

March, 2007

440th Meeting

Vol. 28 #7

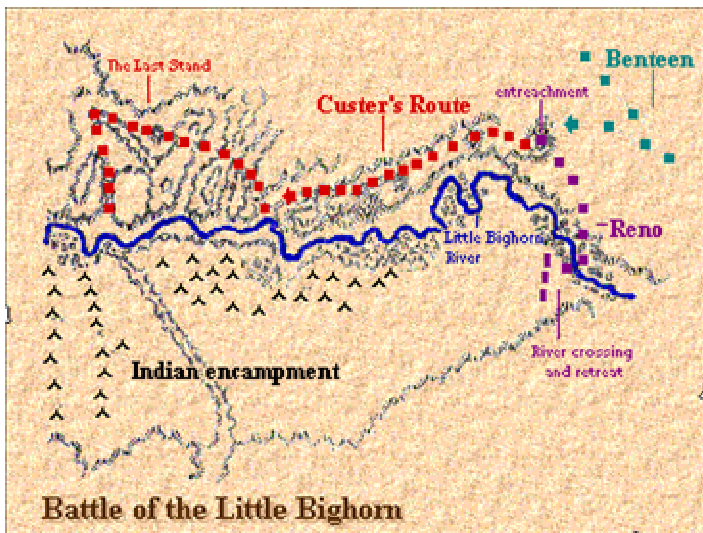
*Tonight's Program:*

## Custer's Last Stand



In late 1875, Sioux and Cheyenne Indians defiantly left their reservations, outraged over the continued intrusions of whites into their sacred lands in the Black Hills. They gathered in Montana with the great warrior Sitting Bull to fight for their lands. The following spring, two victories over the US Cavalry emboldened them to fight

on in the summer of 1876. We know the rest. One of three army columns sent to quell the uprising, Custer found the Indian camp. Ignoring orders to wait, he attacked alone, dividing his force into three. On June 25, 1876, Custer, one of the best known generals of the day, along with roughly 210 of his men, made his last stand.



*Tonight's Speaker:*

## Harold A. George

Mr. George is a local author and Civil War reenactor. He is the author of "Civil War Monuments in Ohio" and "Men of the 9th Ohio: Civil War and Genealogical History of the 9th Ohio Light Artillery." Mr. George has done much genealogical research for the latter book and has authored a pamphlet "How to Locate a Gravesite." He is a frequent speaker on the Civil War at various organizations, often appearing in full uniform. Let us welcome Mr. George and learn more about Custer's Last Stand.

**Date: Wednesday,  
March 14, 2007**

**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: Roasted Alaskan  
Cod or Vegetarian Dinner**

## CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

FOUNDED 1957

*President:*       **John Fazio**           (330) 867-1535  
*Vice President:* **Terry Koozer**       (216) 226-7527  
*Secretary:*       **Marilyn DeBaltzo** (440) 461-6804  
*Treasurer:*       **Jon Thompson**       (440) 871-6439  
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### Directors:

Mel Maurer	Dave Carrino
Rick Maurer	Marge Wilson
Dennis Keating	Phil DiBianca

*website:* clevelandcivilwarroundtable.com

*email:* a-bell@adelphia.net

**Editor - THE CHARGER - Dan Zeiser**

### Cleveland Civil War Roundtable Past Presidents

2006 Dave Carrino	1981 Thomas Geschke
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 Vourlojianis	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

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### MARCH, 2007

I am far from an expert on Custer and his last stand, but have read one comprehensive work on the subject and two of his wife, Libby's, three books: *Boots and Saddles* (1885) and *Following the Guidon* (1890). *Son of the Morning Star* has been on my list for a long time.

I know that he and his Seventh Cavalry left Fort Abraham Lincoln, in North Dakota, looking for Sioux and Northern Cheyenne, under Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse, who chose freedom and peril rather than reservations and submission. (Nothing new there!) I know that Custer split his force into three columns, one under Captain Benteen, one under Major Reno, leading the other himself. On orders from Custer, Benteen went south and accomplished nothing. Reno crossed the Little Bighorn intending to act as the eastern side of a pincer movement. He engaged the Indians (whose numbers were greater than he imagined), but was beaten back across the river with heavy loss. Custer moved westerly parallel with the river and suddenly found himself and his men overwhelmed by Indians in numbers about which he had been warned, to no effect. He lost every-one and everything except a horse. The Indians were armed with repeating carbines they had obtained from John Jacob Astor, who used them to pay for furs which he sold in eastern markets at fantastic profit. Custer's men were armed with two-bullet rifles that frequently jammed. By the end of the day, hundreds of women had been made widows, including beautiful Libby (Elizabeth Bacon Custer), from Monroe, Michigan, who loved him desperately and lived into our own time (dying on April 6, 1933, at 92, in New York City, where she is buried). In one of her books, she described how, when they were riding together, George would often swoop in on her, snatch her off of her horse and carry her away on his horse. Monroe, at the extreme western end of Lake Erie between Toledo and Detroit, and whose power station chimneys can be seen on a clear day from the top of the Perry Monument at Put-in-Bay, has a museum devoted entirely to the briefly happy couple.

John C. Fazio

**CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE  
2006/2007 SCHEDULE**

September 13, 2006

**The 13th Tennessee (Union),  
The Men Who Killed  
The Invader of Ohio,  
John Hunt Morgan**

**Dick Crews**

October 11, 2006

**Images**

Karen Thyer portrays Mother Bickerdyke (1817-1901), Botanical Physician, "Cyclone in Calico," and Don Allen portrays a U.S. Sanitary Commission Inspector, singing songs of the Union and Confederacy

November 8, 2006

**Cleveland CWRT  
50th Anniversary Celebration**



**Lincoln at Gettysburg**

**Mel Maurer**

December 13, 2006

**The Confederacy's New  
Mexico Campaign  
The Battles of Valverde and  
Glorieta Pass**

**Dan Zeiser**

January 10, 2007

**The Annual Dick Crews  
Debate**

*Resolved: That the Institution of  
slavery was the cause of the Civil  
War*

**Moderator: William F. B. Vodrey**

February 14, 2007

**Ohio's Civil War Governors**



**William F. B.  
Vodrey**



March 14, 2007

**Custer's Last  
Stand**

**Harold A. George**



April 11, 2007

**The Lincoln-Baldwin  
Conference**

**James Epperson**

May 9, 2007

**The Civil War Letters  
of Private Alfred Weedon,  
26th Ohio Volunteer  
Infantry - A  
Hands-on Lesson in  
History**  
**Jon Thompson**



## MORE ON BARLOW-GORDON

John Fazio

When I was preparing the article on the Barlow-Gordon Controversy, I succeeded, I thought, in eliminating Generals Jubal Early and Richard Ewell as possible candidates for who sent for Arabella and who granted her safe passage-safe escort to come through Confederate lines to be with her dying husband. By so doing, I naturally concluded that Gordon was the only possible officer who could have done it, thereby confirming his story. In fairness, however, and before putting a padlock on the issue, I had to at least consider the possibility that Robert E. Lee or even Jefferson Davis had a hand in it. I called the National Archives and asked them if they had anything on this. After searching their records, they said "no," but there were some old files, etc., in the basement that had not been classified yet and that I was welcome to come and have a look around. I did so. After poring over and through some dusty and musty tomes, boxes, crates, files, etc., and after shooing the vermin away, I got lucky. I found a transcript of telegraph messages, all dated July 1, 1863, between Davis and Lee. Here it is:

LEE to DAVIS: Mr. President, Gen. Ewell and Gen. Early had a good day today. They drove the Yankees through Gettysburg from the north.

By the way, one of the enemy's division commanders was seriously wounded (Francis C. Barlow). He says his wife is nearby and would like to see her. Her name is Arabella. We're sympathetic, naturally, but who knows: She may be a spy. I discussed the matter with Dick and Jubal and they said they don't want to have to make the decision as to whether or not to allow it. I don't feel comfortable making it either. What do you think?

DAVIS to LEE: Good work, General, and my best to Dick and Jubal. I know the terrain there. Jeb told me to tell you that he would see you in a couple of days. Said he's busy capturing Yankee supply wagons right now. He stopped off to see one of his ladies on his way up from Maryland. (The rascal. No wonder he's always tired.) Try rolling up the Yankee right at Culp's Hill or the left at the little rocky mount. You'll have a peach orchard and a wheat field to get through, but you can do it. If Old Pete gives you a hard time, tell him to take a walk.

About that woman. This is an amazing coincidence, but by God I think I know her. She was a friend of Varina's from New York. They say she was a real item there; knows a lot of Yankee intellectuals, lawyers, etc. I heard that she is ten years older than her husband. Can you imagine? Why on earth didn't she stay in New York? Now I have to decide whether to let her through our lines or not. Frankly, I don't want to have to make this decision. If it backfires, I'll have the Congress all over my back. What do you think?

LEE to DAVIS: Right. That's what I had in mind. And if those attacks fail tomorrow, I'll send Pettigrew's and Pickett's Divisions against their center the next day. That ought to sink that goggle-eyed old snapping-turtle. Don't worry about Old Pete. He knows who's in charge.

Yes, quite a coincidence about Varina and Arabella. I heard she was with him at Sharpsburg too. Frankly, I think these women get in the way on battlefields. Gordon's

wife, Fanny, does the same thing. It really upsets Jubal a lot. I know what you mean about having the Congress on your back, but better your back than mine. (Ha. Ha.) I'm going to bounce this one off of Gordon and see what he has to say. What do you think?

DAVIS to LEE: Yeah, let the Georgian decide.

LEE to DAVIS: Done. I'm glad to get that off my back; it's been depressing me.

DAVIS to LEE: Don't be depressed, Bobby. What do you need? Just name it and I'll see that you have it. Anything.

LEE to DAVIS: O.K. Take a look at that map I left on your desk. Figure out a way for Bragg and me to bring our armies together, march on Washington and put an end to this mess.

DAVIS to LEE: I've looked at that map until I'm blue in the face, Bobby. I can't do it. I know I said I'd give you anything you wanted, but that one's too hard. You have something a little easier I could do?

LEE to DAVIS: Well, yes. My wife has been giving me a hard time lately. Says I'm not spending enough time at home. Could you sort of talk to her and...well...you know.

(At this point there is a long period of nontransmission, indicating silence.  
Then:)

DAVIS to LEE: I'll have another look at that map.

LEE to DAVIS: O.K. By the way, what do you plan to do when all this is over, Chief?

DAVIS to LEE: Dunno. Probably write my memoirs. There's a nice little shack at Beauvoir -- my plantation on the Gulf -- not far from the water. Perfect place for writing. I think I'll call my book "*The Rise of the Southern Confederacy*."

LEE to DAVIS: If we're not careful, you may have to call it "*The Rise and Fall of the Southern Confederacy*."

DAVIS to LEE: That's where you come in. Why do you think I hired you? What are you going to do? Teach? Write your memoirs?

LEE to DAVIS: Nah. Old Pete, Jubal, Grant, Sherman, Sheridan and all those guys will be writing their memoirs. They'll be a dime a dozen. No money there. Might go into the garaygee business though.

DAVIS to LEE: The garaygee business? What's a garaygee?

LEE to DAVIS: It's sort of a livery stable for gasomobiles.

DAVIS to LEE: Gasomobiles? What's a gasomobile?

LEE to DAVIS: You haven't heard? It's that new contraption - a horseless carriage that runs on gasoline. It's got a great future. Thought I'd get in on the ground floor.

DAVIS to LEE: You smoking something beside tobacco, General?

LEE to DAVIS: You know I don't smoke.

DAVIS to LEE: Right. I forgot. How hot did you say it was up there?

LEE to DAVIS: It's hot as blazes. It was 98° today!

DAVIS to LEE: Well find some shade and get on with the battle.

LEE to DAVIS: O.K. Talk to you later.

DAVIS to LEE: You bet.

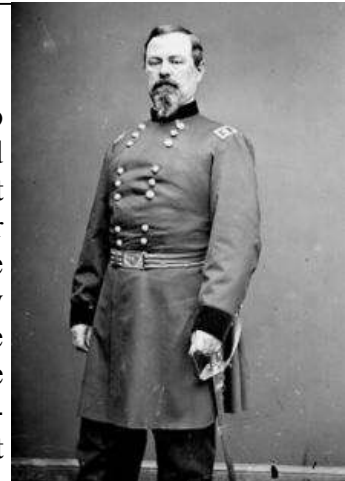
(End of transmission)

[Editor's Note: The above proves that the battlefield incident involving Francis C. Barlow and John B. Gordon, of which we have read in earlier editions of this newsletter, did indeed occur - or so argues our illustrious leader.]

## GENERAL OF THE MONTH Irvin McDowell

Irvin McDowell was one of several Union generals who were fine administrative officers but ineffectual in the field and thus saw their careers tainted by the war. Ohio born and a West Point graduate, McDowell had a career typical of an army officer of his time, including service in the Mexican War. By the time the Civil War broke out, he was well regarded by members of the new Republican administration. In May of 1861, he was given the most crucial command, that of the Army of the Potomac and the Department of Northeastern Virginia. As a very meticulous administrator, McDowell knew that the Union troops were not that ready for battle when they met the Confederates at First Bull Run, so he accepted the loss. The government and public in the North, however, were not so detached and McDowell was replaced in the top command by General George McClellan and demoted to head a division. In the ensuing months, McDowell was shifted from one command to another; by the Second Bull Run campaign in August of 1862, he was in command of the III Corps, Army of Virginia. Although the Union forces were generally beaten, McDowell was particularly singled out for his failures and was removed from command. Although he demanded an official inquiry and was eventually exonerated, he was never given another field command. McDowell retired from the army in 1882 and spent his last years in San Francisco. Totally dedicated, with no interest in political or popular considerations, McDowell simply lacked the inspirational and decisive qualities required of a leader at a certain time in history.

*Taken from The Civil War Almanac, World Almanac Publications (1983).*



## MARCH 14 IN THE CIVIL WAR

1862- THE ADVANCING FEDERALS AT NEW MADRID, MISSOURI, FOUND THEIR ENEMY HAD EVACUATED TO ISLAND No. 10 OR ACROSS THE RIVER, TO THE EASTERN BANK OF THE MISSISSIPPI. GENERAL JOHN POPE STILL DID NOT HAVE ISLAND No. 10 IN HIS POSSESSION, BUT HE WAS PLUGGING AWAY AT IT.

FLAG OFFICER FOOTE AT CAIRO, ILLINOIS, DEPARTED WITH SEVEN GUNBOATS AND TEN MORTAR BOATS TO ATTACK ISLAND No. 10.

AT NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA, BURNSIDE'S 11,000 MEN MOVED ON THE TOWN AND CAPTURED IT, AFTER SOME MINOR FIGHTING, FROM A FORCE OF ABOUT 4,000 CONFEDERATES. THE ATTACK HAD BEEN CARRIED OUT THROUGH POURING RAIN AND OVER MUDDY ROADS. WITH THIS CITY TAKEN, ANOTHER PORT AND USEFUL SUPPLY POINT WAS ESTABLISHED.

1863- AT FORT ANDERSON ON THE NEUSE RIVER, NORTH CAROLINA, THE CONFEDERATES LAUNCHED A SURPRISE NIGHT ATTACK THAT WAS DRIVEN OFF BY NAVAL GUNFIRE PROVIDED BY THE U.S.S. *HUNCHBACK*, *HETZEL*, *CERES*, AND *SHAWSBEEN*.

ON THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER, ADMIRAL FARRAGUT SENT HIS SQUADRON OF SEVEN SHIPS AGAINST THE SHORE BATTERIES OF PORT HUDSON, ATTEMPTING TO RUN PAST THEM. AT 10 P.M., THE FLEET SAILED UPRIVER, THE HEAVIER SHIPS ON THE FORT SIDE, THE LIGHTER SHIPS FARTHER AWAY FROM THE GUNS. THE FLAGSHIP U.S.S. *HARTFORD* MADE IT PAST THE GUNS BUT THE *RICHMOND* TOOK A ROUND IN HER STEAM PLANT AND WAS DISABLED. WITH THE AID OF THE *GENESEEE*, WHICH WAS LASHED ALONGSIDE, THE *RICHMOND* MADE IT OUT OF RANGE WITH LITTLE MORE DAMAGE. THE NEXT SHIP, THE *MONONGAHELA*, RAN AGROUND UNDER THE GUNS OF THE LOWER FORT AND TOOK A POUNDING FOR THIRTY MINUTES BEFORE GETTING OFF WITH THE AID OF THE *KINEO*. THE *MONONGAHELA* HAD AT LEAST EIGHT SHOTS PASS ENTIRELY THROUGH THE SHIP. THE BRIDGE WAS SHOT FROM UNDERNEATH CAPT. JAMES P. MCKINSTRY, INJURING HIM AND KILLING THREE OTHERS. AN ATTEMPT WAS MADE TO CONTINUE UPRIVER, BUT WITH NO LUCK. SHE DRIFTED DOWNSTREAM AND ANCHORED OUT OF RANGE OF THE GUNS.

THE U.S.S. *MISSISSIPPI*, CAPT. MELANCTHON SMITH, WITH LT. GEORGE DEWEY ABOARD, SAW THE *RICHMOND* COMING BACK DOWNRIVER AND TRIED TO CLOSE THE GAP. THE *MISSISSIPPI* RAN AGROUND AND COULD NOT BE BROUGHT OFF THE MUDBAR. SHE WAS SET AFIRE AND ABANDONED. AT 3 A.M. THE NEXT MORNING, SHE BLEW UP WHILE FLOATING DOWNRIVER; THE BLAST COULD BE HEARD FOR MILES. DEWEY ESCAPED AND BECAME THE HERO OF MANILA BAY THIRTY-FIVE YEARS LATER, DURING THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR.

ON THE YAZOO RIVER, ANOTHER GROUP OF GUNBOATS TRIED A DIFFERENT DIRECTION TO GET TO VICKSBURG. THIS TIME THE U.S.S. *LOUISVILLE*, *CINCINNATI*, *CARONDOLET*, *PITTBURG*, *MOUND CITY*, AND FOUR MORTAR BOATS WITH FOUR TUGS MADE THEIR WAY TO BLACK BAYOU. BEYOND THAT POINT, THE TREES WERE CLEARED BY PULLING THEM OUT OR PUSHING THEM OVER WITH THE GUNBOATS TO CLEAR THE CHANNEL. IT TOOK TWENTY-FOUR HOURS TO GO FOUR MILES TO DEER CREEK.

1864- THE COMBINED WEIGHT OF THE NAVAL BOMBARDMENT AND THE LAND ASSAULT ON FORT DE RUSSY ON THE RED RIVER HAD THE DESIRED RESULTS AND THE FORT SURRENDERED. ADMIRAL PORTER AND SHERMAN'S BRIGADIER GENERAL ANDREW JACKSON SMITH COOPERATED BEAUTIFULLY DURING THE ACTION.

1865 - PHILIP SHERIDAN WAS AT THE SOUTH ANNA BRIDGE ON HIS WAY BACK TO GRANT AT PETERSBURG. LEE, IN RICHMOND, WAS HOPING THAT JOSEPH JOHNSTON COULD STRIKE EITHER SHERMAN OR SCHOFIELD BEFORE THE TWO UNITED. MAYBE THE FEDERALS COULD BE DEFEATED PIECEMEAL. SHERMAN'S ARMY AT FAYETTEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA WERE CLEANING THE ARMY OF SICK ANIMALS, REPLACING THEM WITH CAPTURED STOCK. SICK AND WOUNDED MEN WERE BEING SENT TO WILMINGTON BY STEAMER TO BE SENT NORTH TO HOSPITALS. THE REMAINDER OF THE NEGROES AND REFUGEES WAS SENT TO WILMINGTON TO FURTHER LIGHTEN THE LOAD. SOME SUPPLIES HAD COME UP, BUT NOT ENOUGH TO FILL THE NEEDS. UNIFORMS WERE DESPERATELY NEEDED. GENERAL JACOB D. COX'S TROOPS OCCUPIED KINSTON AND PUSHED ON TOWARD GOLDSBOROUGH WITH LITTLE OPPOSITION. (TAKEN FROM *THE CIVIL WAR YEARS, A DAY-BY-DAY CHRONICLE*)

## **Suggested Reading for this Month's Talk**

- Wert, Jeffrey D., "Custer: The Controversial Life of George Armstrong Custer," Simon & Schuster (1996)
- Connell, Evan S., "Son of the Morning Star, Custer and the Little Bighorn," North Point Press (1984)
- Utley, Robert M., "Cavalier in Buckskin: George Armstrong Custer and the Western Military Frontier," University of Oklahoma Press (1988)
- Hatch, Thom, "The Custer Companion: A Comprehensive Guide to the Life of George Armstrong Custer and the Plains Indian Wars," Stackpole Books (2002)



**CAN YOU NAME THIS ARTILLERY WEAPON? A PRIZE TO THE FIRST 2 ATTENDEES AT THE MEETING WHO CORRECTLY TELL ME THE NAME.**

**NEXT MONTH  
OHIO'S CIVIL WAR  
GOVERNORS**

**WILLIAM VODREY**