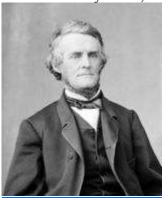*Tonight's Program:*

# Ohio's Civil War Governors

"Dennison, Tod & Brough: Ohio's Civil War Governors" explores the role that Ohio's chief executives played during the tumultuous years of the Civil War. Each in his own way, Ohio's governors rallied and led one of the Union's biggest states during a time of unprecedented crisis, challenge and opportunity. Despite a strong Copperhead presence here, the Buckeye State's leaders enabled President Abraham Lincoln to finally and accurately note, "Ohio has saved the Union."

David Tod

William Dennison

John Brough

*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,**
           **April 11, 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:*   **Asian Short Rib or Grilled Portobello Mushroom**

# President's Message

## April, 2007

I read a book a few years ago titled "What If?" Its message, not surprisingly, is that history has frequently turned on the unexpected happenings imaginable, that humankind could, therefore, have gone in any one of an infinite number of directions, and that there is nothing sacred or foreordained about the direction in which it went. Just one example: Charles Francis Adams, American Minister to Great Britain, advised Secretary of State Seward that British intervention in our Civil War was imminent in the fall of 1862, an act that would have resulted in Southern independence. Her Majesty's government conditioned it on Lee's successful invasion of Maryland. Lee failed because his battle plans were lost by a subordinate and found by Union soldiers who delivered them to McClellan --a one in a million chance. It is strange to think that the United States survived as one nation on such odds, but that is very likely the fact, and no less a scholar than James McPherson has said so.

It is easy to say that slavery would have been abolished or died out in the C.S.A. anyway, inasmuch as Britain, France, and Russia had already abolished it. But maybe not. Its guarantee was written right into the Confederate Constitution. Southerners believed that their survival depended on it, which is how they justified the draconian step of secession. Strange. Like Marathon, Salamis, Tours, Lepanto, Trafalgar, Blenheim, Waterloo, and Saratoga, a different result at any of which would have us speaking Farsi, Arabic, Turkish, Spanish, French, or English, but with a different accent, and perhaps calling our God Allah instead of Yahweh, The Name, The Father, The Son, or The Holy Spirit. The question is: Would it have really mattered?

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**
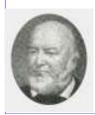
*March 14, 2007*

### Custer's Last Stand

### Harold A. George

*April 11, 2007*

### Ohio's Civil War Governors William F. B. Vodrey

*May 9, 2007*

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

*June 13, 2007*

### The Lincoln-Baldwin Conference

### James Epperson

# CIVIL WAR ARTILLERY

Guns and howitzers are the weapons most people think about when Civil War artillery is discussed. These weapons were usually formed in batteries - that is, a group of six weapons (at least in the Union Army). At the beginning of the war, a battery contained four guns and two howitzers. A 6-pounder battery usually contained four 6-pounder guns and two 12-pounder howitzers and a 12-pounder battery would be made up of four 12-pounders and two 24-pounder howitzers. Four-gun batteries were also common, especially in the Confederate Army.

Several batteries were often placed together in line to form a deadly defensive position. As the enemy troops advanced towards these batteries the guns would belch forth case shot (shells with lead or iron balls inside) and shrapnel shells. The prospect of being wounded or killed caused many soldiers to run or try to find a hiding place. Many veteran troops would throw themselves to the ground just as the weapons to their front fired. Once the weapons had been discharged, these troops would rise up and rush towards the guns hoping to capture the crew before they could reload. Since most proficient crews could fire two rounds per minute, the troops could find themselves hugging the ground several times.

Guns and howitzers differed in several aspects. A gun was a long-barreled, heavy weapon which fired solid shot at long range with a low degree of elevation using a large powder charge. A howitzer had a shorter barrel and could throw shots or shells at a shorter range but at higher elevation with smaller powder charges. Howitzers were lighter, more maneuverable weapons than guns.



The most popular and dependable gun was the Model 1857, commonly called Napoleon (named after the French emperor Louis Napoleon who supported development of the design). This 12-pounder smoothbore was effective, reliable, and easily maneuvered. It had a range of 1,600 yards at five-degrees elevation and for best effect was probably around 1,200 yards. Although the Napoleon is listed here as a gun, it was also classified as a gun-howitzer because of its shorter barrel and light weight.

1857 12-pounder Napolean, above and below.

Model 1841 12-pounder howitzer



The Model 1841 12-pounder was the standard field howitzer used in the Civil War. Because of its higher trajectory at which it was typically fired, it could fire a shell over 1,000 yards with less than one pound of powder.

Mortars were stubby weapons which fired heavy projectiles in a high arc. Only a small powder charge was needed to project the shot or shell to its maximum elevation. When a mortar shell exploded, fragments weighing as much as ten or twenty pounds could fall with extreme velocity on the enemy. Combatants and non-combatants alike, became adapt at constructing bomb-proofs to protect themselves from fragments and solid shot. Bomb-proofs were shelters dug into the side of a bank, away from the enemy, or constructed inside breastworks as small huts with heavy layers of dirt on the top side.


13-inch seacoast mortar

Mortars were most beneficial when the target was above or below the level line of sight. These conditions caused elevation problems for the long barreled weapons but allowed the short mortars to operate with efficiency. Elevation adjustments were accomplished by means of a ratchet and lever mechanism. Occasionally mortars were mounted on the decks of ships, on special barges, or on railroad flatcars. Most mortar projectiles can be recognized by tong holes, or tong ears, which are cast into the metal on either side of the fuze hole. This allowed the ball to be centered properly in the short tube.

Seacoast mortars were designated as 10- and 13-inch and were made of iron. Also known as heavy mortars, these weapons were primarily used for the defense of the rivers and coastal waterways. These mortars had a lug cast over the center of gravity to aid in mounting the heavy weapon. Siege and garrison mortars were constructed to be light enough to be transported by an army on the march. They were also used in the trenches at sieges and in defense of fortifications.

A Columbiad was a heavy iron artillery piece which could fire shot and shell at a high angle of elevation using a heavy powder charge. Columbiads were usually classified as seacoast defense weapons and were mounted in fortifications along the rivers and other waterways. The original Columbiad, a 50-pounder, was invented in 1811 by Col. George Bomford and it was used in the War of 1812. Shortly afterwards it was considered obsolete and retired. The weapon was produced again in 1844 in 8 and 10-inch models. In 1858, a version was produced which eliminated the chamber in the breech, which strengthened the gun. In 1861, Lt. Thomas J. Rodman, of the U.S. Ordnance Department, contracted with the Fort Pitt Foundry in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to produce Columbiads using a special casting method he had developed in 1844. His process, which caused less stress on the gun during casting thereby preventing cracks from forming, was a success and the Columbiad became widely known as a Rodman gun. Columbiads were produced in 8, 10, 12, 13, 15, and 20-inch models and were primarily smoothbore even though a few rifled models were


15 inch Columbiad or Rodman.

turned out. The Confederates continued to produce their Columbiads by the old method and experimented with banding and rifling the weapon. Under this method, a Confederate Columbiad was capable of firing a 225-pound shot a distance of 1,800 yards. Compared to guns, howitzers, and mortars, the Columbiads saw very little action. By the end of the Civil War these heavy weapons were obsolete, replaced by more effective weapons which had been developed during the war.

One famous U.S. inventor was a former West Point graduate and ordnance officer named Robert Parker Parrott. In 1836, Parrott resigned his rank of captain and went to work for the West Point Foundry at Cold Spring, New York. This foundry was a civilian operated business



and Parrott, as a superintendent, was able to dedicate some forty years perfecting a rifled cannon and a companion projectile. By 1860, he had patented a new method of attaching the reinforcing band on the breech of a gun tube. Although he was not the first to attach a band to a tube, he was the first to use a method of rotating the tube while slipping

300-pounder Parrott rifled cannon.



Parrott Projectile.

the band on hot. This rotation, while cooling, caused the band to attach itself in place uniformly rather than in one or two places as was the common method, which allowed the band to sag in place. The 10-pounder Parrott was patented in 1861 and the 20 and 30-pounder guns followed in 1861. He quickly followed up these patents by producing 6.4, 8, and 10-inch caliber cannons early in the war. The Army referred to these as 100, 200, and 300-pounder Parrotts, respectively. By the end of the conflict the Parrott gun was being used extensively in both armies. Parrott's name is also associated with the ammunition fired by his cannon. The elongated Parrott projectile employed a sabot made of wrought iron, brass, lead or copper that was attached to the shell base. When the projectile was fired, the sabot expanded into the rifling of the tube.

A British army officer, Captain Theophilus Alexander Blakely, pioneered a banding system for his rifled cannon. With each experiment of his design a different cannon was developed with the end result of at least five, and possibly as many as ten, distinct types of Blakely cannons



were manufactured. The 3.5-inch caliber, 12-pounder Blakely weapons were developed in nine varieties, with a tenth variation being a 10-pounder mountain piece. Most of these weapons were iron. Blakely rifles were also manufactured in 3.75, 4.5 and 6.3-inch, and 100, 120, 150, 200, 250, 375, and 650-pounder sizes. Most were of iron, with the exception of the 375-pounder, which was made of semi-steel. One famous Blakely rifle was the Widow Blakely, used by the Confederates during the defenses of Vicksburg, Mississippi, in 1863.

4.5-inch Blakely rifled cannon.

In Manchester, England, in the late 1850's, Sir Joseph Whitworth patented a system for cannons (and small arms) which used a hexagonal bore design instead of the usual rifling methods. The ammunition also carried the hexagonal design in order to follow the bore, thus allowing for better range and accuracy. Sir Whitworth manufactured his cannons in both breech-loading and muzzle-loading models. If the Whitworth breech-loader malfunctioned, it could very simply be used as a muzzle-loader on the battlefield.



12-pounder Whitworth rifled cannon and projectile.

Early in the war, John M. Brooke, late of the U.S. Navy and now an ordnance officer in the Confederate Navy, designed a banded cannon which was similar in appearance to the Parrott, but was different in the number of bands wrapped around the breech. The Brooke band consisted of several rings which were not welded together. Its rifling was similar to the Blakely gun and came in a number of calibers, including 6.4-inch, 7-inch, 8-inch, and 11-inch. John Brooke's other claim to fame was the key role he played in designing the armor plating used by the *CSS Virginia (Merrimac)* in its battle with the *USS Monitor*.



7-inch Brooke rifled cannon.

Dahlgren weapons are usually divided into three groups - bronze boat howitzers and rifles, iron smoothbores, and iron rifles. The designer, John A. B. Dahlgren of the U.S. Navy, developed the weapons primarily for use on small boats that patrolled the waterways. The necessity for these weapons was demonstrated by the Navy's experience during the Mexican War when small launches and other craft were assigned to patrol close to river and creek banks. Dahlgren was a Lieutenant when he was assigned to the ordnance department at the U.S. Navy Yard. The first weapon systems were adopted by the Navy in 1850. These bronze 12 and 24-pounder pieces were specially designed for use on the small launches, but were also included on most naval vessels during the Civil War. His iron smoothbores were adopted in 1850 (9-inch gun) and 1851 (11-inch gun). Although these guns were designed for use against wooden ships, the ironclad Monitor class ships carried two of these in their turrets. These weapons were later replaced by the 15-inch Dahlgrens in 1862. By the end of the Civil War, John Dahlgren, now a Rear Admiral, was responsible for the development and design of 12-pounder boat howitzers in several weight classifications (small, medium, and light), 20 and 24-pounder howitzers (some, including the 12-pounders, were rifled), 30, 32, 50, 80, and 150-pounder rifles, and 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15, and 20-inch rifles.



Dahlgren projectile.



15-inch Dahlgren.

## CCWRT Awards History Day Winner!

History Day, founded by David Van Tassel and the CWRU History Department in 1974, is a competition for which history students create presentations on a subject relating to the "theme of the year." Since its inception, History Day has expanded so that finalists go on to the Ohio competition (sponsored by the Ohio Historical Society), whose finalists proceed to National History Day. And it all began right here in our own backyard! John Vacha, Cleveland District #3 Chairman, asked if some of our members might judge, Dale Thomas and Bob Hook (both retired history teachers) volunteered. At the same time, it occurred to me that CCWRT might award a prize to the student submitting the best project on a Civil War-related subject. This suggestion was approved and Mr. Vacha asked if I would present the CCWRT prize at the ceremony. Saturday, March 24 was judging and award day. CCWRT was honored when Mr. Vacha introduced our award *first*, noting that it was a new prize for a newly designated category - for projects relating to the **Civil War**. This year's theme was "Triumph and Tragedy" and the winner in the Civil War category was Chloe Pruitt, for her individual performance as a young nurse: "Out of Tragedy: The Citizens of Gettysburg and Their Noble Struggle for the Wounded." She will be our guest at a spring meeting when she will again play the role of a young woman at Gettysburg soon after the battle. Our $100.00 award brings CCWRT to the attention of young potential members, their teachers, and parents. Also, it is appropriate that we be among other supporting groups: the SAR, Early Settlers, and the Gray's Armory. I was proud to represent CCWRT and look forward to introducing all of you to Chloe and her dramatic presentation.

Marjorie Wilson

## Next Month
## The Civil War Letters of Private Alfred Weedon
## Jon Thompson