

My Fellow Roundtable Members: Our next meeting is on Wednesday, July 11, 2018 at 7 pm at La Navona, 154 North Hamilton Road, Gahanna, Ohio 43230. Our speaker will be Jim Pula. Mr. Pula is Professor of History at Purdue University Northwest. He is the author and editor of more than two dozen books on immigration history and the American Civil War, and he is currently the editor-in-chief of Gettysburg Magazine. His topic is "The Eleventh Corps" which he describes as follows: *When the name "Chancellorsville" is spoken among Civil War buffs it usually evokes two images: "Lee's Greatest Battle" and "The Flying Dutchmen." For more than a century and a half, the men of the Eleventh Corps have labored under the stigma of being caught by Stonewall Jackson's surprise attack, throwing away their weapons and running away. This event colored the reputation of the Corps, and especially its many soldiers of German ancestry, with the label of cowardice. In this illustrated PowerPoint presentation based on my newly published history of the Eleventh Corps, I will present a new interpretation that is quite different and, as one reviewer said, "stands conventional wisdom on its head."* Please see our website <https://centralohiocwrt.wordpress.com> for more information on Mr. Pula.

I have attached Tom Ayres' Report of Tom Parson's presentation at our June meeting.

Here is our Treasurer's Report:

Treasurer's Report for June 2018

Beginning checking account balance 6/1/2018 = \$3143.93

June receipts = \$94.00 (\$25.00 from dues; \$55.00 from book raffle; \$14.00 from Ed Chapdelaine aluminum can sales)

June expenses = \$450.00 to Tom Parson for speaker fee; \$125.00 to Mike Peters for speaker expenses; \$55.00 donation to Motts Military Museum)

Ending checking account balance 6/30/2018 = \$2607.93

Thanks Colonel Ed for your continuing devotion to our Roundtable. On the topic of the charitable impulses of the good Colonel, if you are a member of the American Battlefield Trust (formerly the Civil War Trust), you have received the most recent edition of the Trust's *Hallowed Ground* magazine. If you look under the list of donors who have given more than 150 gifts, you will find our friend Ed. In addition, you can find Mr. Tim Maurice under the list of givers of more than 200 gifts. Well done gentlemen!

From the Columbus Barracks Roundtable: *Our round table meeting for next month will be held on Thursday, July 12, 2018 and the topic will be "James Longstreet: Lee's Old War Horse" by Dale Beck.* [EDITOR'S NOTE: Dale is a member of our Roundtable, so please try to turn out and support him]

Our meeting will run from 7:00 P.M. until 8:45 P.M. in Meeting Room B in the Upper Arlington Public Main Library, which is located at 2800 Tremont Road in Upper Arlington, Ohio (at the northeast corner of Northam Road and Tremont Road). After you come in the main entrance, turn right at the first hallway past the Circulation Desk and follow it to the end to Meeting Room A and then turn right at the first opportunity and take either the steps or the elevator down to the lower level to Meeting Room B.

*James G. Ryan
President, Central Ohio Civil War Roundtable*

Forrest shattered

Infamous Confederate raider Nathan Bedford Forrest was a major thorn in the Union side, mainly that of William Tecumseh Sherman, whose moving columns needed continuous supply by rail. Forrest's focus was tearing up that rail, namely the Nashville & Chattanooga railroad, and its many bridges.

When Forrest set out from northeast Mississippi in May 1864 for Tennessee to do violence to this rail line, Sherman anticipated the raid and dispatched Brigadier General Samuel Davis Sturgis from Memphis with a formidable force of 4,800 infantry, 3,300 cavalry and 22 guns to blunt Forrest's 3,500 men.

Sturgis, West Point class of 1842, was a seasoned veteran of the Mexican War, having performed admirably at Wilson's Creek in August 1861, earning his star, then serving under John Pope at Second Bull Run and commanding a division of the IX Corps at South Mountain, Antietam and Fredericksburg. The IX Corps was then sent west.

The two armies met June 10 at Brices Crossroads, north of Tupelo. Sturgis was outmaneuvered by Forrest's dismounted cavalry. The 2nd Tennessee succeeded in capturing the bridge at Tishomingo Creek and getting in the rear of Union forces. In their retreat 1,623 of Sturgis's men were captured. Plus, Forrest's men relieved Sturgis of 16 cannons.

It was a thorough victory for Forrest, whose reputation was further burnished. For Sturgis this was his final field command of the war, though he was brevetted major general in March 1865. After the war he served with the 7th Cavalry in the West.

With Sturgis's exit, Major General Andrew Jackson Smith, a grizzled Union veteran, entered the picture. Smith, West Point class of 1838, was a wily veteran who was an expert at moving his men around a field of battle. His army included the hard-drinking "Fighting Joe" Moyer, the very able cavalry commander Benjamin Grierson, who had led a successful raid that extended to Baton Rouge, and Colonel David Moore, who had lost a leg at Shiloh.

As Tom Parson told the Roundtable in June, Smith's mission was to crush Forrest, keep him in Mississippi and tear up the Mobile and Ohio rail lines in eastern Mississippi. Parson is the author

of Work for Giants about the battle of Tupelo or Harrisburg and a park ranger at the Corinth Civil War Interpretive Center.

The Confederate leadership was in shambles, thanks to Forrest. He sabotaged his superior Lieutenant General Stephen D. Lee at every turn and ordered bizarre troop movements. Smith “stole a march” on the Confederates several times as he faked, feinted, diverted and outfoxed them.

Historians have been aided greatly in understanding encounters and movements by the meticulous journal kept by Elijah Edwards of the 7th Minnesota regiment. (Pre-eminent historian Ed Bearss published *Protecting Sherman’s Lifeline* about Brices Crossroads and Tupelo in 1971).

Smith departed LaGrange, Tennessee, on July 5 at the head of the right wing of the 16th Army Corps, with the aforementioned Mower commanding the first division and Moore the third, supported by Grierson’s cavalry. Also, Colonel Edward Bouton headed the first brigade U.S. Colored Troops. In all, 13,000 infantry, 3,000 cavalry and 24 guns. They were in pursuit of Brigadier General James Chalmers’s first division and Brigadier General Abraham Buford’s second division. The rebels numbered 2,100 infantry, 7,000 cavalry and 20 guns.

In three attacks on advancing Union forces headed toward Tupelo, various rebel units had some initial success but were sent reeling by superior Union numbers. Confederate Colonel Edmund Rucker’s brigade captured a Union wagon train on July 13, killing all the mules, forcing the federals to burn seven wagons, before being driven off.

On toward Tupelo, Smith found high ground on a ridge at Harrisburg that he liked to the west of Tupelo. He formed a strong line on July 14 with Mower on the right with Moore and Bouton’s colored troops on the left.

Facing them were Buford, under Lee, on the left and Chalmers on the right. What followed was a “medley of blunders” by the rebels. Forrest refused to lead the attack. On the Confederate right Colonel Philip Roddey’s brigade, open to artillery fire, was routed, retreated to woods and entrenched. On the left, brigades under Colonels Hinchie Mabry and Tyree Bell faced the strongest part of the Union line. Bell’s 4th Tennessee brigade was “cut to pieces,” in Parson’s words.

Before noon the fighting was about over, the rebels thoroughly defeated. The next day Smith “stole another march” and headed back to LaGrange. In three days of fighting, Forrest was shot in the foot and humiliated. He never took responsibility for the destruction of four brigades, with 215 killed and 1,125 wounded or missing. The federals lost 69 killed and 533 wounded or missing. Also, Confederate Colonel Robert McCulloch was severely wounded.

Sherman was miffed that Smith had not totally destroyed Forrest’s army. But he came close. And Forrest, while still able to mount the occasional raid, was never again capable of confronting federal infantry.

And Sherman’s vital rail lines in Tennessee remained intact

