the Civil War” series. The January 11 introductory program was “The Battle of Middle Creek”. President Garfield rose in rank to lieutenant colonel in the 42nd Ohio in this moderate battle of significance. On Wed. Feb 15, Noon -1:15pm the program title is “Fort Henry and Fort Donelson Examined”. Held in the library lower level Garfield Room, admission is free. You are welcome to bring your own lunch. This series runs the day after our NEOCWRT meeting.

Edwin C. Bearss Watch: About 13 months ago we announced the “Savant of American History” would be gracing the Mahoning Valley Youngstown club May 14th and our NEOCWRT Willoughby based roundtable May 15th. Through the unified due diligence of Gordy Morgan and JET Tirpak that reality is down to 90 days and counting, Stay tuned for more specifics on this special Spring event.

George Washington turns 280 Years Old: The Father of Our Country will be revered and praised by the Sons of the American Revolution, at his annual birthday celebration. The event will be held again at the Shaker Heights Country Club on February 22nd. For more specific details, please contact dual members of the NEOCWRT, Frank Moore, Chuck D. Richards, Dick Fetzer or C. Pat Norris.



On February 14, 2012, Dr. Phillip Price, Superintendent of the Mayfield City Schools and NEOCWRT member, will present, *“Oberlin – The Town that Started the Civil War”*. This presentation was originally slated for last year but our distinguished member and honorary February speaker took ill and had to defer to Norton London. Norty introduced us to “The Life and Times of Confederate President Jefferson Davis”.

Special Announcement: All MEMBERS- FYI: After seven years of keeping \$22 as the price of dinner at Dino’s Restaurant, increased costs for outside speakers has depleted our reserve funds. Therefore, starting with the Feb. 14th meeting, the cost for our abundant cuisine and great service will now be \$24 per person. The Executive Committee thanks you for your cooperation and understanding in implementing this new price policy. I am looking forward to being with you all next week. Franco # 14

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

John A. Sandy, editor

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Richmond, Virginia Correspondent: Brent Morgan

The Kent State University Museum's look at Civil War Fashion by Rebecca Byrne

In observance of the 150th anniversary of the Civil War, the Kent State University Museum is currently presenting "On the Home Front: Civil War Fashions and Domestic Life." Much of this exhibit consists of clothing worn by Northern women, especially from Ohio, during the 1860s. The display includes, in part, wedding and party dresses, informal commonplace dresses worn around the house, corsets and undergarments, and coats and capes. Also shown are men's and children's attire and various diverse remembrances from this period.



The casual Civil War observer is able to learn fascinating tidbits about everyday life from the plaques and excerpts of letters that appear with the corresponding pieces. The war and an exceptionally high infant mortality rate brought death and devastation directly to many families. One woman expressed frustration with the long mourning period, noting how the preponderance of severe black apparel was affecting the mood of her town, not to mention the fashion scene.

Memorabilia took on a new, more sentimental value in the 1860s as folks searched for ways to commemorate their loved ones. People had long been keeping locks of hair from family members as treasured keepsakes. By the mid-nineteenth century, human hair was being woven into intricate patterns and wreaths. Some examples of these can be viewed, along with jewelry, pictures, tinctures, and other mementos.

While the preservation of these articles is quite remarkable, Curator and Assistant Professor Sara Hume stated in an interview that many patches and repairs can be seen upon closer examination. She laughingly says the items in the exhibit have benefited from the low lighting employed by the Museum. One of the dresses has a large rip under the arm that threatens to take the sleeve entirely off. The clothing is kept in a temperature and humidity controlled environment and, when not on display, the items are wrapped in acid-free paper. *Photograph above left from the Nov. 2, 2011 Plain Dealer*



Most of the garments belonged to women of the upper class. However, one dress in particular is simple and plain, in the style of middle order women, as is the children's clothing, according to Ms. Hume. There was heavy communication between the United States and Great Britain during this time, and the fashions shown have a definite European influence.

The photograph on the left, is from the Nov. 2, 2011 Plain Dealer

Many of the pieces on display are part of the Kent State University collection, donated by Shannon Rodgers and Jerry Silverman upon creation of the Fashion School. Some items were borrowed from the Western Reserve Historical Society, and some donations were given specifically for the Civil War exhibit. Ms. Hume, a Ph. D. History candidate, says the exhibition has been well-received by both the public and student communities. This presentation is a fascinating collection of primary sources; the effects of the Civil War on fashion and clothing are remarkable and should not be overlooked. "On the Home Front: Civil War Fashions and Domestic Life" is on display until August 26, 2012, on the Museum's second floor. Visit <http://www.kent.edu/museum/exhibits> for more information.

Editor's Note: The Northeast Ohio Civil War Roundtable Spring Field Trip is scheduled for Saturday May 19, 2012 and will include a visit to the Kent State History Museum. The details for this event will be forthcoming.

KING COTTON – THE POLICY OF THE CONFEDERATE STATES GOVERNMENT AND AN EDITORIAL AGAINST IT, PUBLISHED 150 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH. Compiled by Carl Dodaro

When I came across this article on a page on the internet, it surprised me because I thought that it was only thru after-the-fact hind-sight that we could see the problems in the “king cotton” diplomacy believed in by Southerners and the Confederate Government during the first two to three years of the war. It seems that almost everything written about “king cotton” caused me to believe that it was a unanimously accepted as the best policy by all Southerners, the best policy to lure England and France into recognizing the Confederacy. And yet here is an editorial, written by a “T.M.” from Cuthbert, Georgia, pointing out the problems with “king cotton” diplomacy and doing it before the first anniversary of the firing on Fort Sumter, before the first real blood-letting of the Civil War at Shiloh, before the C.S.S. Virginia threatens the U.S. Fleet in Hampton Roads. It was written at a time when the Confederate States of America was at its zenith, and there didn’t seem to be much to stop its existence as a new member as one of the nations of the world. And yet “T.M.” didn’t see it that way.

Published in the MACON DAILY TELEGRAPH (Macon, Georgia) on February 27, 1862:

“COTTON IS KING AND WILL SUBJUGATE THE SOUTH”

Mr. Clisby: I believe it is proper at this time of peril with our beloved country that every man, woman, and child should lay their shoulder to the wheel and afford all the aid possible. There has much been published through your excellent paper upon the subject of planting a crop of cotton the present year, and as success of our arms, and the freedom and independence of our country greatly depend upon that crop that will be planted in the course of the next few weeks, I wish to give my feeble aid in making a fair statement, hoping thereby to help the farmer to come to a correct conclusion upon the subject. The question stands thus: if an average crop of cotton is planted in the South, we will be subjugated by the North. If no cotton is planted, and corn and meat is produced in great abundance, not Lincoln with his hellish host can conquer so brave a people as compose the Southern Confederacy. The Gulf States must raise provisions or we shall be whipped. Let us look honestly and fairly at the condition of things: Tennessee can’t more than make a supply for her home consumption the present year, Kentucky can’t possibly make her food with the great army drifting over her bosom. Missouri is in worse condition. North Carolina cannot make a support. Virginia is in as bad a condition as she can be, all her most productive land lies on her water courses, and is, and must be for some time to come, the campground of two great armies. In fact, South Carolina will make but little rice, and it will take her best to make a support.

The small planters in the South have supplied the cities and towns with provisions, and, at least, two-thirds of the small planters are in our army. The farmer must be blind to his own interest, and the welfare of his country, that will plant more cotton than to keep in seed. If they make cotton, it is now a fixed fact; they will find no market for it. The delusion of foreign intervention, so far as to lift the blockade, has now vanished, and when broken up, the brave volunteers of the South will have the honor of doing it, and before they can succeed several more crops will have been planted. If cotton is planted, where is the planter to get bagging and rope to pack it in? It can’t be purchased at any price. So long as the war lasts, there will be a good cash market for provisions, and it will be after the present time impossible to sell enough cotton to pay taxes. Farmers of the South awake to your danger, and rally to the support of your bleeding country. If you plant cotton we must be the slaves of your slaves and Lincoln. If you plant grain and produce provisions, we may expect the help of God and we shall be free and independent, yes, the greatest, the most prosperous, and happy of all the nations upon the earth.

T.M.
Cuthbert, February 24th, 1862

I wonder if things would be different, the history we know today be different, if “T.M.” was replaced with the name Jefferson Davis?

The editorial is from NEWS IN HISTORY.COM quoting from the MACON DAILY TELEGRAPH, FEBRUARY 27th, 1862 edition published in Macon, Georgia.

Information on “king cotton” diplomacy can be found in the HISTORICAL TIMES ILLUSTRATED ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE CIVIL WAR, Patricia L. Faust, editor, as well as Wikipedia and many other internet sources.

Destiny of the Republic by Candice Millard – a book review by Scott Hagara

As a life-long resident of Lake County, I am almost embarrassed to admit how little I knew about one of the area's favorite sons – James A. Garfield. Given the NEOCWRT's active involvement with 2012's events taking place at Lawnfield, it seemed like the time to learn more about this great man.



James A. Garfield was born into poverty, but through a ferocious desire for knowledge and great work ethic became a noted scholar. His academic career was highlighted by becoming president of the Western Reserve Eclectic Institute, now known as Hiram College, at the ripe old age of 26. In 1859 he was elected an Ohio state senator and then enlisted in the Union Army at the start of the Civil War. Garfield led his troops of the 42nd Ohio to a crucial victory at the Battle of Middle Creek and was promoted to the rank of brigadier general in 1862. That same year, he was elected to the U.S. Congress and later asked by President Lincoln to resign his army commission in order to serve in Congress. In the years immediately following the Civil War, the country dealt with territorial expansion and reconstruction in dealing with the southern states. Garfield led the Appropriations Committee under President Grant, and he was a passionate advocate of the freed slaves.

Photograph on the left of President James Garfield from the National Archives.

Enter Candice Millard's new book, *Destiny of the Republic*. This book's subtitle is "A Tale of Madness, Medicine and the Murder of a President." It is not really a biography of Garfield, but gives a great account of life in America during the period around 1880. The story really gets going with the presidential election of 1880. It documents the political divisions within the Republican Party that resulted in Garfield's nomination, despite his continued desire not to run for President. The rivalries between the major players at the time, especially Roscoe Conkling, U.S. Grant, and Chester Arthur, are highlighted and very interesting. The back room negotiations and in-fighting were not unlike political positioning in today's era. All of this was not lost on Garfield, as he grew increasingly frustrated with the back room deals required to become president.

The book includes the story of a deranged young man, Charles Guiteau, who shot President Garfield in July, 1881. Guiteau was a troubled man who came to believe that he was serving God by removing the president. He had stalked President Garfield for weeks, and prior to the shooting prepared a letter explaining that "the President's tragic death was a sad necessity but it will unite the Republican party and save the Republic." He believed that he would reap a financial windfall by creating demand for a book he had written. Guiteau was hanged on June 30, 1882, two days before the anniversary of the shooting.

Photo of Charles Guiteau from the Library of Congress

As many are aware, the shooting of President Garfield did not need to be fatal. The author documents the medical care, or the poor medical care, that resulted in his death. A remarkable drama took place as doctors fought for an opportunity to treat the injury, but ultimately was responsible for his death. Garfield's wounds were treated with a minimum amount of antiseptics, with repeated probing and draining by dirty fingers and non-sterile implements. The attending physicians believed that the wounds were not going to be fatal, and struggled to contain the infections that slowly, and painfully, overtook him. Garfield's spirit remained strong for much of the ordeal, but he passed away in September, 1881, roughly 100 days after the shooting. Dr. D. Willard Bliss, the chief surgeon attending the president, had earlier stated that "if I can't save him, no one can." He seemed to bungle the medical treatment of the president. The American public, which devotedly followed daily medical updates to his condition, was devastated when President Garfield died.



Another subplot presented by the author involved Alexander Graham Bell. He was working to develop a medical device that would locate the bullet that remained in the president. The drive to perfect this device, as well as discussion about Bell's struggles and triumphs with other inventions, was interesting, but kind of lost in the overall narrative of President Garfield's death.

One last tidbit from the book was the lack of Secret Service protection for the president. After Lincoln's assassination, the Secret Service was created. Their primary duty was to prevent counterfeiting, not to protect the president. There was really no desire to surround any president with bodyguards, and Garfield had remarked that "assassination can no more be guarded against than death by lightning, and it is best not to worry about either".

I highly recommend this book, as it was informative as well as interesting. It was hard to put down. I enjoyed learning about Garfield, as he really was an inspiration. Devoted to his wife and family, as well as his country, it is a shame that he did not have longer to serve. He was a healthy president for only 100 days, and had begun work to eliminate some of the political cronyism prevalent at the time. His honesty seemed rare when compared to the other political characters and he seemed destined for a productive time in office. I have to also admit that it was neat to see Mentor, and Lawnfield, mentioned prominently throughout the book.

Destiny of the Republic was written by Candice Millard, and published by Doubleday in 2011. Multiple copies are available at the Mentor Public Library and Morley Library, as well as available at Amazon for \$18.56.