



The War Correspondent

Newsletter of the Ray Fawcett Chapter of The Central Ohio Civil War Roundtable

February 2004

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General-in-Chief's Report By Pete Zuhars

We had another great turn out for our first meeting of the New Year. Thanks to everyone! Our good friend and Roundtable member Clarke Wilhelm treated us to a wonderful talk on Winfield Scott Hancock. Thank you Clarke for a great talk on a very interesting person.

We have four new members to the Roundtable, Peter D'Onofrio, Douglas Gill, Robert Hatton and James Kloiber. Welcome abroad guys.

Gordon Rhea was originally scheduled as our guest speaker for February but due to a conflict Mr. Rhea will not be able to attend. We have tentatively rescheduled him for the June meeting. Pinch-hitting for Mr. Rhea this month will be Eric Wittenberg who has graciously agreed to talk on the major cavalry action in the GETTYSBURG Campaign. If you would like to do some reading on the subject, I highly recommend that you pick up Eric's book "*Defending the Flank: The Battle for Brinkerhoff's Ridge and East Cavalry Field.*" Eric should also have copies of his book available for sale at the meeting.

As reported in the last two issues of the newsletter, we are now taking deposits for our annual spring battlefield trip. This

year the trip is to Shiloh on April 23rd-26th. Space is limited so if you would like to go, you need to get your deposit (\$150) to me by the February 11th meeting. The total cost of the trip will be between \$300-\$325. If you're not yet sure whether you can make it but you would like to go, I would recommend that you send in your deposit. If it turns out that you can't go, we will refund your deposit as long as you cancel before the April 14th meeting. If you have any questions, comments or suggestions, please feel free to contact me.

Your Obedient Servant,
Pete Zuhars

Answer to January Puzzler

4,792 prisoners were taken.

February Puzzler

What Tennessean enlisted as a private, became a brigadier after Shiloh, and had six horses killed under him?

2004 Spring Trip

Deposits (\$150) for the April battlefield trip are due by the February 11th meeting. The final payment is due by the April 14th meeting.

Deposits can be mailed to the Roundtables PO Box or brought to the meeting.

If you have any questions please contact Pete Zuhars at (740) 363-9542 or Patty Barker at (614) 985-3353

Historian General's Report

Our speaker for the February 11th, meeting is Eric Wittenberg. His topic for the evening will be based on his book *Protecting the Flanks: The Battles for Brinkerhoff's Ridge and East Cavalry Field, Battle of Gettysburg, June 2-3, 1863.*

For those of you who may not know Eric he is a graduate of Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and also of the University of Pittsburgh School of Law. He was admitted to practice before the Ohio bar in 1987, as well as the United States District Courts for the Northern (1989) and Southern (1987) Districts of Ohio and the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit (1990).

Eric is also a prize-winning Civil War historian. He is the author of numerous books and more than a dozen articles that have appeared in national magazines on the Civil War. His first book, *Gettysburg's Forgotten*

Continued on page 2

ten Cavalry Actions, was named the third winner of the Robert E. Lee Civil War Roundtable of Central New Jersey's Bachelder-Coddington Award, as the best new work addressing the Battle of Gettysburg of 1998. Other books written by Eric are *"We Have It Damn Hard Out Here": The Civil War Letters of Sgt. Thomas W. Smith, Sixth Pennsylvania Cavalry, Glory Enough for All: Sheridan's Second Raid and the Battle of Trevilian Station*; and *Little Phil: A Reassessment of the Civil War Leadership of Gen. Philip H. Sheridan*.

Eric is a member of our Roundtable and in the past held the position of Historian General.

**Adjutant General's
Report
January 14, 2004
Meeting
By
Mary Chester**

Larry J. Daniel spoke about one of my favorites, Union General Winfield Scott Hancock. Hancock, he said, was one of the most successful commanders who never had his own command.

Much of Hancock remains a mystery even today. We know that he served in the Army for 46 years, and was a man with a gigantic presence. But Hancock was quiet about his career and left no memoirs, nor diary.

Although he barely met the West Point height standards upon admission, he was 6'2" when he graduated. Not a good student, he graduated 18th in a class of 25 and began his career with the Sixth Infantry.

During the Mexican War he was assigned to recruitment

and was so successful that he had difficulty getting a battlefield assignment. After a letter writing campaign, Hancock was sent to Mexico to serve under his namesake General Winfield Scott. During his service in Mexico, Hancock discovered that he loved combat. Because of his meritorious service there, Hancock was brevetted to First Lieutenant.

After Mexico, Hancock was sent to St. Louis, Missouri where he met and married Almira Russell. They had two children, a son and daughter. Unfortunately Hancock outlived both his children.

Hancock served during the Seminole Wars in southern Florida, during the violence of "Bleeding Kansas" and briefly in Utah. Then in 1859 the Hancock's moved with the army to California. In California Hancock served under Albert Sidney Johnston, along with some of his friends including George Pickett, Tom Garnett and Lew Armistead.

Hancock was a Democrat, no fan of Lincoln, and a believer in states rights. However, he had no sympathy for those who wanted to secede from the Union, as he believed the Union was sacred.

When war came Hancock was assigned to Robert Anderson as supply officer, to serve in Kentucky. But Hancock wanted to fight, and after moving his family to New York, headed for Washington D.C. Another friend, George McClellan, had just been given command of the Army, and McClellan remembered Hancock from Mexico. McClellan made him Hancock a Brigadier General, with instructions to form a brigade. Hancock assumed command of a brigade of Baldy Smith's division of the 6th Corp.

Hancock proved to be a fair minded commander who

treated both regular Army and volunteer officers the same. He believed strongly in drill and discipline. He also had a temper and the worst language in the Union Army! Hancock's forte was moving troops where they were needed.

It was at Williamsburg, during the Peninsula campaign where he saw his first action as a commander in battle. It was as a result of his leadership during a critical flank attack, that George McClellan called Hancock "Superb."

When Isreal Richardson was mortally wounded at Antietam, McClellan chose Hancock to take command of Richardson's division. He assumed command and held the line. After the battle he was given command of the First Division of the 2nd Corps.

Hancock refused to join in the grumbling that occurred after McClellan was replaced. He believed that "we serve the cause, not the man." That belief was surely tested at Fredericksburg when the 1st Division of the 2nd Corp was the second wave to move against the Confederate's fortified position on Marye's Heights.

At Chancellorsville Hooker did not prove to be an improvement over Burnside. When Hooker decided to retreat, it was Hancock's division of the 2nd Corp that was chosen as the last line of defense. Like something from a movie, this one division covered the withdrawal of the entire Union Army.

After Chancellorsville, Major General Darius Couch decided that he had had enough and requested a transfer. Hancock was selected as his replacement to command the 2nd Corp.

General George Meade

soon replaced Hooker. Immediately upon Meade's appointment the Confederates converged on Gettysburg. The man Lincoln would have preferred to Meade, the man who refused the appointment, was John Reynolds. During the morning of the first day of battle, Reynolds was killed.

Although Hancock was junior to other officers already on the field, Meade sent Hancock to take command. Hancock stabilized the situation and recommended to Meade that the Army remain there to fight, telling him that the Union Army had great defensive position.

Hancock was instrumental in repulsing the Confederate attacks of the second and third day. He commanded from the front and during Pickett's Charge was severely wounded. Despite his wound, he refused to leave the field until the issue was decided. This became his finest moment.

By the spring of 1864 Hancock had healed enough to return to command the 2nd Corp, and what was left of the 3rd Corps. Hancock fought under Grant at the battles of the Wilderness, Spotsylvania, Cold Harbor and Petersburg. Again and again Grant chose Hancock and his 2nd Corps to lead the attacks.

By late fall he could barely move and his wound forced him to relinquish field command for a third time. He was later responsible for carrying out the sentences of those convicted of assassinating President Lincoln.

After the war Hancock headed to the Great Plains and Missouri. Recalled to Washington by then Secretary of War Grant, Hancock was made military commander of Louisiana and Texas. Unfortunately Hancock, who insisted that former

Confederates could vote, got into feuds because of his stance. He asked to be relieved.

In 1880 this non-political man was convinced to run for President. Although he never campaigned he came close to achieving victory. After sleeping through the night of the election, he awoke to find that he had been defeated by only 7,000 votes.

Unfortunately this man of so many accomplishments left little of himself in writing. What did he think about the events of his life? How did he feel about those for whom and with whom he served? Hancock, despite his accomplishments, remains a man of mystery.

Grand Ball

On February 15 at the Inn at Historic Roscoe Village the Confederate Rose Winter Grand Ball will be held.

There will be dancing, light refreshments and other amusements.

The proceeds will benefit the Ohio Confederate Rose graves preservation project and Historic Roscoe Village.

Admission is \$10 per couple. For more information contact Eli R. Beachy at Box 251, Chippewa Lake, OH 44215 or generaleli@yahoo.com.

Military Ball

On February 28 the 16th annual Ohio Regimental Military Ball will be held at the Canton Marriott McKinley Grand in Canton.

There will be afternoon dance lessons, social hour, sit down dinner, and dancing to music by Anonymous String Band, there will be a cash bar.

Registrations postmarked by January 15 will be \$29

each. After January 15 the cost will be \$31 each and must be received by February 14.

Proceeds will go to the Civil War Preservation Trust. The site is themed to honor President William McKinley adjacent to the National First Ladies Museum and Library, near McKinley monument and museum.

For information contact Heather Nichols, (330) 769-3561 or Valerie Francesangeli, at (330) 278-2228; www.ormb.com

Coming CWEA Events

February 26-28 - **The Mobile Campaign: The Battles of Mobile Bay, Fort Morgan, Spanish Fort and Blakely.**

This is a field tour with William Glenn Robertson.

The cost is \$345, which includes 2 lunches.

March 20-21 - **Stonewall Jackson and the Maryland Campaign of 1862.**

This is Saturday 8:30 am through Sunday 2:30 pm and is with Gary L. Ecelbarger.

The cost is \$195, which includes Saturday and Sunday lunches.

March 27 - **Gettysburg: The 1st Corps on the 1st Day.**

This is a walking tour with Gary Kross.

The cost is \$125, which includes lunch.

March 28 - **Gettysburg - Sites Seldom Seen: Hidden and Misplaced Monuments, Rock Carvings by Battle Veterans and other Unusual Sites.**

This is with Gary Kross.

The cost is \$125, which includes lunch.

For more information and registration contact Civil War Education Association at: phone 800-298-1861 or fax 800-550-1347; e-mail cwea@earthlink.net or www.cwea.net

The War Correspondent
Patty Barker, Editor

Roundtable Officers

Pete Zuhars

General-in-Chief

740-363-9542

zeteman@yahoo.com

Gary Milligan

Inspector General

614-793-0761

milligg@columbus.rr.com

Mary Chester

Adjutant General

614-497-3136

David Larrick

Historian General

740-369-1309

Patty Barker

Chief of Signal Corps

614-985-3353

War Council Members

Mike Van Huss

War Council Commander

Richard Cartwright

614-855-3333

Peter Burnside

Jamie Ryan

614-890-6485

Rory McIntyre

614-261-7179

CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

Wednesday, February 11, 7:30 p.m. – The speaker will be Eric Wittenberg – Defending the Flank: The Battle for Brinkerhoff's Ridge and East Cavalry Field. The meeting will be held at the **Westerville Electric Company, 139 E. Broadway, Westerville, OH 43081.**

Future Meetings:

March 10 – John Haas (The Battle for God and Right Civil War Letter Books of Emerson Opdycke)

Dates are subject to change

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P. O. Box 471

Lewis Center, OH 43035-0471