

November, 2004

418th Meeting

Vol. 26 #3

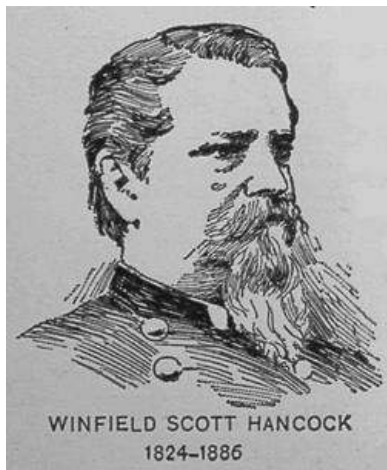
*Tonight's Program:*

## Winfield Scott Hancock

Winfield Scott Hancock was born February 14, 1824 in Montgomery Square, Pennsylvania. One of identical twins, he became a soldier, while his brother, Hilary, became an attorney in Minnesota.

A West Point graduate of the class of 1844, he served with distinction in the Mexican War. Hancock was appointed a brigadier general of volunteers on the outbreak of the Civil War and served in the Peninsular campaign of 1862. In May 1863, he was made head of the II Corps, Army of the Potomac, which he led for most of the remaining two years of the war. He served with distinction at Gettysburg, where he was wounded, and participated in the Overland Campaign in 1864. He left the Army of the Potomac in late 1864.

As a major general after the war, he commanded various army departments, including the military division composed of Louisiana and Texas. Although great discretionary power had been conferred upon him, Hancock insisted on the maintenance of the civil authorities in their "natural and rightful dominion." This stand enraged some Republicans, who were counting on military power to protect black and white Republicans in the South, but his policy won him the support of the Democrats, who nominated him for the presidency in 1880. After narrowly losing the election to James A. Garfield, he returned to military life.



*Tonight's Speaker:*

## Daniel G. Zeiser

Dan has been a student of the Civil War since his childhood. A history major in college, the Round Table has permitted him to continue his fondness for historical figures such as George Thomas. He has contributed many articles for the Charger and is known for his quirky, yet scholarly, pieces.

Dan has been a member of the Round Table since 1992 and is a past president. He currently serves as the Editor of the Charger.

Dan is married and has three children. He appreciates their patient listening to his historical ramblings.

*Date:* **Wednesday,  
November 10, 2004**

*Place:* **The Cleveland  
Playhouse Club  
8501 Carnegie Ave.**

*Time:* **Drinks 6 PM  
Dinner 7 PM**

*Reservations:* **Please Call  
JAC Communications  
(216) 861-5588**

*Meal choice:* **Veal Parmagiana  
or Vegetarian Pasta**

## CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

FOUNDED 1957

*President:* **Mel Maurer** (440) 808-1249  
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Editor - THE CHARGER - Dan Zeiser

### Cleveland Civil War Roundtable Past Presidents

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1998 John Moore	1974 Nolan Heidelbaugh
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1996 John Sutula	1972 Bernard Drews
1995 Norton London	1971 Kenneth Callahan
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1982 John Harkness	1958 George Farr, Jr.
1981 Thomas Geschke	1957 Kenneth Grant

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### NOVEMBER, 2004

Our October speaker, John Marszalek, took us inside the mind of the subject of his latest book – Henry Wager Halleck. (“Henry W. Halleck: Commander of All of Lincoln’s Armies”). It was a scary trip but maybe appropriate for Halloween month. I doubt that anyone listening to John changed whatever opinion they had of General Halleck – that was not his intention – but I think all left with a better understanding of the man. We still have some forms available for anyone wishing to order the Halleck book which has just been selected as a History Book Club offering.

Former CCWRT president, Charger editor and Quizmaster extraordinaire, Dan Zeiser will speak to us this month on Winfield Scott Hancock. Knowing Dan and his research, we will soon know the heroic Hancock very well. As if to prepare, Dan won last month’s featured wine – “Winfield Scott White.” This month’s wine will be “Zeiser Zinfandel.” Be sure to get your tickets.

A recent article in the Plain Dealer reminds us that when we win a fight to preserve historic ground, the battle is only half over – the second battle: to properly maintain the ground. The article stated that budget crunches have led Gettysburg and the other 387 sites managed by the National Park Service cut back hours, maintenance, and interpretative programs, and even close facilities.

One historic site - owned by the Western Reserve Historical Society - that is not only being maintained but also improved is Hale Farm and Village in Bath, Ohio. When Hale Farm re-opens next April, it will be 1861 and the country will be on the brink of Civil War. Its theme will be “Citizens and Soldiers: Life in Northeast Ohio During the Civil War.” The village will then progress through each year of the war ending with 1865. A spokesperson told me they plan to present the impact of the war on civilians on the Ohio home front. It is another reason to look forward to spring as winter arrives.

I look forward to seeing you on the  
10<sup>th</sup> ... *Mel Maurer*

**CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE  
2004/2005 SCHEDULE**

September 8, 2004



Lincoln and Douglas

**Voices of the  
Civil War:  
D o u g -  
las, Lincoln,  
and Echoes on  
the Prairie**

**George Buss**

October 13, 2004

**Henry  
W.  
Halleck**



**John Marszalek**

November 10, 2004

**Winfield Scott  
Hancock**

**Dan  
Zeiser**



December 8, 2004



**Ghosts of  
Gettysburg**

**Neil  
Glazer**

January 12, 2005

**The Great Debate**

*Which is the best book, fiction or  
non-fiction, on the Civil War?*

**Moderator: William Vodrey**

February 9, 2005

**Stonewall  
Jackson in the  
Valley**  
**Bob Boyda**



March 9, 2005

**Myths of  
Shiloh**

**Tim Smith**  
Shiloh National Park Historian



April 13, 2005

**Abraham  
Lincoln**  
Portrayed by  
**Jim Getty**



May 11, 2005

**U. S. Grant Seen  
and Heard**

**Harold Holzer**



## BROTHERHOOD FOREVER

College fraternities have a number of well-known reputations, some good, some bad. Gettysburg College's fraternities are no different, with the attributes of brotherhood, friendship, and service, as well as the notoriety of being the places to go for revelry on a Friday or Saturday night.

The Sigma Nu House on West Broadway is known for eerie footsteps, levitations, and the sounds of doors opening and closing when no one has entered or left. Along with it are a number of other houses, once privately owned that now shelter fraternity men — and apparently some other beings as well.

The Theta Chi House stands on Carlisle Street. The house was built by Col. Charles H. Buehler. Buehler, in his youth, attended Pennsylvania (now Gettysburg) College for two years and then became involved in publishing the local newspaper. When the Civil War broke out he enlisted and spent two years serving. Returning to Gettysburg after his service, he built the house in 1869, one of the first constructed north of the railroad.

Evidence of the ethereal nature of supernatural tales is the fact that the events that were said to have brought on the unexplainable occurrences are often different in their beginnings. Obviously, the telling of tales through the generations can account for the differences. Two legends have emerged from the lore of the Theta Chi House, both of which revolve around the cellar, either of which could be the genesis for the strange happenings recorded over the years.

The first of the legends of the Theta Chi House records that many years ago, one of the brothers, in spite of health ordinances in Gettysburg proscribing certain quirky disposals of the dead, requested, and was granted his request, to be buried in the basement of the old house. Someone — perhaps some new brother who grew squeamish at the thought of a body sleeping eternally below where he slept — apparently reported this grisly last request and, in spite of the deceased's desire to spend eternity with "the brotherhood," the body was removed to a more appropriate cemetery and there laid to rest.

Shortly afterward, odd — and even bizarre — events began to take place in the house. Lights in a certain room would suddenly extinguish. A trip to the switch and a flick would turn them back on again. A query of other brothers would reveal that no other lights had flickered during that time indicating a power failure or blown fuse. It was as if someone simply wanted the lights off in just that room.

Creaking noises, sometimes like footsteps, sometimes like floorboards buckling, would emanate from halls and rooms when no one was there to make the noises. Rapping noises (which some researchers wish to attribute to interior pipes or tree limbs outside) were heard inside the house. Doors left open would slowly swing shut, even on windless days. These same doors, on other occasions, would slowly swing open, as if allowing someone out of the rooms. Student researchers have given excellent, documented explanations for most of the occurrences, but some of the occupants are convinced that they are the manifestations of a fraternity member long dead who was first granted his deathbed wish — then had it taken away — to spend eterni-

In anticipation of next month's speaker, the above article was reprinted, not in its entirety, from *Ghosts of Gettysburg III* by Mark Nesbitt. Mr. Nesbitt is the author of a number of books on Gettysburg. The above selection was taken from the third of a series of six books on various ghosts of Gettysburg connected to the battle. Mr. Nesbitt also operates the Ghosts of Gettysburg tours, which take patrons in and around the town to learn of unexplainable sightings and, perhaps, see a ghost. You can learn about Mr. Nesbitt, the Ghosts of Gettysburg tours, and more at [www.ghostsofgettysburg.com](http://www.ghostsofgettysburg.com).

ty with his brothers.

The second of the legends is that of man named Thompson. Current research fails to indicate whether Thompson was an owner or just a tenant in the house. Either way, brothers in the 1980s called a room in the basement, "Thompson's Room," identified thus because it was in this room that the mysterious Thompson allegedly killed his wife and buried her. Thompson fled the area, but, like some character out of an Edgar Allen Poe story, he was driven to imprudent actions by his guilty conscience. He returned to Gettysburg, confessed his guilt, and, apparently deciding that official justice was not quick enough to suit his own nagging conscience, hanged himself.

From this second legend comes the documented story of how one of the brothers who graduated in 1980 had walked into the house and heard muffled voices coming from the room which is situated right above "Thompson's Room." Walking closer to the room he realized that the door was closed. He also realized that he did not recognize the voices as belonging to any of the brothers. He knocked on the door and the voices stopped. He opened the door, and to his astonishment, the room was empty.

Another brother was getting ready for bed and had turned off his light. He had crawled into bed and had begun to doze off when the light came back on. The switch of was a dimmer variety, the type one pushes to turn on and off again. He got out of bed, pushed the switch to turn off the lights and got back into bed. Just as he was nodding off, again the lights came back on. Finally, after turning the lights off a third time, they remained extinguished, though the student's imagination certainly burned more brightly after the incident.

Late in 1981 some of the brothers were partying in what they call the "Mystic Rites Room" on the third floor. Someone had brought up the topic of ghosts, and the discussion proceeded in that direction for some time. Finally, one of the brothers excused himself to go to bed.

When he crawled into bed, his reading light was hanging on the wall behind his bunk, just beyond the side of his bed. The light had fallen from the nail a few times before, and always dropped straight down and landed on the floor. The next morning he awoke, rolled over, and found the lamp had come off the nail again. But this time, instead of crashing to the floor directly below, it was lying on the bed right next to him, placed there by some unseen hand as if to remind him that the living were not the only ones occupying the house.

When he told the brothers about the incident the next day, one of them scoffed and said "Thompson must have done it!" As if to remove all doubt, a light which had been clamped to an object suddenly clicked off, fell to the floor and broke. The six or seven others in the room, including the house chef, were "freaked out," as the interview goes. When their courage had returned, they examined the light. Some remembered that the lamp had never come unclamped before, and, in order to be removed, had to be physically unclamped and pulled off the object by someone.

Other feats of levitation were performed in the presence of the brothers. A full beer resting upon a silent stereo speaker, "floated out before falling" to the floor. Falling off of a roaring speaker can be explained, but witnesses confirmed that it levitated and moved forward for a moment before crashing to the floor. The same thing happened, in another room, to a large brandy snifter sitting upon a book case. Indeed, music was playing in the room, but the recording had stopped and there was some length of silence, when the several people watched as the glass snifter "fell" the two or more feet from the book case to the wooden desk so gently that it did not even break, barely rolled, and stopped on its side, almost as if someone had carefully lowered it to the desk.

The previous stories from *Ghosts of Gettysburg III* were brought to the Charger's attention by William Allport, a member of the Round Table since 1993. Bill attended Gettysburg College and was a member of Theta Chi. He recalls levitating glasses of beer, but swears the alcohol had nothing to do with it.

## **SIGNIFICANT NOVEMBER CIVIL WAR DATES**

### **1861**

**NOVEMBER 1**— General Winfield Scott relinquishes his post as General-in-Chief; George B. McClellan assumes command.

**NOVEMBER 6**— Jefferson Davis is elected President of the Confederate States of America. The *USS Jacinto* stops the British packet ship *Trent* and removes James Mason and John Slidell.

### **1862**

**NOVEMBER 6**— James Longstreet and Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson are promoted to Lieutenant General.

### **1863**

**NOVEMBER 9**— The *USS Adger* captures the blockade runner *Robert E. Lee*, one of the most successful blockade runners to date, having run the blockade twenty-one (21) times.

**NOVEMBER 19**— President Lincoln gives the Gettysburg Address, largely viewed as disappointing at the time.

**NOVEMBER 23**— The Battles for Chattanooga open when George Thomas's Army of the Cumberland takes Orchard Knob, a small hill south of Chattanooga.

**NOVEMBER 24**— The Battle of Lookout Mountain, also known as the Battle Above the Clouds, is fought as part of the Battles for Chattanooga. Joseph Hooker's 11th and 12th Corps took the Confederate position.

**NOVEMBER 25**— The Battle of Missionary Ridge, the final stroke in the Battles for Chattanooga occurs. Thomas's Army of the Cumberland is again victorious when William Sherman's Army of the Tennessee was unable to dislodge Patrick Cleburne from Tunnel Hill.

**NOVEMBER 27**— John Hunt Morgan and some of his officers escape from the Ohio State Penitentiary in Columbus.

**NOVEMBER 29**— The Battle of Knoxville. James Longstreet's only independent command ends in failure at Fort Sanders.

**NOVEMBER 30**— Braxton Bragg receives a telegram from Richmond accepting his resignation. He later becomes military advisor to Jefferson Davis.

## 1864

**NOVEMBER 8**— Abraham Lincoln is reelected President over George B. McClellan by a fifty-five percent (55%) majority. The soldiers of the various Union armies support him overwhelmingly over McClellan.

**NOVEMBER 15**— Sherman destroys what is left of Atlanta.

**NOVEMBER 16**— Sherman leaves Atlanta and begins his March to the Sea.

**NOVEMBER 25**— Confederate arsonists are arrested in New York City with chemical bombs. Their plot to set fire to the city is foiled, although they had managed to set fire to ten (10) hotels, including the Belmont, Metropolitan, Saint James, and Astor House, as well as the Barnum Museum.

**NOVEMBER 30**— The Battle of Franklin, visited by the Round Table on this year's field trip. John Bell Hood, angry at his missed opportunity at Spring Hill, orders a frontal assault by most of his Army of Tennessee. Twenty-two thousand (22,000) Confederates must march over two (2) miles of open ground, against entrenched Union men. The Confederates lose heavily, suffering over six thousand (6000) casualties. Six southern generals were killed, including Patrick Cleburne.

### **A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF TURNER ASHBY 1828-1862**

Ashby was a Confederate General whose death in combat seemed to typify the doomed gallantry of the South's military efforts. He was from an old Virginia family. His grandfather had fought in the Revolution and father had fought in the War of 1812. Turner was opposed to secession in principle, but, as a planter and grain dealer, he defended the practice of slavery. He personally organized a troop of mounted volunteers to ride to Harper's Ferry when he heard of John Brown's raid, but he arrived too late to take action. When Virginia seceded, Ashby immediately organized another troop of horsemen that, incorporated into the 7th Virginia Cavalry, he led in the early operations in the Upper Potomac. In the spring of 1862, Ashby helped cover Jackson's retreat to Swift Run Gap, but by late May he was pursuing the retreating Federals under Banks. On May 27, Ashby was commissioned a brigadier general, by which time he was commanding a cavalry brigade that was fighting rearguard actions to protect Jackson's army as it retreated from the Shenandoah Valley. On June 6, 1862, Ashby was killed by federal troops.

*Taken from the Civil War Almanac (Bison Books, 1983)*

**AVAILABLE NOW! CCWRT T-Shirts and POLO Shirts.**

For years members have wondered why we do not have shirts with our Charger logo on them. Well, now we do. We have made arrangements for T-shirts or Polo shirts in light or dark gray to be made to our individual orders. Just complete the following form and get it to me with your money and you will have your shirt(s) in time for the holidays. We will have samples of the shirts at our next meeting if you are interested.

**Name            T-Shirt (\$18)   Polo(\$20)   Light Gray   Dark Gray   Size (S,L, XL)   Amount**

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**NEXT MONTH'S SPEAKER**

**NEIL GLAZER  
GHOSTS OF GETTYSBURG**

