

THE CHARGER

September 2009

461st Meeting

Vol. 31, #1

Tonight's Program:

Plenty of Blame to Go Around: Jeb Stuart's Controversial Ride to Gettysburg

Robert E. Lee wrote, "In the exercise of the discretion given him ... General Stuart determined to pass around the rear of the Federal Army ... and cross the Potomac between it and Washington, believing that he would be able, by that route, to place himself on our right flank in time to keep us properly advised of the enemy's movements...but the enemy advanced with equal rapidity on his left, and continued to obstruct communication with our main body." Lee also wrote, "Upon the suggestion of (Stuart) that he could damage the enemy and delay his passage of the river by getting in his rear, he was authorized to do so ... but he was instructed to lose no time in placing his command on the right of our column as soon as he should perceive the enemy moving northward...The movements of the army preceding the battle of Gettysburg had been much embarrassed by the absence of the cavalry." Lee also mentioned that General Stuart was to "...take position on the right of our column as it advanced." General Stuart's ride would deny his Commander the use of his cavalry and its valuable intelligence concerning the whereabouts of the Union forces until the battle at Gettysburg was into its second day.

Thus began the controversial ride of J.E.B. Stuart.



Stuart's ride (shown with a red dotted line) during the Gettysburg Campaign, June 3 – July 3, 1863

Eric J. Wittenberg

Eric J. Wittenberg grew up in Reading, Pennsylvania, home to the Sixth Pennsylvania and attended Dickenson College in Carlisle. He is an award-winning Civil War historian who has published fourteen books as well as over two dozen magazine articles. His specialty is cavalry operations, with a particular emphasis on the Army of the Potomac's Cavalry Corps. He also is a frequent lecturer and leader of battlefield tours. When not writing, Mr. Wittenberg works as an attorney in Columbus, Ohio, where he lives with his wife, Susan, and their two golden retrievers.

**Date: Wednesday,
September 9, 2009**

**Place: Judson Manor
1890 E. 107th Street
Cleveland, Ohio**

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

**Reservations: Please Call
Dan Zeiser (440) 449-9311
Or email ccwrt1956@yahoo.com
By 8 pm Tuesday before meeting**

Meal choice: Sautéed chicken, asparagus, whipped red skin potatoes, salad, and dessert.

CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

FOUNDED 1957

President: **Dennis Keating** (216) 397-0188
Vice President: **Lisa Kempfer** (440) 526-1318
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Editor - THE CHARGER - Dan Zeiser

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

SEPTEMBER 2009

Greetings,

I look forward to another interesting year, beginning with Eric Wittenberg's presentation. He returns as a speaker after about a decade, having published more books and now being a Civil War blogger. The line-up of speakers, both from our area and beyond, includes Civil War authors, re-enactors, and our own Mel Maurer. The topics range from a look at events that precipitated the Civil War to Reconstruction and beyond. They include histories of Ohio regiments, politics (the Copperheads), leading Ohio figures such as President Rutherford Hayes, and Civil War movies. The Dick Crews debate topic will focus on Ohio's controversial William Tecumseh Sherman. I invite those particularly interested to volunteer to participate in the debate.

Our field trip will take us to numerous sites in and around Richmond and Petersburg, Virginia (last visited a decade ago). Our guide, retired military historian Lynn Sims, will take us through the 1862 Peninsula campaign and the Seven Days battles, Grant's 1864 Overland campaign ending in the disastrous attack at Cold Harbor, the subsequent move south of the James River and the siege of Petersburg (including the battle of the Crater), finally ending in the April, 1865 breakthrough leading to Lee's surrender a week later. We will also visit major sites in Richmond like the Museum of the Confederacy and Hollywood Cemetery.

I will try to respond to your suggestions from our member survey to improve our meetings. We will continue our meetings at Judson Manor. I urge you to invite guests and recruit new members. And let us know about Civil War-related events. Finally, thanks to our Executive Committee members, our Charger editor Dan Zeiser, our webmaster Paul Burkholder, and our historian Mel Maurer for their service to the club.

Respectfully, Dennis Keating

Cleveland Civil War Roundtable Past Presidents

<p>2009 Jon Thompson 2008 Terry Koozer 2007 John Fazio 2006 Dave Carrino 2005 Mel Maurer 2004 Warren McClelland 2003 Maynard Bauer 2002 Bill McGrath 2001 William Vodrey 2000 Bob Boyda 1999 Dick Crews 1998 John Moore 1997 Dan Zeiser 1996 John Sutula 1995 Norton London 1994 Robert Battisti 1993 Kevin Callahan 1992 Bob Baucher 1991 Joe Tirpak 1990 Ken Callahan Jr. 1989 Neil Glaser 1988 Martin Graham 1987 George Vourlojianis 1986 Tim Beatty 1985 Brian Kowell 1984 Neil Evans</p>	<p>1983 William Vodrey 1982 John Harkness 1981 Thomas Geschke 1980 Charles Spiegle 1979 William Bates 1978 Richard McCrae 1977 James Chapman 1976 Milton Holmes 1975 Thomas Gretter 1974 Nolan Heidelbaugh 1973 Arthur Jordan 1972 Bernard Drews 1971 Kenneth Callahan 1970 Frank Schuhle 1969 Donald Heckaman 1968 Frank Moran 1967 William Schlesinger 1966 Donald Hamill 1965 Lester Swift 1964 Guy DiCarlo, Jr. 1963 Paul Guenther 1962 Edward Downer 1961 Charles Clarke 1960 Howard Preston 1959 John Cullen, Jr. 1958 George Farr, Jr. 1957 Kenneth Grant</p>
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**CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE
2009/2010 SCHEDULE**

September 9, 2009

**Plenty of Blame to
Go Around: Jeb Stu-
art's Controversial
Ride to Gettysburg**



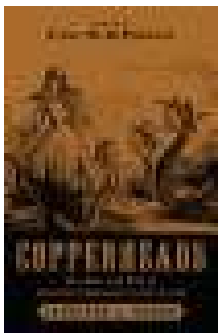
Eric Wittenberg

October 14, 2009

Behind the Scenes at a Civil War Movie

**Michael Kraus
Curator of the Pittsburgh Soldiers &
Sailors Military Museum & Memorial
Advisor on Cold Mountain and
Gettysburg movies**

November 11, 2009



**The Copperheads:
Lincoln's Oppo-
nents in the North**

**Prof. Jennifer L.
Weber**

December 9, 2009

Three Soldiers and the Negro

**David L. Forte
Professor
Cleveland-Marshall College of
Law**

January 13 2010

**The Dick Crews Annual
Debate**

*After Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E.
Lee, William Tecumseh Sherman Was
the Greatest General of the War*

Moderator: William F. B. Vodrey

February 10, 2010

**The 26th Ohio
Volunteer Infantry:
The Ground Hog
Regiment**
Jeff Hill



March 10, 2010

**Steps Toward War: Two Dramatic
Rescues That Led To It.**
Nat Brandt

April 14, 2010

**Rutherford B. Hayes
and the
23rd Ohio Volunteer
Infantry**
Thomas J. Culbertson



May 12, 2010



**John Wilkes
Booth:
Escape and
Capture**
Mel Maurer

**For membership in the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable, please visit our web site:
<http://clevelandcivilwarroundtable.com>**

J.E.B. "Jeb" Stuart at Gettysburg

As flamboyant as he was energetic, Confederate Major General James Ewell Brown "JEB" Stuart faithfully and valiantly served Robert E. Lee from the time General Lee took command of the Army until Stuart's death at Yellow Tavern, Virginia in May of 1864. He gained fame for himself and embarrassed the Northerners by twice riding around the Army of the Potomac, at the time commanded by Major General George B. McClellan. After being surprised in June 1863 at Brandy Station by a sudden, surprisingly vigorous Federal Cavalry, General Stuart decided to again pass around the men in blue, this time under the command of General Joseph Hooker.



Both Generals, Lee and Stuart, have received their share of criticism and blame for Stuart's ride, which kept his valuable cavalry out of touch from June 25 until July 2. Upon initial review, Lee's orders to Stuart outlining his responsibilities for that time may appear vague. A section of the orders stated,

"If General Hooker's army remains inactive, you can leave two brigades to watch him, and withdraw with the three others, but should he not appear to be moving northward, I think you had better withdraw this side of the mountain to-morrow night, cross at Shepherdstown next day, and move over to Fredericktown. You will, however, be able to judge whether you can pass around their army without hindrance, doing them all the damage you can, and cross the river east of the mountains. In either case, after crossing the river, you must move on and feel the right of Ewell's troops, collecting information, provisions, etc."

The distinction between "inactive" and "not appear to be moving" is unclear. These discretionary orders allowed Stuart the freedom to determine his route, as long as he obeyed the remainder of the orders. Lee did add the enjoiner "...but I think the sooner you cross into Maryland after tomorrow the better."

In the final of his three reports to Confederate President Jefferson Davis concerning the Army's foray into Pennsylvania, General Lee would assert, "In the exercise of the discretion given him when Longstreet and Hill marched into Maryland, General Stuart determined to pass around the rear of the Federal Army with three brigades and cross the Potomac between it and Washington, believing that he would be able, by that route, to place himself on our right flank in time to keep us properly advised of the enemy's movements...but the enemy advanced with equal rapid-



The Gregg Cavalry Shaft on East Cemetery Field

ity on his left, and continued to obstruct communication with our main body." Although this manner of writing seemed to avoid an accusatory tone, General Lee would also clearly state, "Upon the suggestion of (Stuart) that he could damage the enemy and delay his passage of the river by getting in his rear, he was authorized to do so, and it was left to his discretion whether to enter Maryland east or west of the Blue Ridge; but he was instructed to lose no time in placing his command on the right of our column as soon as he should perceive the en-

emy moving northward...The movements of the army preceding the battle of Gettysburg had been much embarrassed by the absence of the cavalry." General Lee also mentioned in an earlier report that General Stuart was to "...take position on the right of our column as it advanced."

General Stuart's ride would deny his Commander the use of both his cavalry and its valuable intelligence concerning the whereabouts of the Union forces until the battle at Gettysburg was into its second day. Arriving on the field the afternoon of July 2nd, Lee would instruct Stuart to hold General Ewell's left. On July 3rd, those responsibilities and the hopes that he could exploit any found weakness in the Union line would send him into a collision with Brigadier General David McMurtree Gregg's Federal Cavalry.

Often overlooked by visitors to the Battlefield are the monuments, markers, and grounds of what is now called the East Cavalry Field. General Stuart would initially emerge from the woods along Cress Ridge on the Rummel Farm, pictured to your right, with 6,300 Southern Cavalrymen. A Confederate Officer with the Virginia Cavalry would describe the fierce conflict that followed as "hand to hand, blow for blow, cut for cut, and oath for oath." After two hours of fighting, which included an initial artillery duel, the Confederates mounted one final grand charge. A ferocious counterattack lead by newly promoted Brigadier General George Armstrong Custer, blunted the Confederate thrust and brought an end to the day's fighting. Neither side gained an advantage, but General Stuart's men were kept from gaining access to the potentially vulnerable rear of the Union lines, allowing the Federal infantry to focus all of their efforts on repulsing Pickett's Charge.



The Rummel Farm on East Cavalry Field

After the Battle, General Stuart would attempt to answer his critics in his Official Report. He would say in part, "It was thought by many that my command could have rendered more service had it been in advance of the army the first day at Gettysburg, and the commanding



Michigan Cavalry Monument on East Cavalry Field

general complains of a want of cavalry on the occasion; but it must be remembered that the cavalry (Jenkins' brigade) specially selected for advance guard to the army by the commanding general on account of its geographical location at the time, was available for this purpose, and had two batteries of horse artillery serving with it. If therefore, the peculiar functions of cavalry with the army were not satisfactorily performed in the absence of my command, it should rather be attributed to the fact that Jenkins' brigade was not as efficient as it ought to have been, and as its numbers (3,800) on leaving Virginia warranted us in expecting. Even at that time, by its reduction incident to campaign, it numbered far more than the cavalry which successfully covered Jackson's flank movement at Chancellorsville, turned back Stoneman from the James, and drove 3,500 cavalry under Averell across the Rappahannock. Properly handled, such a command should have done everything requisite, and left nothing to detract by the remotest implication from the brilliant exploits of their comrades, achieved under circum-

stances of great hardship and danger."

Despite the occasional bitter controversy, General Lee would continue to hold his Cavalry Commander in the highest esteem with Stuart serving faithfully and valiantly through the following spring. Sadly, the South would mourn his passing a year later on May 12, 1864 as Stuart's Cavalry strove to stop Union Cavalry commander Major General Phillip Henry Sheridan from approaching the Confederate Capitol of Richmond during the Battle of Yellow Tavern. The Confederate Army and people throughout the South would lament the loss of such a talented and devoted officer. After receiving his mortal wound and seeing some of his outnumbered men retreating, he called out to them "Go back! Go back! Do your duty as I've done mine, and our country will be safe. Go back! Go back!" Upon learning of his death, General Lee would respond, "I can scarcely think of him without weeping."

Taken from www.brotherswar.com/Gettysburg3-q.htm
The American Civil War: The Battle of Gettysburg



Grave marker and monument for Major General Jeb Stuart



General of the Month Strong Vincent

On June 17, 1837, Strong Vincent was born in Waterford, Pennsylvania. He graduated from Harvard, Class of 1859 and practiced law in Erie, Pennsylvania. Vincent went on to become a hero at the Battle of Gettysburg, where he was mortally wounded defending Little Round Top.

When hostilities erupted in April 1861, Vincent left the law to become an officer in the Erie Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteers. He mustered out with the regiment in July 1861 and into the U.S. Army on 14 September 1861. When the regiment commander, Col. McLane, was killed at Gaines' Mills on 27 June 1862, Vincent was promoted to colonel. He served in several campaigns with the Army of the Potomac, fighting at Yorktown, Fredericksburg, and Chancellorsville. Vincent was promoted to colonel after Yorktown, and prior to Gettysburg, was given command of the Third Brigade, First Division, of the Fifth Corps.

On the night of July 1, 1863, Vincent and his men were hurrying toward the battlefield under a bright moon. When the soldiers passed through a small town near Gettysburg, the regiment bands began to play and residents came to their doors to cheer the Yankee troops. Vincent remarked to an aide that there could be a worse fate than to die fighting in his home state with the flag overhead.

The next day, as Vincent and his brigade were arriving behind the Union lines, General Gouverneur K. Warren frantically summoned Vincent's force to the top of Little Round Top, a rocky hill at the end of the Federal line. Warren observed that the Confederates could turn the Union left flank by taking the summit, which was occupied by only a Yankee signal corps at the time. So Vincent and his men hurried up the hill, arriving just ahead of the Rebels. Vincent placed his brigade in the order of the 16th Michigan, 83rd Pennsylvania, 44th New York, and 20th Maine (under Joshua Chamberlain, Huzzah!), taking special care to ensure that the 83rd Pennsylvania and 44th New York were side-by-side. It was brigade tradition that these units, some-



Vincent gravesite in Erie Cemetery, Erie, PA.

times called "Butterfield's Twins," fight next to one another. The brigade held the top, but just barely. Vincent was mortally wounded in the engagement and died on July 7. He

was promoted posthumously to brigadier general.

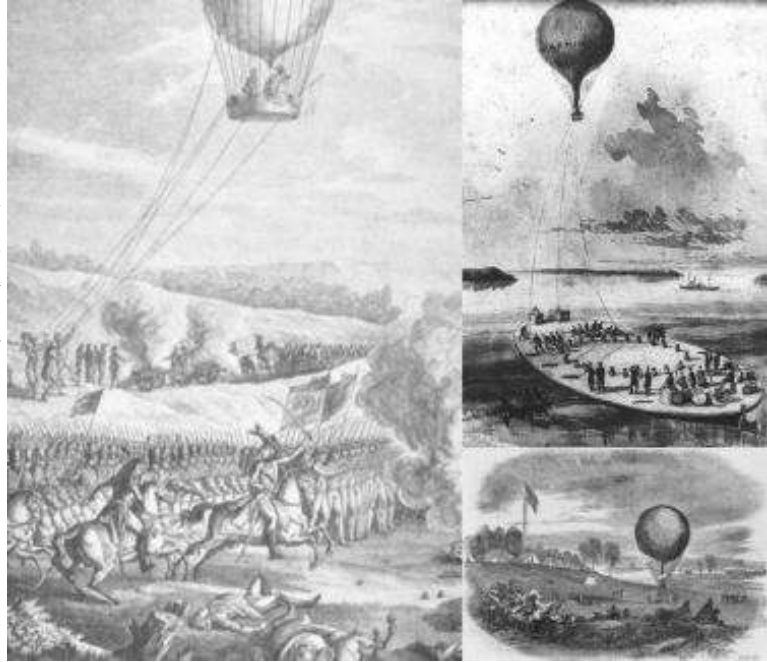


Memorial to Strong Vincent on Little Round Top. It is at the location of the 83rd PA.

Balloons in the Civil War

Balloons were used for surveillance and reconnaissance during the Civil War for both sides, the Union side invested heavily in their development. The ability to locate troops and assess their numbers quickly became a very important capability, but it is not known if a photograph from a balloon was ever taken because to date no vertical or oblique aerial photography captured by balloons from the Civil War period have been found.

The initiative for creating the US Army Balloon Corps, under the Bureau of Topographical Engineers, came from one Thaddeus Lowe who championed their development in 1861 to President Lincoln who committed to the project because he recognized the strategic advantage they gave his armies.



Civil War balloon sketches; launch from a coal barge.

In 1863 the Balloon Corps was disbanded. This was due in part to the fact that they drew attention and provided convenient targets, and also those involved, including Lowe, were not exactly honest cooperative gentlemen. Also a factor in discontinuing this endeavor was that to counter the balloon advantage the Confederate side started using deception techniques that caused severe miscalculations on the part of those who had come to rely on balloon observations for planning strategic movements. This technique of reconnaissance deception would continue in all the wars since that relied on aerial surveillance.



Inflating the Intrepid at the Battle of the Oaks in 1862.

NEXT MONTH Behind the Scenes at a Civil War Movie

Michael Kraus
Curator of the Pittsburgh Soldiers &
Sailors Military Museum &
Memorial Advisor on Cold Mountain
and Gettysburg movies

Civil War Encampment Tremont

On Saturday, September 19 and 20 (Sunday) there will be a Civil War Encampment in Lincoln Park in Cleveland's Tremont neighborhood, featuring the 8th Ohio re-enactors. Our own Tim Daley will talk at 2 PM on Sunday.