

THE CHARGER



CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

OCT. 2016

VOL. 38 #3

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

ON WALKING BATTLEFIELDS.....

On the way to Fredericksburg last month, I wondered to myself why we do this. Why do we trudge along trails, over fields, in the hot sun to listen to someone tell us about what we could read in the comfort of our homes or watch on television?

Someone during the weekend of the field trip said that walking the battlefields was like walking through a book.

I stood in the Salient, closed my eyes, listened to how quiet it was, listened to the birds, and tried to imagine what it must have been like at that very spot 154 years ago: the noise, the screams, the smoke, the whine of bullets and stench of death.

Why did troops look at the enemy on the next hill only to find out, when they attacked, that there were two or more hills between the armies? At Perryville I saw why.

How could soldiers march across a field and not see the enemy artillery until they were almost upon them? At Gettysburg I saw how.

The distance covered by the line of forts in the Petersburg Campaign is much larger than I had imagined from looking at the maps in books.

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Pres.message cont.

From Signal Point on Signal Mountain in Tennessee I looked in the distance, and I could understand very clearly how signals were sent from there to Racoon Mountain and then to Lookout Mountain. The view was worth a thousand paragraphs of description from a book.

And so we follow Grant to Vicksburg and Lee to Chancellorsville. Or we follow Jackson up the Valley, McClellan down the Peninsula or Sherman across Georgia. Along the way officers and men become real and we learn to know them with both their virtues and faults. Battles and why they were fought become more clearly understood. And we are able to travel with and meet people with whom we can converse about the War without looking into glazed eyes and vacant stares.

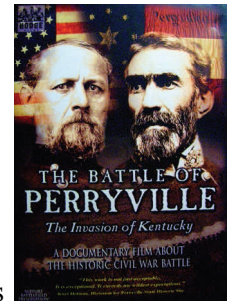
Thanks for coming to Fredericksburg.

Jean

THIS MONTH:

THIS MONTH...

“Autumn 1862 – The True High Tide of the Confederacy”



On October 8, 1862 Braxton Bragg’s Army of Mississippi met Don Carlos Buell and the Army of the Ohio in the Chaplin Hills near Perryville, Kentucky. The engagement was part of Bragg’s campaign to divert Union forces from Vicksburg and Chattanooga. He also hoped to recruit new troops from the border state. The Battle of Perryville was the largest battle fought in Kentucky and one of the bloodiest battles of the Civil War. Although considered a tactical Confederate victory initially, Bragg, at the end, was pushed into Tennessee.

Robert Lee Hodge may be familiar to some of you as the re-enactor on the cover of the best seller, *Confederates in the Attic*. He has worked on several history-based films, has been featured on National Public Radio and has done historical research for the National Archives and *Time-Life Books* among many other things.

NEXT MONTH: *“Work for Giants: he Campaign and Battle for Tupelo”* with Tom Parson.



Peter Diemer & Curtis Phillips : The Last Civil War Veterans From Cuyahoga County

Not to long ago while visiting the Soldiers and Sailors Monument downtown I overheard a docent telling someone that the last Civil War veteran from Cuyahoga Co. died in 1943. His name was Peter Diemer and I wondered just exactly who Mr. Diemer was, where he lived and where he was buried. I also learned that the last Cavalry soldier to pass away in Cuyahoga County was Curtis Phillips. Mr. Phillips died in 1942 and was buried in Butternut Ridge Cemetery in North Olmsted. Being from that part of town I decided to visit Mr. Phillips. Maybe I could find the house where he lived after the war and see where he died. So began my detective work concerning these two gentlemen, who obviously lived full and probably very interesting lives after their Civil War Service.

I began my search with a visit to the Soldiers & Sailors Monument. The guys there were more than helpful and we found the service records of both gentlemen. I also went to The Western Reserve Historical Society and was able to go online and get a much more detailed account of their lives and Civil War Service.

PETER DIEMER

According to the Plain Dealer and sources at the Soldiers & Sailors Monument the last living Grand Army veteran from Cuyahoga County was Peter Diemer. Mr. Diemer was born in Cleveland in 1844, when the city had a population of 9,000. His father had come here from France six years before. Peter went to work for the E.I. Baldwin, an early dry goods firm in Cleveland. He was drafted for 100 days in September 1864 into The 150th Ohio Infantry, and went directly to Washington D.C. There he did guard duty at Ft. Lincoln and Ft. Totten; both were part of the vast network of defense forts surrounding Washington. He stayed there for the duration and was mustered out in July of 1865. He came back to Cleveland and lived at 1910 E. 89 St. Between Euclid and Chester Ave. (The house has long since vanished as the property now belongs to the Cleveland Clinic) He took up his old position with Baldwin & Co. And after the death of his wife in 1917 he went to live with his daughter in Montreal, Canada. He passed away in February 1943 and is buried there. Mr. Diemer's name however is listed proudly at the Soldiers & Sailors Monument along with other members of the 150th Ohio.

CURTIS PHILLIPS

According to the Plain Dealer and sources at the Soldiers & Sailors Monument the last Cavalry officer and second last member of The Grand Army Memorial Post 141 in Cuyahoga County was Mr. Curtis Phillips. Mr. Phillips was born in July 1844 in Salem, Ohio. (He enlisted from Columbiana Co, and therefore is not listed in the Monument downtown.) He entered the 12th Regiment of Ohio Volunteer Cavalry when the was 18 and served throughout the war. He was mustered out in November 1865 and returned to Salem and was associated with his father in the tanning business. He came to Cleveland in the 1890s and became a druggist and lived at 2901 Jay Ave. His store was located at 1887 Fulton Rd. in Ohio City. He retired in 1930 and at that time was living at 1666 Winton Ave until moving to 1371 Clarence Ave. in Lakewood. He passed away in December 1942. Services were conducted at Daniels Funeral Home in Lakewood by members of Lookout Camp of The Sons of Union Veterans. He was buried at The Butternut Ridge Cemetery in North Olmsted, Ohio.

The 12th Regiment served throughout the War in the West Virginia and North Carolina mountains. Interestingly enough the 12th was part of Stoneman's Cavalry raid through North Carolina in April 1865 and almost captured Jefferson Davis and the remaining members of the Confederate Government. They finished the War in Nashville, Tennessee from where they were mustered out.

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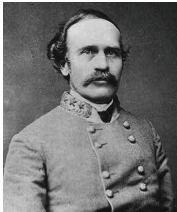


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Bushrod Johnson's Final Resting Places by David A. Carrino



The history brief that was presented at the April 2016 meeting of the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable focuses on Confederate General Bushrod R. Johnson. This history brief describes Johnson's life and mentions that although he fought for the Confederacy, he was born in Ohio and grew up in a family that had abolitionist sentiments. The history brief, which lists all of the Confederate generals from Ohio, can be found on the Roundtable's web site at the link shown after the text of this article. One interesting anecdote about Bushrod Johnson that is mentioned in the history brief is that he has two final resting places.

It was certainly not unheard of that men who fought in the Civil War were later reinterred from their initial place of burial. But the story of Bushrod Johnson's interment is interesting, because it was 95 years before his remains were moved over 300 miles to lie beside his wife, and this would not have happened without the insight and efforts of a descendant of a Confederate soldier who took action after a casual remark.

According to an account that was published in the August 7, 1975 edition of the *St. Petersburg (Florida) Independent*, Noble Wyatt, whose mother's grandfather served in the Confederate infantry, was responsible for Bushrod Johnson finding his way home after being interred for a long time in enemy territory. Johnson lived for many years in Nashville, Tennessee prior to the Civil War, but ten years after the Civil War he moved north to Illinois with his only child, a mentally handicapped son, to live with relatives. Johnson's wife, Mary, had died in 1858 and was buried in Nashville. Johnson died in 1880 of a stroke, and Wyatt stated that Johnson "lay unconscious for several weeks before he died." The relatives with whom Johnson was living at the time of his death may not have known that Johnson had purchased a burial plot for himself in the cemetery in Nashville in which his wife was buried, nor could Johnson's handicapped son tell this to the relatives. Whatever the reason for the decision not to return Johnson's body to Nashville for burial, Johnson was buried in a cemetery in Miles Station, Illinois and remained there until a chance comment decades later.

Noble Wyatt was born in Charleston, West Virginia and eventually, for work-related reasons, lived in Alton, Illinois, which is less than 20 miles south of Miles Station. Wyatt stated that a woman who lived in Alton told him about the Confederate general's grave. Wyatt's description of Johnson's Miles Station grave is that it was "obscure" and also neglected, as evidenced by the tombstone being broken. Wyatt further stated about Johnson's grave that "there was no reference to the Confederate Army on his tombstone." Because Wyatt knew that Johnson's wife was buried in Nashville and that Johnson considered Nashville his home, Wyatt sought to have Johnson's remains moved to Nashville. Wyatt obtained permission from Johnson's three closest descendants to have the general's remains moved. On August 2, 1975 Johnson was exhumed from his Miles Station grave, and on August 23, 1975 Johnson was reinterred in Nashville. A marker was placed on Johnson's Miles Station grave to indicate that Johnson had been buried there, and this marker notes his Confederate service and his reinterment in Nashville. For spearheading the return of Bushrod Johnson to Nashville, Noble Wyatt received an award from the West Virginia Historical Society in 1999. Thanks to Noble Wyatt's Civil War astuteness and willingness to take action, Bushrod Johnson was reunited with his wife and his home.



Link for the history brief about Bushrod Johnson:

www.clevelandcivilwarroundtable.com/articles/comment/history_briefs16.htm



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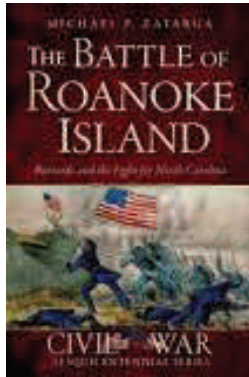
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CIVIL WAR BOOKSHELF

By William F.B. Vodrey

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The Battle of Roanoke Island by Michael P. Zatarra (History Press, Charleston, S.C. 2015)



Having made summer trips to the Outer Banks with my family since I was a boy, I wanted to read this book as soon as I heard about it. I knew only a little about the Civil War along the North Carolina coast from David Stick's classic *Graveyard of the Atlantic* (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill 1952). Michael Zatarra, a historian formerly with the National Park Service, has written a short, concise book about one of the first Army-Navy amphibious operations in U.S. history. Although *The Battle of Roanoke Island* isn't perfect, I did learn quite a bit from it.

George McClellan and Ambrose Burnside were classmates and friends at West Point, and McClellan gave Burnside a much-needed job with the Illinois Central Railroad in 1858 after Burnside's business went bankrupt. Burnside did not do too badly leading troops at First Bull Run, and McClellan, named to command the Army of the Potomac, soon picked him to lead an expedition to capture territory along the North Carolina coast. If all went well, Federal strongholds there could provide bases and coaling stations to support the

Navy's blockade, and furnish jumping-off points for raids deeper into Confederate territory, including threatening the naval base in Norfolk, Va., just up the coast.

Zatarra provides short profiles of the commanders of the mostly-New England units which Burnside brought into his "Coastal Division," including Cols. Edward Harland of the 8th Connecticut infantry regiment, Charles Russell of the 10th Connecticut, John Hartranft of the 51st Pennsylvania, Edward Ferrero of the 51st New York and Edwin Upton of the 25th Massachusetts, among others. We learn of Col. Lionel Jobert D'Epineuil's 53rd New York, a riotous lot and an unfortunate exception to the usual rule of Zouaves being elite troops, and of Col. Isaac Peace Rodman's 4th Rhode Island, so pleased by their new commanding officer that they bought him a gift of field glasses for the expedition. Jesse Reno, one of Burnside's brigade commanders, won early glory on the North Carolina campaign before his untimely death on South Mountain later that year.

Burnside, to his credit, soon assembled his disparate units into an effective force, and also worked well with his Navy counterpart, Flag Officer (there were no admirals then) Louis M. "Old Guts" Goldsborough. They loaded up the almost 13,000 soldiers at Annapolis, Md. aboard a scratch fleet of 65 ships - many of the transports were acquired by the Navy from the commercial shipping trade - over several days in early January 1862. Despite a severe storm on the way down the coast, the fleet eventually assembled at Hatteras Inlet, already in Union hands from the year before.

The author gives due attention to the much-smaller Confederate army arrayed against Burnside. Gen. Henry Wise, the top Confederate officer in the region and a well-connected former Governor of Virginia (it was he who had signed John Brown's death warrant), had done his best with limited resources, but his pleas for more of everything went largely unanswered by the Confederate War Department. One observer wrote that Wise in early 1862 had "no gunners, no rifled cannon, no supplies, no anything except undrilled and unpaid country bumpkins posing as troops."

When the battle began, Wise had only about 2,500 men under his command. Col. Ambrose Wright of the 3rd Georgia and Col. Charles H. Dimmock, an engineer, tried to beef up Confederate defenses at Forts Bartow, Huger and Blanchard, at key points on Roanoke Island along Croatan Sound, just up the inland coast from Cape Hatteras. They were backed by a tiny Confederate Navy "Mosquito Fleet" of seven small warships with just eight guns between them, led by Cmdr. William F. Lynch.

On February 7, 1862, United States forces went ashore in small boats on the northwestern coast of Roanoke Island, almost unopposed. "In less than 20 minutes from the time the boats reached the shore, 4,000 of our men were passing over the marshes at a double quick and forming in most perfect order on dry land," Burnside later wrote. "I never witnessed a more beautiful sight." He got his entire invading force ashore with few casualties and, after an uncomfortable night out in the rain and mud, made his attack the next day on the much-smaller Confederate army arrayed against him.

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Battle of Roanoke cont.

How the one-day battle ended will come as little surprise, given the great disparity of forces, but it is how the clash unfolded, and why, that I found the most interesting.

The Battle of Roanoke Island is not written in an especially lively way, could have done with more careful editing, and its few maps leave much to be desired, but for anyone who wants to learn more about a little-known amphibious campaign of the Civil War, it's worth a look.



JOIN US FOR OUR NEXT MEETING



Oct. 12, 2016

Drinks @ 6pm, Dinner @ 6:30 Judson Manor

East 107th St & Chester

Program: *Autumn 1862 – The True High Tide of the Confederacy*

Speaker: Robert Lee Hodge



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