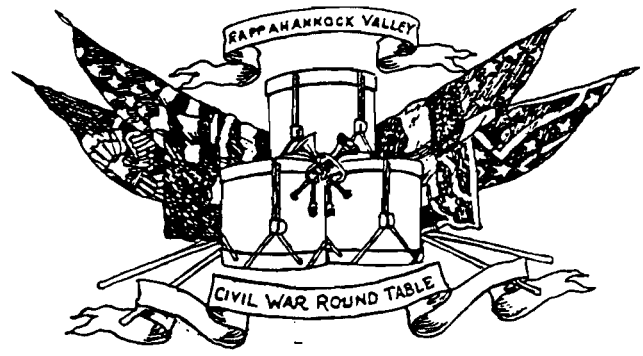


DRUM & BUGLE  
Voice of the Rappahannock  
Valley Civil War Round Table



Vol. 11, No. 12

December 2000

**“Little Billy” Reconsidered**

Speaker: **Walt Sheffield**

Topic: **The Career of Major General William “Little Billy” Mahone**

When: **Monday, December 11, 2000.** Social at 6:30 p.m., dinner at 7:00 p.m., meeting at 7:45 p.m.

Location: **Fredericksburg Square, 525 Caroline Street, downtown Fredericksburg**

Dinner: The cost for dinner is \$17.00. **Reservations are required and must be made by noon Monday, December 4.** To make reservations, contact Mike Stevens in any of the following ways: 371-3115 (telephone), 372-9860 (fax), <drmste@aol.com> (e-mail). If you make a reservation and find that you will not be able to attend the dinner, please call to cancel as soon as possible. If you make a reservation for dinner, then fail to show up, and we have to pay for your meal, you will be billed for it. If you don't call until after the Monday noon deadline, or if you just show up for the dinner unannounced, you may or may not eat. We allow the folks who have properly signed up to get their food first.

Walter Jervis Sheffield was born in Petersburg, and as the son of a Methodist minister, spent his formative years in several communities around the Commonwealth. A short and inglorious dip in the academic pool promptly led to several enlisted and commissioned years in the Army. Later majoring in Virginia history at Old Dominion, Sheffield went on to earn legal degrees from Emory and NYU. After working in Governor Mills Godwin's office, he settled in Fredericksburg, where he has practiced law for the past 25 years. Proving that you can fool all of the people some of the time, Sheffield served two terms as the city's vice-mayor. He is a past president of the Fredericksburg CWRT, a student of the Mexican War, and perpetually amazed by the post-Cold-Harbor indifference he finds among many Civil War devotees.

He will talk about one of the war's most interesting generals, “Little Billy” Mahone. After a rocky start at Seven Pines and in the first six of the Seven Days under Benjamin Huger, Mahone did well at Malvern Hill, followed that up with solid work at Chancellorsville and in the 1864 Overland Campaign, and came into his own during the siege of Petersburg. Mahone had many ties to the Fredericksburg area, and after the war became a key political figure in the Commonwealth. His war reputation (along with Longstreet's) was tarnished by Jubal Early and has still not been fully appreciated.

## Calendar

**Saturday, December 9** – FoFAB-sponsored guided tour/lecture at Prospect Hill, led by Ford Maune. Meet at Fredericksburg Battlefield Tour Stop #4 at 2:00 p.m. For more information, call 540-972-9954.

**Thursday, December 14** - FoFAB education program, Central Rappahannock Library, 1201 Caroline Street, Room 2, 7:00 p.m. Annie Bartholomew on Clara Barton at Fredericksburg.

**Monday, January 8** - RVCWRT meeting. Mike Gorman speaks on Researching Civil War Richmond.

"

**Monday, February 12** - RVCWRT meeting. Pete Wilson speaks on "The Civil War: One Man, His Unit, His Family, and His Community."

**Monday, March 12** - RVCWRT meeting. Women of the Round Table speak on "Scandal on the Threshold of War."

**Saturday, March 24** – RVCWRT spring bus tour to the new Richmond National Battlefields Park Visitor Center at Tredegar Iron Works and Hollywood Cemetery.

**Monday, April 9** – RVCWRT meeting. Boone Bartholomees speaks on the Army of the Potomac staff.

**Monday, May 14** - RVCWRT meeting. Carolyn Elstner and Tom Van Winkle speak on Ellwood.

**Monday, June 11.** – RVCWRT meeting. Frank O'Reilly speaks on the 1864 Shenandoah Valley Campaign.

**Monday, September 10** - RVCWRT meeting. Eric Wittenberg speaks on the Battle of Tom's Brook.

**Saturday, November 4** – RVCWRT field trip to 3rd Winchester and Fisher's Hill.

**Monday, November 13** - RVCWRT meeting. Chuck Siegel speaks on topic to be determined.

## Larry's Quiz

And now for something completely different! There were a significant number of Union generals born in Ohio. Can you guess the number and who they were? Answers on next to last page. Memo to Larry: Were there any Confederate generals who were born in Ohio?

## Pickett's Charge in History and Memory

by Carol Reardon

Reviewed by Mac Wyckoff

Close your eyes and form a mental picture of Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg on July 3, 1863. According to Dr. Carol Reardon, most of what you probably envision is wrong or cannot be substantiated.

Reardon, a professor of history at Penn State, addressed this topic at the November meeting of the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table. She explained that our conception of the past is viewed through two lenses, history and memory.

Civil War history is largely based upon the after-action reports by the officers that were published in *The Official Records of the War of the Rebellion*, supplemented by soldier letters, diaries, and memoirs. Unfortunately, the *Official Records*, often referred to using the acronym OR, are neither official nor complete. Either some officers never made reports, or the reports were lost by the time the OR was compiled for publication. Some reports are vague and poorly written. Others contain defensive rhetoric to protect the author's reputation; few would admit to making mistakes. Dr. Reardon emphasized that these reports should be critically viewed as you should any testimony, and not accepted as gospel.

Contemporary letters are a good source of information, but a soldier sees little of what is going on around him. Diaries tend to be brief, and memoirs are written long after the event, when memory can play tricks. Military combat is a traumatic experience, of which soldiers tend to remember only the most dramatic and extraordinary events, and not the mundane happenings of combat or soldier life.

Dr. Reardon stated that there are four events associated with Pickett's Charge about which we possess a great deal of information. These accounts are often conflicting, and little is known about other aspects of the charge. She discussed each of these four events.

The first incident is the Confederate artillery bombardment that preceded the assault. The National Park Service signs, the electric map program, and the bus tour narrative all state that the shelling lasted for 2 hours. In reality, the participants came to no such agreement. Reardon has found varying accounts that say the bombardment lasted as little as 10 minutes and as long as 4 hours. She said the most reliable way to calculate the length of time in question is to throw out the testimony, tabulate the number of shells fired from the ordnance reports, and multiply that figure by the amount of time it took to fire a shot. This leads her to conclude that the bombardment lasted between 75 and 90 minutes. The National Park Service signs state that 137 Confederate guns participated in the shelling. Reardon was able to trace this "fact" back to a Union private who would have had no way of knowing this information. In reality, we do not know how many cannon were used.

The second event is the Confederate advance. Most publications now agree that 15,000 soldiers went forward. She has found accounts that vary from as few as 5,000 to as many as 60,000 Confederates charging toward the Union line. In reality, probably about 12,500 Southern boys participated in the attack. What did the formation look like? Once again, testimony varies. Some say there were 2 lines, some say the Confederates advanced in 3 lines.

How many Confederates reached the famous Angle in the Union lines? Dr. Reardon said that accounts vary between none and 1,000 men reaching the Angle. Once again, we just don't know the answer. Nor do we know what units were involved; claims have been made in behalf of regiments from North Carolina, Virginia, and Tennessee.

Lastly, how many Confederates became casualties that afternoon? Some units involved in the charge had been heavily engaged two days earlier, and the records don't state which day the men fell. Again, we don't really know the answer.

Dr. Reardon next posed the question of how we can get a better understanding of the attack. She said that one way is to walk the actual ground. Far too many tourists simply view the ground from their car at either the Angle in the Union line or at the Virginia Monument where the attack began. They see what appears to be flat ground stretching for a mile between the lines and wonder why General Lee was so foolish as to attack here. In reality, the terrain is not flat. Dr. Reardon has conducted dozens of staff rides for military officers across the ground, and these modern soldiers are amazed to find that for only the last 400 yards would the Confederates have been without cover.

What role did the media play in shaping our understanding of the charge? It is the newspapers that misnamed this attack. Richmond's 5 newspapers competed for coverage, and they naturally focused on the Virginians who were in General Pickett's Division. They were not interested in writing about the two other divisions (Trimble's and Pettigrew's) that contained men from other Southern states. These papers began making references to Pickett's Charge, a reference that continues to the present time, to the annoyance of North Carolinians. In fact, many Southerners from states other than Virginia refer to the charge as Longstreet's Assault.

Dr. Reardon concluded by saying that by the Silver Anniversary of the battle (1888), when the Blue and Gray again gathered on the fields of Gettysburg, the veterans were not interested in telling the truth. She quoted a participant who wrote that writing accurate history is not always possible, and by 1888 was not even politically desirable. She stated that historians need to do a better job of writing accurate history, and readers need to be more discriminating in what they accept as truth.

### **2002 Field Trip Destination Voting Results**

It has become RVCWRT practice to have the participants in our multi-day field trips undertake a preliminary winnowing of possible destinations for the next multi-day field trip. On the way back from Charleston, SC, in late October, the 27 participants narrowed a list of some 20 possible destinations down to four. These were: the Last Days of the War in North Carolina (Wilmington, Averagesboro, Bentonville, and the Bennett Place); Middle Tennessee (Stones River/Murfreesboro, Spring Hill, Franklin, and Nashville); the 1862 Shenandoah Valley Campaign; and Civil War Savannah.

The final vote was taken at our November meeting, using a proportional ballot that allowed voters to rank their preferences from 4 (highest) to 1 (lowest). There were 57 voters, each allocating 10 points, for a theoretical total of 570 points. As might be expected, there was one person who only voted for his/her Number 1 choice, and that lowered the actual total to 564 points.

The results were: Savannah 159, North Carolina 157, 1862 Valley Campaign 128, and Middle Tennessee 120. The votes in fact were handcounted twice, and while the Florida Supreme Court has not ruled on certification of the vote, it would appear that Savannah has won by a whisker-thin margin. There must be something in the air this fall that induces cliffhanger elections. Anyway, we will be traveling (not marching) to Savannah in the fall of 2002.

## **Heritage, Not Hate**

Our heritage, with all its memory and meaning, is not a renewable resource. We who understand must never give up or give in to ignorance or prejudice, for to do so would be unworthy of the bravery and courage and example of our Confederate ancestors. And since no one respected them more than those who fought against them, to do so would prove us unworthy of our Union ancestors as well.

With a non-confrontational approach, with an emphasis on education, and with persistence and patience, let's fight the good fight until the Final Roll is called. As the immortal Babe Ruth once said, "It's hard to beat a person who never gives up."

I respectfully request that you share the attached with as many folks as you can, so as to keep the flame alive.

Thank you.  
Mike Stevens  
Fredericksburg, VA

## **An Apology**

### **Letter to a Confederate Great-Great-Grandfather**

July 1, 2004

Dear Great-Great-Grandfather,

I am writing to beg your forgiveness. I have done a terrible thing. I had no intention of letting these matters get out of hand, but they did. I pray that you will forgive me and ask the Lord for guidance in these troubling times.

See, back only four or five years ago, there was still support for things Confederate and for the fond memory of men like you. There were organizations that were in place to defend your good name and to remember the deeds you had done, and to honor the sacrifices you made; but I, like others, failed to support them, and now it is too late.

Now the Battle Flag is outlawed in public. You cannot find one in school or town. There are no Southern Crosses flying on any flagpoles anymore. I can remember a few years ago, they were flying on city, county, and state government buildings. Very few even dare to keep them at home for fear of losing their jobs or being arrested.

We now have a state-approved flag that is more "universal." All flags for states that were once proud of their Confederate heritage have been changed. They have renamed all the streets, counties, buildings, and schools that once honored the brave men of the CSA with names of contemporary "leaders." The monuments that once graced the courthouse lawns and parks have been taken to the museums. In fact, there is only a small section of the museum now dedicated to the Confederate sacrifice. It is not a positive exhibit. You men in gray are labeled as criminals and traitors.

There are no more references to Confederate veterans in the local cemetery. The stones have been modified to erase any commentary on that war service. As I mentioned before, because of the ban on the Southern Cross, we can no longer place the dear flag on your final

resting place. The school kids can't play "Dixie" in the band any more. The school board says it is racist. I guess we have to live with it, because they don't know the words anyway.

We are having a tougher time even finding things about the war unless they are published in the North. Our county library had to remove all the Southern history and Southern culture books because they are judged as harmful to children. The textbooks that *are* in the schools pretty much defame you and all the veterans for being hateful, nasty rebels. I am sorry for letting things get the way they are.

The politically correct revisionists are a carry over from the carpetbaggers and scalawags of your time. They have most of the country now believing the lies of the North. I could have done more, but I really didn't think *my* inaction would allow this to happen.

See, grandfather, I could have flown the flag at home. I could have gotten more involved in the heritage organizations. I could have marched in parades, worked as a volunteer in schools, contributed a few hours and a few dollars when an SCV/CSA-related project was promoted, but I didn't. I should have checked on the kids' textbooks every year and offered corrections to the errors. I should have stood up against the lies. I could have written letters, or spoken to politicians. I should have gotten my family, friends, and neighbors involved.

Every time some group called the Confederates racists or traitors, I should have stood up and done something. I did not, and I failed you. I was too busy. I did not think my participation really was important. I did not like some of the men who were leading us. I know now that I was wrong.

It is all gone because of my sloth, apathy, lack of cooperation, and unwillingness to give a little time or money for the cause. I should have thought about all your sacrifices and the sacrifices of thousands of other Confederate veterans. I lost focus on what ya'll gave for the cause, instead thinking selfishly, only of myself.

Had I done something four years ago, before things really got bad, there would still be honor for you and for me. Now there is nothing left of the Confederacy or of your good name. I fumbled that away, and not only for you and me, but also for the generations to come. I hope that when I leave this earth, and we see each other face to face, you will have some pity on me and forgive me for the awful job I did as a member of the Sons of Confederate Veterans.

In the bonds of Old Virginia! Deo Vindice!

#### **Note**

By publishing this letter, RVCWRT seeks to highlight one manner in which individuals can pursue their Civil War heritage. Similar pursuits might include membership in the Sons of Union Veterans and efforts to ensure the remembrance of participants in local slave rebellions. RVCWRT's bylaws commit the organization to support a greater public appreciation of the Civil War and the preservation of Civil war sites.

Larry's Answer - 63

The following is an alphabetical list of the 63 generals, with year and place of birth.

1. Joseph Bailey, 1825, Pennsville;
2. John Beatty, 1828, Sandusky;
3. William Thomas Harbaugh Brooks, 1821, Lisbon;
4. Catharinus Putnam Buckingham, 1808, Zanesville;
5. Don Carlos Buell, 1818, Lowell;
6. William Wallace Burns, 1825, Coshocton;
7. Cyrus Bussey, 1833, Hubbard;
8. Charles Champion, 1822, Zanesville;
9. George Crook, 1828, Dayton;
10. George Armstrong Custer, 1839, New Rumley;
11. Charles Ewing, 1835, Lancaster;
12. Hugh Boyle Ewing, 1844, Lancaster;
13. Thomas Ewing, Jr., 1829, Lancaster;
14. Lucius Fairchild, 1831, Portage County;
15. James William Forsyth, 1835, Maumee;
16. James A. Garfield, 1831, Cuyahoga County;
17. Quincy Adams Gillmore, 1825, Lorain;
18. Robert Seaman Granger, 1816, Zanesville;
19. Ulysses Simpson Grant, 1822, Point Pleasant;
20. Charles Griffin, 1825, Granville;
21. William Grose, 1812, Dayton;
22. Rutherford B. Hayes, 1822, Delaware;
23. Edward Needles Kirk, 1828, Jefferson County;
24. William Haines Lytle, 1826, Cincinnati;
25. Alexander McDowell McCook, 1831, Columbiana County;
26. Daniel McCook, Jr., 1834, Carrollton;
27. Edward Moody McCook, 1833, Steubenville;
28. Robert Latimer McCook, 1827, New Lisbon;
29. Irvin McDowell, 1818, Columbus;
30. Nathaniel Collins McLean, 1815, Ridgeville;
31. James B. McPherson, 1828, Clyde;
32. Jasper A. Maltby, 1826, Kingsville;
33. Mahlon Dickerson Manson, 1820, Piqua;
34. John S. Mason, 1824, Steubenville;
35. John Grant Mitchell, 1838, Piqua;
36. Robert B. Mitchell, 1823, Mansfield;
37. Emerson Opdycke, 1830, Trumbull County;
38. Thomas Ogden Osborn, 1832, Jersey;
39. Eleazer A. Paine, 1815, Parkman;
40. Halbert Eleazer Paine, 1826, Chardon;
41. Abram Sanders Piatt, 1821, Cincinnati;
42. Orlando Metcalfe Poe, 1832, Navarre;
43. Benjamin Franklin Potts, 1836, Carroll County;
44. James William Reilly, 1828, Akron;
45. Americus Vespuccius Rice, 1835, Perryville;
- ~~46. James Sidney Robinson, 1827, Mansfield;~~
47. William S. Rosecrans, 1819, Delaware County;
48. Robert Cumming Schenck, 1809, Franklin;
49. William Tecumseh Sherman, 1820, Lancaster;
50. Joshua W. Sill, 1831, Chillicothe;
51. John Potts Slough, 1829, Cincinnati;
52. William Sooy Smith, 1830, Tarlton;
53. David S. Stanley, 1828, Cedar Valley;
54. Wager Swayne, 1834, Columbus;
55. James Madison Tuttle, 1823, Summerfield;
56. Ferdinand Van Derveer, 1823, Butler County;
57. Melancthon Smith Wade, 1802, Cincinnati;
58. George Day Wagner, 1829, Ross County;
59. Charles Carroll Walcutt, 1838, Columbus;
60. William Harvey Lamb Wallace, 1821, Urbana;
61. Godfrey Weitzel, 1835, Cincinnati;
62. Charles Robert Woods, 1827, Newark; and
63. William Burnham Woods, 1824, Newark.

Among these 63 men were three future presidents of the United States (Grant, Hayes, and Garfield) and two future commanding generals, USA (Grant and Sherman).

Drum and Bugle is published monthly by the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Roundtable, P.O. Box 7632, Fredericksburg, VA 22404. Dues are \$15 per year for individuals, \$25 for families, and \$7.50 for students. Membership is open to anyone interested in the study of the Civil War and the preservation of Civil War sites. Elsa Lohman, President; Mac Wyckoff, Vice President; Chuck Siegel, Secretary; Mike Stevens, Treasurer; Melanie Jordan, Immediate Past President; Dane Hartgrove, Newsletter Editor; Jack Barnes, Richard DiNardo, Steve Gambaro, John Graham, John Griffiths, Tom Quigley, Executive Committee members.

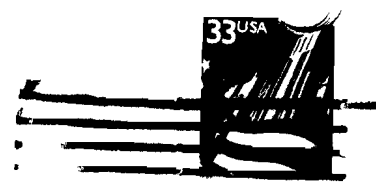
### RVCWRT SNOW POLICY

If the weather is questionable, i.e., snow or freezing rain, call Elsa (540-373-6122) or Mac (540-371-0802) at the Park the day of the meeting. They will tell you whether the meeting has been cancelled or not. Elsa and Mac will also leave a message at the meeting place as to whether or not the meeting will take place. Please don't endanger yourself by leaving home without checking first.

### IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN

Time to pay your RVCWRT dues, that is. Pay Mike Stevens ASAP, please.

Rappahannock Valley Civil War Roundtable  
P.O. Box 7632  
Fredericksburg, VA 22404



MAC WYCKOFF      00  
11610 ENCHANTED WOODS WAY  
FREDB'G    VA 22407-8674

**Don't Forget: Dinner Meeting, Monday, December 11.**  
**Contact Mike Stevens by noon on Monday, December 4, for reservations at:**  
**371-3115 (voice)/372-9860 (fax)/<drmste@aol.com> (e-mail)**