



THE COURIER



Northeast Ohio Civil War Round Table



Tuesday February 10th, 2015 Meeting #151

Canteen: 6:00 pm Dinner: 6:45 pm

Pine Ridge Country Club

30601 Ridge Road, Wickliffe, Ohio

Guest Speaker: The Honorable Dale Fellows

Topic: George Washington, the Past, the Present, and the future

Reservations required Guests are Welcome Please call Mike Sears

Phone 440 257 3956 e-Mail: mikeanddonna@roadrunner.com



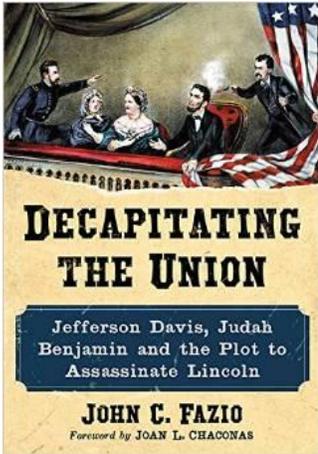
The Honorable Dale Fellows, the president and owner of Morgan Litho, Inc and Eagle Advertising LLC., is a man that defies gravity and most of the other laws of Physics, how else might one explain his nearly endless list of accomplishments! On January 16th, 2015, he was honored by the Willoughby, Ohio Rotary Club with its Distinguished Citizen of the Year Award. When Dale Fellows is not running his business, he can often be found on WVIZ, Public television, or NPR, National Public Radio offering his views on the latest upcoming political campaign. Dale is Chairman of the Lake County Republican Party and a Member of the Lake County Board of Elections. He is a 1979 graduate of Kent State University, and a former Lake County Commissioner. Besides tutoring student in Economics, Mr. Fellows has taught classes at Lakeland Community College and served on the Willoughby Hills Architectural Board

and Planning Commission. He also found time to pursue graduate studies at Cleveland State University, and represent Lake County on the Cuyahoga County Air Port's Zoning Board. We must also note that Dale is a member of the Willoughby Area Chamber of Commerce and a trustee of the Friends of James A. Garfield Historic Site in Mentor, Ohio. We are just "scratching the surface of this man's many accomplishments and awards.

In 1998, Dale Fellows became a Charter member of the Northeast Ohio Civil War Round Table and was our keynote speaker in December 2008 when he presented a talk on "**The Founding Fathers and Our Constitution.**" On Tuesday February 10, 2015, he will be presenting a talk entitled: "**George Washington, the past, the present and the future.**" Be sure to join us for this special presentation by a man with boundless energy and unyielding devotion to the ideals of our First President.

CIVIL WAR JOURNAL of Franco M. Sperrazzo, Events Coordinator

January 13th Meeting, John C. Fazio: “Intrepid Mariners, Kearsarge & the Alabama” John C. Fazio, has now made 3 wonderful presentations to our round table; Francis and Arabella; John and Fanny, Love and War; and the Confederate Secret Service and the Assassination of Abraham Lincoln. Mr. Fazio displayed his remarkable talent with the story of the sinking of the Confederate Raider, CSS Alabama by the Federal gunboat, and USS Kearsarge under the command of Captain Winslow. John Fazio has the unique ability to put his listeners back in time as though they were experiencing the events first hand. John creates a play-like portrayal, using dialogue between the key participants.



Mr. Fazio, clearly appreciates our club and after his visit he wrote me of some comments his best friend, Wife Mary shared with him while driving home. Mrs. Fazio, enjoyed our membership, the superiority of Dino’s Catering service and food fare at Pine Ridge Country Club. Look for his new book scheduled for release spring 2015 entitled: Decapitating the Union, Jefferson Davis, Judah Benjamin and the plot to Assassinate Lincoln.

NEOCWRT Club Dues 2015: this 2nd notice for membership dues renewal confirms the cost for the annual fees in 2015 including the new category for the admission of women and family status. Individual membership remains at \$55. Partners and family members residing in the same household at least 21 years of age will fall under the same umbrella and submit a total of \$90. Make your check out for either price increment to NEOCWRT and indicate in the memo portion your purpose. Separate dinner charge remains \$25. Sergeant-at-Arms Mike Sears will be accompanied by Treasurer Bill Meissner, at the entrance table February 10th. You may send you check to: William Meissner, 9571 Headlands Road, Mentor, OHIO 44060.

NEOCWRT Executive Committee:

- Founders:** Bob Baucher Norton London Joseph Tirpak Frank Yannucci
- President:** Bernard Taub **Vice President:** William Wilson **Treasurer:** William Meissner
- Secretaries:** William Wilson & Steve Abbey
- Sergeant-at-Arms:** Mike Sears & William Meissner
- Directors of Special Projects:** Arlan Byrne, Paul Siedel John Sandy, Ted Karle, Franco Sperrazzo
- Program Chairmen:** Bob Baucher, Norton London;
- Membership Directors:** Kenny Godnavec, Steve Abbey, Terry Reynolds
- Courier Newsletter:** Rebecca Byrne.... Editor; John Sandy: Newsletter Consultant
- Events Coordinator/ Tours:** Franco Sperrazzo, Ted Karle, John Sandy, Norton London
- Website & Constitution Consultant:** Tom Horvath Sr.
- Flags & Color Guard:** Tom Horvath Jr.
- Mahoning Valley CWRT Liaison:** Frank Yannucci **Sunshine Fund:** Steve Abbey, Franco Sperrazzo



PAST PRESIDENTS of the NORTHEAST OHIO CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

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| 1998 Joseph E Tirpak | 1999 Robert Baucher |
| 2000 Norton J. London | 2001 Robert Bayless |
| 2002 Dr. Robert Battisti | 2003 Frank Yannucci |
| 2004 Theodore J. Karle | 2005 John A. Sandy |
| 2006 Brent Morgan | 2007 J. Michael Sears |
| 2008 William Meissner | 2009 Arlan Byrne |
| 2010 Terry Reynolds | 2011 Franco M Sperrazzo |
| 2012 Steve Abbey | 2013 Tom Horvath Sr. |
| 2014 Carl Dodaro | 2015 Bernard A. Taub |

Above Photo, Front: Norton London, Joe Tirpak; Back: Frank Yannucci, Bob Baucher, Bob Bayless, Ed Bearss and Dr. Bob Battisti

Spring Tour 2015: Our NEOCWRT one day Spring Touring Event is tentatively planned for May. We are preparing an excursion to Hiram College which is located in Portage County, Ohio. This historic institution was once headed by James A. Garfield, a Greek and Classical languages professor whom would later become the 20th President of the United States. We will be visiting pre civil war locations that will provide insight into the social turmoil of that era. Garfield was not an Abolitionist, but he hated slavery. He helped form the 42nd Ohio Volunteer Infantry Regiment from the Hiram College area. Many of the officers and men who joined the 42nd were students at Hiram College. Later, we will travel to the Welshfield Inn for our mid-day nourishment.

Mentor Library/JAG Major Battles of the Civil War, Lunch Speaker Series February 11th: The noon-1pm lecture program will be Part 2 of "FAMOUS OHIO REGIMENTS". Ohio was known to have supplied over 300,000 soldiers (3rd most) in the Civil War behind New York and Pennsylvania. Ohio then suffered the 2nd most casualties from combat and various diseases. Learn about the Unions most famous including infantry and artillery units. Featured will be the 7th & 23rd Ohio Regiments. Keynote speaker will be Ohio resident and Antietam Park Ranger Dan Vermylia. The program convenes in the lower level Garfield room and a carry-in lunch is permitted. Location is 8215 Mentor Avenue, phone: 440-255-8811 to confirm.

The February 10th, 2015 meeting will feature Dale Fellows portraying George Washington. We will be having a Book Raffle and 50/50 drawing at the February meeting. We encourage all of our members to donate their old Civil War or American History books. Your donations plus the profits from the raffle, help to defray the costs of our out of town speakers. **Please Note: Beginning on February 10th, dinner will be served at 6:45pm.**



Medical Update on Major William "Bill" Koeckert: Big Bill is recovery well following a fall after the Christmas Holiday Season. Apparently Bill broke his arm and contracted pneumonia. We have received a communication from his Daughter Lynn Welter, through the assistance of Bill's good friend Errol Savage. The 22 year career United States Military veteran is now residing in Shawnee, near Kansas City, KS. Bill is rehabbing nearby his daughter's place. The following letter from January 27th, states verbatim what Lynn wants our NEOCWRT members to know. Errol will continue to convey information to us as progress hopefully occurs.

"HERE'S AN UPDATE ON DAD. This past Friday he was hospitalized for pneumonia and a urinary tract infection. He responded well to treatment and was released yesterday (the 26th) to a rehab facility here in Shawnee. A couple of blocks from my home. Since his fall he's been sedentary and become very weak. They will be

focusing on leg strength and then working the arm once that's healed enough to tolerate therapy. Here we go again". He's in a private room at a place called The Sweet Life Rosehill. Address: 12802 Johnson Drive. Room 306. Shawnee, KS 66216. Phone 913-248-7186. Keep those cards and letters coming!

Thank you, Lynn

GENERAL JOHN BELL HOOD and the courtship of SARAH BUCHANAN PRESTON by Arlan Byrne



JOHN BELL HOOD was born in Kentucky in 1830. His father was a doctor and the owner of 600 acres of farm land, which he farmed with the help of several dozen slaves. In 1849 John, also called Sam, obtained an appointment to West Point, but while he was there, he didn't exactly set the world on fire. At that time, 200 demerits would get you dismissed from the academy and by the middle of Johns' senior year; he had accumulated 196 demerits. So, facing expulsion, he settled down, went to work, and managed to graduate in 1853, 44th out of a class of 55 cadets.

Hood also managed to set another sort of record. At the time the Library of West Point was one of the most extensive libraries in the country with over 16,000 volumes. According to Academy records, in four years at West Point, John only checked out two books; both popular novels of the time. After graduation Hood was sent west and eventually assigned to the United States 2nd Cavalry Regiment. This regiment became famous as the training ground for 17 Civil War Generals. While in Texas fighting Indians, he not only got a Comanche Indian arrow in his left hand; but he picked up a reputation as a ferocious fighter; the kind of leader the wild and savage Texans admired.

Thus, when the Civil War started he was assigned to lead what would become the hard fighting Texas Brigade; one of the Confederate Armies outstanding combat units. They participated in nearly all of the early battles of the Army of Northern Virginia and then, in the winter of 1862 – 1863, Hoods personal life changed completely. He fell in love.

SARAH BUCHANNON PRESTON, usually called 'Sallie' or 'Buck' was the beautiful, flirtatious, vivacious eighteen year old daughter of a wealthy, aristocratic, socially prominent, old line South Carolina family; whose ancestor was the famous "Give me Liberty or Give Me Death", revolutionary war patriot, Patrick Henry. She had two brothers, both of whom were killed in the war, one even killed while fighting under Hood in 1864; and two sisters, one younger and one older. At the beginning of the war the older sister, Mary, was engaged to marry Dr. John Darby, the chief medical officer of the Texas Brigade and eventually our story will begin with him.



MARY BOYKIN CHESNUT was the wife of John Chesnut, a rich South Carolina planter and slave owner. He owned five square miles of South Carolina farmland and 500 slaves to farm it. When the war started he was called to Richmond to act as an advisor to Confederate President Jefferson Davis and also to run various departments of the government. Mary went with him and opened their Richmond home to visiting dignitaries and Generals as a semi-official White House hotel; where anybody who was important in the high Confederate government and social circles gathered to live, party and gossip. She also started a five year detailed daily diary in which she faithfully recorded any facts or rumors she heard during this time. Civil War historians have come to accept Mary's' diary as a valuable research source regarding the Confederate Government, life in Richmond and the role of Confederate women during the Civil War. Since the Preston and Chesnut families were close friends, and since few of the letters or written documents of the Preston and Hood families survive; the main source of information about the Hood-Preston

romance is Mary Chesnut's diary. *Mary Boykin Chesnut photograph above left*

By the winter of 1862-1863 a five month lull had enveloped the war. In March, Dr. John Darby, Hoods chief surgeon, apparently thought Hood should meet his fiancée's younger sister Buck, so he brought Hood to the Chesnut home where the Prestons' were staying. Mary Chesnut must have been impressed with Hood, because she wrote in her diary; "When he came, with his sad Quixote face, the face of an old crusader who believed in his cause, his cross, his crown-we were not prepared for that type exactly as a beau ideal of wild Texans. Tall-thin-shy, blue eyes and light hair, tawny beard and a vast amount of it covering his lower face-appearance of awkward strength. Someone said that great reserve of manner he carried only into ladies society."

Although Mary Chesnut was impressed with Hood, evidently Buck Preston was not; because she refused to come downstairs and meet

him. However, several days later, as Hood was leading his troops through Richmond in a freezing snowstorm to their camps on the Rappahannock River; Hood noticed the Chesnuts, the Preston sisters, and Dr. Darby standing by the road watching.



“Hood and his staff immediately came galloping up, dismounted and joined us;” Mary Chesnut wrote. “Buck somewhat stood apart until Dr. Darby introduced her to Hood.” Then, Mrs. Chesnut remembered, Hood remounted, turned his horse and sat looking at Buck for a minute. Finally he leaned down and said something to Darby, who smiled. When he left, Buck came rushing up to Darby and said, “What did he say? Was he talking about me?” “Only a horse compliment,” Darby relied, “he is a Kentuckian, you know. He said you stand on your feet like a thoroughbred.” Apparently, before the invention of automobiles and airplanes, when the horse was still the main method of transportation, this was a high compliment to a woman; because the next day, when Hood returned to the Chesnut home for dinner, a courtship began in earnest. Before the meal was served they played cards – Buck, Hood, Bucks sister Mary and Dr. Derby. “Certainly” Mary Chesnut wrote, “never did a game of Casino cause so much uproarious mirth.” *Sallie Buchanan Preston photograph on the left*

Soon Hood was off to war and in the fighting at the ‘Devils Den’ during the Battle of Gettysburg, Hood was wounded in the left arm. He did not lose the arm, but for the rest of his life it was useless and remained pinned to the front of his shirt. As he was recovering from his wound in Richmond, he continued the courtship and before he went to Tennessee to take part in the Battle of Chickamauga, he proposed to Buck. Later he recalled, “she didn’t say yes, and she didn’t say no;” so hope remained.

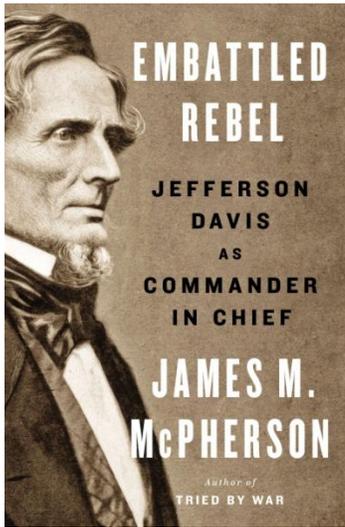
At the Battle of Chickamauga Sam Hood was shot in the right leg, and in order to prevent gangrene from setting in, the surgeons, following the medical custom of the day, amputated his leg four inches below his body. However doctors did not expect Hood to live, so when they put him in an ambulance to take him home, they put his leg in with him so they could be buried together. But Hood did survive, and by the time he arrived in Richmond, he was still determined to

convince Buck to marry him. He asked her again on Christmas Day in 1863; and again she turned him down. So, it was a great surprise when Mary Chesnut heard a few weeks later that Buck and Sam were engaged. When she asked Buck about it, Buck replied she had gone down to his carriage to say good night, and he held out his good hand and ask her to marry him one more time. “Say yes or no,” the general told Buck, “I will not be satisfied with anything else-yes-or no is it?”

“Well, he would keep holding out his hand,” Buck told Mary Chesnut. “What could I do? So, I put my hand in his. Heavens, what a change came over his face.” “Now I will speak to your father,” Hood declared, “I want his consent to marry you at once.” Wedding plans began, but again the war interfered. This time Hood was sent west to assume command of the Army of Tennessee from General Joseph Johnston. Confederate defeats at the Battles of Atlanta and Nashville followed; and by June, 1865 the war was over.

The Prestons and Chesnuts left Richmond and moved back to the Carolinas; but when Hood returned from the west and stopped in South Carolina to marry Buck, her family finally laid down the law. No daughter of a Preston would be allowed to marry beneath her class; and they considered Hood, a Kentuckian who was no longer a war hero, as definitely beneath her class. There would be no marriage and Hood, who had faced and overcome death and difficulties on many dangerous battlefields, admitted defeat and gave up. The engagement was over. “If he had just been more persistent,” Buck wailed to Mary Chesnut. “If he had not given way under Mamie’s violent refusal to listen to us, if he had asked *me*. When you refuse to allow anybody to be married in your house - well, I would have gone down on the sidewalk. I would have married him on the pavement, if the parson could be found to do it. I was ready to leave all the world for him, to tie my clothes in a bundle and like a soldier’s wife, trudge after him to the ends of the earth.” But she didn’t. Post Script: In 2005, two descendants of Buck, Frances Herman Jackson and Mary McNeese Kinard wrote a novel about the adventures and experiences of their beautiful ancestor, entitled: “A Silence of Trumpets, the story of Sarah Buchanan Preston.” It is il avail in paperback from Amazon for \$2.95.

***Embattled Rebel, Jefferson Davis as Commander in Chief* by James M. McPherson
– a book review by Scott Hagara.**



There is little doubt that James M. McPherson is one of the best Civil War historians and authors, and *Embattled Rebel, Jefferson Davis as Commander in Chief* is one of his most recent books. The book follows a similar analysis of Abraham Lincoln in *Tried by War* (reviewed in the *Courier* in 2013), and provides the reader with a good perspective on one of the war's most important, and controversial, figures.

The introduction to *Embattled Rebel* says it all when it states that “history has not been kind to Jefferson Davis”. In February, 1861, Mr. Davis was elected president, not just commander in chief, of the newly formed Confederate States of America. His military and political background made him an ideal person for such a position, but he would have preferred being just the general-in-chief. The next four years would prove to be a huge struggle for the Confederates and Davis. The ultimate failure of the Confederacy and loss of the war would cause many to place the blame on their leader.

This book provides a relatively even treatment of Davis, documenting his success as well as failure in his position of leadership. It also contrasts the challenges faced by Davis to those of Abraham Lincoln. The author dispels many misconceptions regarding Davis, both as a man, and as a military leader. Given the huge disparity of resources, it is hard to imagine the Confederacy ever winning the war, but McPherson points out many ways that they could have done better. The analysis of Davis's strategy was interesting, as he looked to have several concentrated forces that would be defensive in nature, with an occasional offensive thrust. This was at odds with state governors that wanted their territories protected, never buying in to the common cause of their effort.

Jefferson Davis was certainly lacking in “people skills”. The book discusses his strategies and management style. He was loyal to his friends, but there were not many of them. Perhaps this loyalty was misplaced with regards to Generals Polk, Hood, and several others. He had a good working relationship with Robert E. Lee, but had a terrible time with a number of his generals, notably Joseph Johnston and P. G. T. Beauregard. His subordinates seemed self serving and dismissive of many of his ideas regarding strategy. This is something that Lincoln was able to overcome, but Davis could not. Davis was ill much of the time, but never neglected his work or his cause. He never gave up, even after Appomattox he still believed that his army could rally and preserve the cause of disunion.

I found this book to be very informative and well written. Several sub plots of the book, including the lack of cooperation and ineptitude of many of the Confederate generals and cabinet members, were very enlightening. It was also interesting to follow the thought process of allowing blacks to serve in the Confederate Army and when they finally approved it was too little and too late to change the outcome of the war. It is also refreshing to get a perspective of the Civil War from the Confederate side. Please note that this book is not a biography, and provides little insight into the life of Jefferson Davis before, or after, the war.

Embattled Rebel was written in 2014 and published by Penguin Press. It is available at the Mentor and Morley Public Libraries, and is available on Amazon and all book stores. The book contains 252 pages (not too long) and has a section of notes that is easy to reference.