

# The Sentinel

## General Isaac Ridgeway Trimble, CSA

The Roundtable was again visited by a member of the Indianapolis Civil War Roundtable, Tony Trimble, who spoke about his ancestor CSA General Isaac Ridgeway Trimble (May 15, 1802 – January 2, 1888). General Trimble was a United States Army officer, a civil engineer, a prominent railroad construction superintendent and executive, all before the war, and a Confederate general during the Civil War, perhaps best known for his role in the assault known as Pickett's Charge at the Battle of Gettysburg on July 3, 1863.

Trimble was born in Culpepper County, Virginia, the youngest of nine children his father had with two wives. The family moved to Kentucky when Isaac was young, and it was from there he was nominated by the well-known Kentucky icon Henry Clay to attend West Point where, in 1822, he earned a degree in engineering. After some struggle and due to his own dogged determination he was commissioned as a second lieutenant of artillery. He served in the 3rd and 1st U.S. Artillery regiments, but left the army in 1831 to pursue engineering in the emerging business of railroad construction. He was the surveyor of the C&O Canal and laid out the National Road almost single-handedly from Cumberland, Maryland, to Columbus, Ohio. Eventually, he became the chief engineer of the B&O Railroad, a position that placed him in Baltimore. He was in Cuba assisting in the construction of the first railroad in that country when the Civil War began, so he made a hasty retreat back home and volunteered immediately to help the Confederacy, where his sympathies definitely lay, even though he was not necessarily a secessionist nor did he own any slaves. At 62, Trimble was one of the oldest officers in the Confederate army at the war's outbreak.

As commander of the Maryland Militia in Baltimore, Trimble eventually tired of the Union using the railroads to advance troops through the technically neutral city, so he sent men to Havre de Grace north of the city and had them burn the main railroad trestle there, effectively cutting off this route for

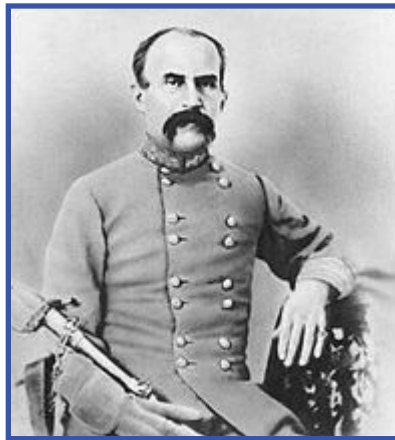
the North. This made him a criminal hunted by none other than Union general Benjamin "The Beast" Butler and eventually led to his escaping the city and offering his services to Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. He served with distinction as a commander of troops at Cross Keys and Malvern Hill, as well as at Second Manassas, where he was wounded in the leg, and Chancellorsville. In the Gettysburg campaign, he was assigned to Gen. Richard Ewell's command, someone he didn't like and with whom he argued constantly. He felt Ewell was making bad tactical decisions and partially because Trimble simply had no filters when it came to expressing himself to his superior officer. Finally, on the afternoon of July 3, Trimble was given command of Dorsey Pender's troops, when Pender was

mortally wounded. His command became one of the three wings of the Confederate assault that has come down in history as Pickett's Charge, but should rightly be known as the Pickett-Pettigrew-Trimble assault. Trimble was wounded in the same leg as earlier in the war, but this time much more grievously, requiring the leg to be amputated. As he could not travel, he was captured and held as a prisoner for the remainder of the war, mainly at Johnson's Island in Lake Erie.

Trimble, although "old" at the war's outset, survived his wounds, got a wooden leg, and lived until 1888, when he traveled to Ohio to attend the funeral of a (Union) cousin, stood with his hat off during the long grave side service, caught pneumonia

and died himself not long after. He is buried in Green Mount Cemetery in Baltimore. Interestingly, it is the cemetery where the Junius Brutus Booth family plot is located, and in which, in an unmarked grave, lie the remains of Lincoln's assassin, John Wilkes Booth.

The general's descendant and our presenter, Tony Trimble, has had immeasurable pleasure researching his ancestor through the years, including being able to actually gaze on the general's face through his windowed coffin in the early 1980s. He has now been approached to edit and publish General Trimble's papers that have been held by his direct family descendants for decades. This would be the crowning achievement of Tony's many years of research and would perhaps even eclipse his acquisition of the original portrait of the general prepared for the *Century Magazine* done on acid-etched vellum signed by him in the 1880s. It has been a Tony Trimble family treasure for years.



*General Isaac Ridgeway Trimble*

## Annual Elections Are Held

At the April meeting, the annual Roundtable elections were held for the new officer corps for the next two years. After having worked on it for a few weeks, the nominating committee presented a slate of candidates that included David Wiley as president, Steve Rolfe as secretary, and Kevin Shiflet as treasurer. As there were no nominations or objections from the floor, this slate was elected by acclamation. Take a moment when you can to congratulate them and offer your service to help advance the Roundtable through the “new campaign.”

## Stones River Devastated by Tornadoes

Greg Biggs from our sister roundtable in Clarksville, Tennessee, has sent us information on recent tornadoes which ripped across the battlefield at Stones River, just outside Murfreesboro, Tennessee. In just a couple of minutes, heavy damage was inflicted by high winds although, fortunately, no one was injured. For a look at the results, go to <http://www.midtenrelics.com/update.htm>. Donations for help in restoration of the battlefield can be sent to the National Park Service, 3501 Old Nashville Highway, Murfreesboro, Tennessee, 37129.

## Looking for a fun volunteer activity

Lisa Hutchcraft, representing Marlin Elementary School on Bloomington's north side, has contacted the Roundtable and asked if we could provide someone to participate in their **Mini-Marathon of Education**. This is an annual “inside festival” with ten “stations” around which the approximately 130 students (K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade) will rotate and get a brief presentation on a variety of subjects. One subject the school would like to cover is the Civil War. The event takes place on Friday, May 15, from noon-3 p.m.. If you would like to have fun while opening a few young eyes to the topic that fascinates us all, contact Steve Rolfe at 322-0628 or [srolfe@indiana.edu](mailto:srolfe@indiana.edu) for details. The topic for the ten (approximately) ten-minute sessions is up to you!

## Don't forget the History Center

And, as we said last month, if you are not a member of the Monroe County Historical Society, our parent organization that provides us with free meeting space and unending support, please consider a basic membership in their ranks right away. Several members of the MCCWR have become MCHS members and have even begun volunteering for the center as greeters, curator assistants, etc.

## Next Meeting!

**May 12, at 7:00 p.m. at the History Center.**  
**Our guest speaker will be Ronald Darrah with a talk about “Family History & the Civil War.”**

**This is the time to find more  
about hunting out our  
sometimes elusive ancestors!**

## MCCWR Executive Committee

Many may not know this, but the Roundtable's routine business is conducted through its Executive Committee, which meets once a month in person and communicates frequently via electronic mail. Input from others is always welcomed and encouraged. If you would like to help with this activity, please contact one of the officers or any member of the board (listed at the end of this newsletter) to volunteer your ideas or your time or both. Our small group has become well established in its four-plus years of existence, but constant input is needed, so please consider this advisory role to further our communal quest for Civil War history.

## Major Civil War Exhibit Returns to the History Center This Fall

If you remember the highly successful Civil War exhibit at the Monroe County History Center in 2007, and especially if you did not get a chance to see it, you will want to note that a repeat performance is now set for late August until November of this year. One of the main galleries will again be devoted to a fascinating variety of Civil War artifacts, many of them provided again by one of the MCCWR's own, member Bob Willey from Fort Wayne. However, we do not want Bob to have to do it all alone! If you have one or more items that you think would be appropriate for inclusion in this exhibit and which you are willing to loan for three months, contact the museum or one of the MCCWR's officers to get further information about how to transact the loan, security for your item or items, and the timing of the exhibit.

## Contacts

Steve Rolfe, Secretary	336-0757	<a href="mailto:srolfe@indiana.edu">srolfe@indiana.edu</a>
David Wiley, President	337-0649	<a href="mailto:davidwiley@sbcglobal.net">davidwiley@sbcglobal.net</a>
Kevin Shiflet, Treasurer	824-8708	<a href="mailto:keshift@aol.com">keshift@aol.com</a>

## Executive Committee

John Crosby, Ray Beeker, Allan Sather,  
Deborah Cronin, Carol Wise

On the web at <http://mypage.iu.edu/~rawatson/roundtable/>  
Web master, Rick Watson.

# E-Announcements Exclusive to the e- mail edition

• The Civil War Preservation Trust has recently issued its 2009 list of **most endangered battlefields**, a practice it has been doing for some years now to bring attention to the loss of battlefield land because of commercial encroachment. To see this year's list, go to <http://www.civilwar.org/>.

• Remember the old movie *Friendly Persuasion* with Gary Cooper and Anthony Perkins? For an interesting and mostly unexplored look at the experience of Quaker pacifists in the Civil War, take a look at this newly released book, *Mr. Lincoln's Chair*. For details, go to: <http://www.mwpubco.com/titles/shakers.htm>.

• Think you might buy a Civil War book soon (or any historical book, for that matter)? Savas Beatie, LLC, a publisher of historical works, has offered to refund 30% of any book purchased from them back to our Roundtable treasury. Check out their selection at [www.savasbeatie.com](http://www.savasbeatie.com) and should you decide to buy something, enter our purchase code, **CWRTMonroeCounty**. When you pay on PayPal, the rebate will come directly to us.

• Most of you know about Indiana's own general Lew Wallace, his problems with Grant at Shiloh, and his redemption at Monocacy. MCCWR member and recent program presenter Charlie Matson has pointed out a nifty new website established by the General Lew Wallace Museum & Study in Crawfordsville. Check it out! <http://www.ben-hur.com/>. If there is someone out there who is a Wallace "expert," this is a topic that would be well received by the Roundtable, so study up and volunteer to present.

• Check here for general CW info and a special deal on some Civil War related publications, including the periodical *Civil War Courier*: <http://www.civilwarcourier.com/news/index.asp>

• Lanier Days will be held on the grounds of the Lanier Mansion, Madison, the weekend of June 13 and 14, 2009. Several Civil War re-enactor groups, including the 32nd Regiment, Indiana Volunteer Infantry, Co. G and the 30<sup>th</sup> Indiana, will have an encampment, fire artillery on the hour, present cooking demonstrations, conduct military boot camps for children, and hold mock battles on both days of the event. The battles will be held at 3 p.m. on Saturday and 2 p.m. on Sunday. For details, call 812.273.0556 or go to [http://www.in.gov/ism/StateHistoricSites/LanierMansion/lm\\_activ.aspx](http://www.in.gov/ism/StateHistoricSites/LanierMansion/lm_activ.aspx)

• Don't forget to check out [www.CivilWarTraveler.com](http://www.CivilWarTraveler.com) for all

the latest news about events, anniversaries, re-enactments, etc.

• Do you like Civil War music? We just received this information from Lisa Meyer about her new CD, *Voices Hushed and Still: a collection of Southern Songs and Rare Gems from the Civil War Period*. <http://cdbaby.com/cd/lisameyer>

• Here's a source for **CW regimental muster rolls** for the state of Indiana as well as many other states, as well as hospital muster rolls. They sell for between \$80 and \$100 each plus S&H depending on condition. If interested, contact Tom Maiyer, 419-529-5162, [tmayer@aol.com](mailto:tmayer@aol.com), with the regiment and company you are interested in. These are original documents.

• Another **Civil War book publisher** to explore. <http://campaign.constantcontact.com/>

• The trans-continental railroad was begun during the height of the Civil War. Here's an interesting look at the economics of the Civil War and the fact that **Lincoln** did not forget this important "piece" of the country while the war raged around everyone. Again, thanks to Charlie Matson! <http://www.insideindianabusiness.com/contributors.asp?id=1430>

• And watch for the Union Pacific Railroad sponsored exhibit *With Malice Toward None* ([www.upcelebrateslincoln.com](http://www.upcelebrateslincoln.com)), now on exhibit at the Library of Congress in Washington through May 9, to come to the Indiana State Museum in Indianapolis in winter, 2009/spring, 2010.

• If you liked the movie *Glory*, which is just now turning 20 years old, you will want to read the article/interview in the HistoryNet Communiqué with Andre Braugher, one of the stars. <http://www.historynet.com/looking-back-fondly-on-glory-20-years-later.htm>

• Here's the newsletter from our sister roundtable in Clarksville, Tennessee. Greg Biggs of this group will be a presenter in the fall. He will be our very first "out-of-state" presenter, so be ready to welcome him in October. <http://clarksvillecivilwar.wordpress.com/>

• Those interested in a symposium about **John Bell Hood and the Battle of Franklin**, Tennessee, (November, 1864) should look at this website: <http://www.franklinscharge.com/>

• Read a review of a new book, *Long Time Gone: Neighbors Divided by Civil War* (Mariner Publishing, Buena Vista, Va., \$34.95, on Elisha Hunt Rhodes from Rhode Island (you might remember him from the Ken Burns series) and his cousin James Sheldon who fought for Georgia. Both of these men were engaged in most of the major battles of the war and both survived. [http://www.projo.com/opinion/columnists/content/CLsheldon12\\_04-12-09\\_7VDUFOT\\_v31.137819a.html](http://www.projo.com/opinion/columnists/content/CLsheldon12_04-12-09_7VDUFOT_v31.137819a.html)



WASHING DAY, COLUMN ON THE MARCH, 5 May 1865. Detail of a period drawing by Edwin Forbes, Library of Congress.