

February, 2006

430th Meeting

Vol. 27 #6

Tonight's Program:

**Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain:
Scholar, Citizen, Soldier**

Historical prominence comes not only from accomplishment, but also from serendipity - the fortuitous opportunity to perform deeds that deserve a place in history. For those in wars, such opportunities are plentiful, but many do not survive their deeds and cannot enjoy the accolades or even perceive the short-term impact of their deeds. The subject of the February Roundtable meeting, Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, commanded a small unit at a critical moment in one of the most decisive battles of the Civil War and survived to see the results of his decisions and bask in the admiration he rightly earned. As such, Chamberlain had ample opportunity to affect history and enjoy his legacy. Chamberlain lived his heroic reputation so well that it almost seems that he was preparing for it as he ordered the charge down Little Round Top. His long postwar career cannot, without more, explain why he is held in such high esteem today. The reputations of many wartime heroes suffer in their post-war lives. Perhaps lasting heroism entails more than wartime bravery and achievement, requiring also a breadth of character beyond the traits of an effective warrior. By this criterion, Chamberlain merits high marks, because he was an intellectual who could comprehend the significance of his momentous wartime actions, and because he possessed the talents and character to build on these achievements in his postwar life. Chamberlain embodied more than just the skills of a warrior, and he is, therefore, aptly described as a "Scholar, Citizen, Soldier."

Tonight's Speaker:

William F. B. Vodrey

William F.B. Vodrey is a magistrate of Cleveland Municipal Court. He has often spoken to this and other groups about the Civil War. He was president of the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable in 2000-2001, is a member of the Civil War Preservation Trust and of the Ohio Historical Society, and is a former reenactor with the 51st Ohio Volunteer Infantry, Co. B. Through his many efforts on the Roundtable's behalf, William continues to make valuable contributions to the Roundtable.

Date: **Wednesday,
February 8, 2006**

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: **Roast Round of
Lamb or Vegetarian Dinner**

CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

FOUNDED 1957

President: **Dave Carrino** (440) 843-9088
Vice President: **John Fazio** (330) 867-1535
Secretary: **Marilyn DeBaltzo** (440) 461-6804
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Lisa Kempfer
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website: clevelandcivilwarroundtable.com

email: a-bell@adelphia.net

Editor - THE CHARGER - Dan Zeiser

Cleveland Civil War Roundtable Past Presidents

2005 Mel Maurer	1980 Charles Spiegle
2004 Warren McClelland	1979 William Bates
2003 Maynard Bauer	1978 Richard McCrae
2002 Bill McGrath	1977 James Chapman
2001 William Vodrey	1976 Milton Holmes
2000 Bob Boyda	1975 Thomas Gretter
1999 Dick Crews	1974 Nolan Heidelbaugh
1998 John Moore	1973 Arthur Jordan
1997 Dan Zeiser	1972 Bernard Drews
1996 John Sutula	1971 Kenneth Callahan
1995 Norton London	1970 Frank Schuhle
1994 Robert Battisti	1969 Donald Heckaman
1993 Kevin Callahan	1968 Frank Moran
1992 Bob Baucher	1967 William Schlesinger
1991 Joe Tirpak	1966 Donald Hamill
1990 Ken Callahan Jr.	1965 Lester Swift
1989 Neil Glaser	1964 Guy DiCarlo, Jr.
1988 Martin Graham	1963 Paul Guenther
1987 George Vourlojanis	1962 Edward Downer
1986 Tim Beatty	1961 Charles Clarke
1985 Brian Kowell	1960 Howard Preston
1984 Neil Evans	1959 John Cullen, Jr.
1983 William Victory	1958 George Farr, Jr.
1982 John Harkness	1957 Kenneth Grant
1981 Thomas Geschke	

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

FEBRUARY, 2006

Hdqrs. ClvInd. Civil War Rtbl.

February 8, 2006

The January Roundtable meeting featured the latest installment of the Roundtable debate, its first time under the new name of the Dick Crews Annual Debate. Five members presented their cases for the most overrated leader of the Civil War. Each debater selected a deserving subject for this dubious title. Bob Boyda asserted that James Longstreet's stubbornness and surliness and his inability to be successful in independent command were sufficient to qualify Old Peter as the most overrated. Neil Evans risked the wrath of Northerners by insisting that Ulysses S. Grant merely bungled his way to an undeserved reputation. Dennis Keating, in a reluctant slight to his own ethnic heritage, targeted Phil Sheridan with compelling evidence to support the claim that, in contrast to Little Phil's physical stature, the reputation of the vindictive, self-promoting Sheridan is exaggerated. Donald Kellon, with input from the figures of Mount Rushmore, other historical figures, and reports from two newspapers, argued that Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard may deserve beautiful consideration in name, but not in reputation. John Sutula, in an emphatic presentation that would be hazardous if spoken in Virginia, claimed that Robert E. Lee's offensive deficiencies made him unworthy of his lofty stature. In the end, the Roundtable members voted Ulysses S. Grant the most overrated leader of the Civil War, and Neil Evans was awarded fabulous prizes after a debate in which each participant made a strong case. My thanks to William Vodrey for his superb efforts in moderating the debate and to all of the debaters and Roundtable members for a very lively meeting.

Thanks again to Lisa Kempfer for handling the sale of raffle tickets for the Künstler print. Just a reminder to everyone who purchased tickets at the December meeting, please send me your name, phone number, and ticket numbers by e-mail (dac5@case.edu) or phone (440-843-9088), so I can put this information on the tickets.

Very respy. your obt. srvt.

D.A. Carrino

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

September 14, 2005

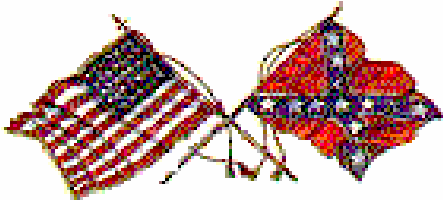
**T h e y
H a d
N a v i e s,
T o o???**



Bruce Smith

October 12, 2005

How the Civil War Still Lives



James I. Robertson Jr.

November 9, 2005

**The Transformation of
Abolitionism in War and
Peace: Oberlin, Ohio as a Case
Study**

**Carol Lasser and Gary J.
Kornblith, Oberlin College**

December 14, 2005

**The Supply for Tomorrow
Must Not Fail: The Civil War of
Captain Simon J. Perkins Jr., a
Civil War Quartermaster**

**Lennette Taylor
Summit County Historical Society**

January 11, 20056

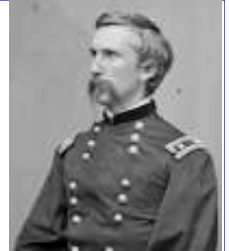
The Great Debate

*The Most Overrated Leader
(Military or Political) of the
Civil War*

Moderator: William Vodrey

February 8, 2006

**Joshua Lawrence
Chamberlain:
Scholar, Citizen,
Soldier
William F. B. Vodrey**



March 8, 2006

**The Trial of Henry
Wirz
A Play by
Dale Thomas**



April 12, 2006

**A New Framework for Civil
War Military History**

Richard McMurry

May 10, 2006

**Union Jacks:
Yankee Sailors
In the Civil
War**



Michael Bennett

FRANCIS AND ARABELLA

John Fazio, CWRT Vice President, Second in a Series

[Editor's Note: When last we saw Francis and Arabella, Francis had just fought in the battle of Cold Harbor and moved to Petersburg.]

Arabella had been at Fredericksburg during most of the Overland Campaign. With casualties pouring in from the Wilderness, Spotsylvania, the North Anna River, Cold Harbor, and Petersburg, her work in the hospitals was no less beastly than Francis's in the trenches, though throughout this period they managed to correspond by making use of ambulance drivers. She acquired a reputation for making do with whatever she could beg, borrow, or steal, so much so that she was dubbed "the Raider" by her friends, co-workers, and the stricken. In June, she made her way to White House Landing near Port Royal, where a new base hospital was set up. Francis visited her there on June 8, after Cold Harbor.



While working in the hot sun at a City Point hospital, she became ill. She went to Washington to seek the care of friends. On July 6, she returned to be with Francis. They spent what would be their final hours together at his Division Headquarters. At his urging, she returned to Washington where, it was felt, she could make a recovery from what was thought to be typhus. She did not.

On July 27, in Washington, Arabella died. Francis received the news of her death the next day and, despite heavy fighting, was given 15 days leave to bury her. We can only imagine – we can never know – the effect this news had on Francis. And our imaginings must, perforce, be a pathetically feeble copy of the real thing. Arabella, after all, was more than Francis's mate, more than his partner. She had cast her lot with his at the very moment he decided on service instead of comfort. And she had made it a point to be as near to him as possible throughout the campaigns so that she would be available to him if and when he needed her. And he did, at Antietam, and again at Gettysburg, where and when she appeared as if from another world and breathed life into his crumbling and tortured body, confounding the medical "experts"

who had given him up for dead. My best guess is that what he felt was something like the feeling one gets when one is kicked in the gut by a horse. She was buried in Old Raritan Cemetery in Somerville, New Jersey, on July 31, with her husband, a broken and shattered man, at her side. This notice appeared in the *New York Herald*:

Died in Washington, Wednesday morning July 27, 1864, Mrs. Arabella Barlow, wife of Brigadier General Francis C. Barlow, of fever contracted while in attendance upon the hospitals of the Army of the Potomac at the front.

An army doctor wrote this about her:

Her exhausting work at Fredericksburg, where the largest powers of administration were displayed, left but a small measure of vitality with which to encounter the severe exposure of the poisoned swamps of the Pamunkey, and the malarious districts of City Point. Here, in the open field, she toiled . . . under the scorching sun, with no shelter from the pouring rains, and with no thought but for those who were suffering and dying all around her. On the battlefield of Petersburg, hardly out of range of the enemy, and at night witnessing the blazing lines of fire from right to left, among the wounded, with her sympathies and powers of both mind and body strained to the last degree, neither conscious that she was working beyond her strength, nor realizing the extreme exhaustion of her system, she fainted at her work and found, only when it was too late, that the raging fever was wasting her life away. It was strength of will which sustained her in this intense activity, when her poor, tired body was trying to assert its own right to repose. Yet to the last, her sparkling wit, her brilliant intellect, her unflinching good humor, lighted up our moments of rest and recreation. So many memories of her beautiful constancy and self-sacrifice, of her bright and general companionship, of her rich and glowing sympathies, of her warm and loving nature, come back to me, that I feel how inadequate any tribute I could pay her worth."

Helen Gilson, a fellow nurse, wrote:

You say I am getting familiar with death. Yes; but death wears its most solemn aspect when it touches our individual lives. Sometimes it makes terrible voids in our hearts. I groaned aloud last night, so heavy was my heart, when I knew I should not again see Mrs. Barlow.

After he buried his wife, Francis was brevetted to the rank of major general on August 1, 1864 (a promotion confirmed on May 25, 1865), but his heart was no longer in it. He returned to the front and fought in the Deep Bottom Campaign until August 18, when he simply handed his division over to Nelson Miles and sought refuge in a



Brigadier General Barlow as portrayed in Winslow Homer's *Prisoners from the Front*.

military hospital at City Point. Five days later he returned to the front, but had to be carried off on a stretcher. Hancock's adjutant said that during this period "he had been more like a dead than a living man." The stress of military life and the loss of Arabella were too much for him, so he took an extended leave and went to Europe to recover, or to try to. He returned home in March, 1865, a full eight months after his wife's death, but he did not rejoin the army until April 6, 1865, just in time for Appomattox and the final encounters leading up to the surrender (Sayler's Creek, Farmville).

After the war, Francis resumed his law practice with his old partner, George Bliss, in New York City and became active in Republican politics. He resigned his commission as major

general on November 16, 1865. In 1867, he married Ellen Shaw, a sister of Robert Gould Shaw, who, be it remembered, commanded the 54th Massachusetts, the African-American unit that distinguished itself by storming Battery Wagner in Charleston Harbor. Shaw was killed in the encounter. Francis was one of the founders of The American Bar Association. He also investigated irregularities in the 1876 presidential election (Hayes – Tilden). He was twice elected Secretary of State of the State of New York and was appointed United States Marshal for the Southern District of New York by President Grant. As Attorney General of the State of New York, also an elected position, he prosecuted to conviction William March "Boss" Tweed, the political gangster who, as head of Tammany Hall, the political machine that controlled New York City politics, stole hundreds of millions from the city.

Francis died on January 11, 1896, from complications of the grippe. He was sixty-two. He is buried in Brookline, Massachusetts, in the Walnut Street Cemetery,

also the final resting place of his mother, brothers, and other family members.

POSTSCRIPT

It needs to be said that some students of the war, fortunately only a few, question the authenticity of the Gordon-Barlow encounter at Gettysburg. I have not the slightest doubt that it occurred. The evidence for it is, in my judgment, overwhelming. I will make my case in another article.



The monument to Francis Barlow at Gettysburg sits atop Barlow's Knoll. Barlow's Knoll is northeast of the town, where his division fought Early on the first day.

John Fazio is a frequent contributor to the Charger and currently the Vice President of the CWRT. He will assume the presidency in June of this year.

William Vodrey sent President George Bush one of the flag pins the Roundtable had made. He received this letter in reply.



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

October 27,2005

Mr. William F. B. Vodrey
Chair, CCWRT Fundraising Committee
Cleveland Civil War Roundtable

Dear Mr. Vodrey:

Thank you for your thoughtful remembrance.

I am humbled and honored to lead a proud Nation. Through courage, compassion, and strength, Americans are demonstrating the character of our country.

Our Nation faces great tasks, and we are meeting them with courage and resolve. My Administration is committed to continuing our economic progress, defending our freedom, and upholding our deepest values of family and faith.

Laura and I send our best wishes. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless America.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

Civil War Lecture at Oberlin College

William W. Freehling will be speaking at Oberlin College on Thursday, March 2, 2006 at 8 pm in Wilder Hall, room 101. The title of his lecture is "Did Personality Defects Help Cause the Civil War? Alexander Stephens, James Henry Hammond, and the Triumph of Southern Disunion." Professor Freehling is the author of several important books relating to the Civil War, including *Prelude to Civil War: The Nullification Controversy in South Carolina, 1816-1836*; *The Road to Disunion, vol. 1: Secessionists at Bay, 1776-1854*; *The South vs. the South: How Anti-Confederate Southerners Shaped the Course of the Civil War*; and *The Reintegration of American History*. He holds the Singletary Chair at the University of Kentucky and is Struppa Fellow at the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities. The lecture is free and open to the public.

NEXT MONTH

THE TRIAL OF HENRY WIRZ A PLAY BY DALE THOMAS