

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

P.O. box 444, Vermilion, Ohio 44089

APRIL 1983

VOLUME 6 NUMBER 5

224th Meeting

DATE: APRIL 12th

PLACE: THE HERMIT CLUB

SPEAKER: Dr. James Robertson 'nuff said!

TIME: Social Hour 6:00 P.M. Dinner 7:00 P.M.

DR. JAMES ("BUD") ROBINSON OUR APRIL SPEAKER

Dr. Robertson is undoubtedly the most popular Civil War Round Table speaker in the country. Recognized as one of the country's premiere Civil War historians, he is the author of eighteen books, including: An Index Guide to the Southern Historical Society Papers (in two volumes); The Stonewall Brigade; A Concise Illustrated History of the Civil War; a two-volume Critical Bibliography; Annotated Civil War Letters of General McAllister; Memoires of General James Longstreet; Colonel Walter H. Taylor, Privates John H. Worsham and John Casler, and Sarah Morgan Dawson. He has also written approximately 75 articles for historical journals and other periodicals. Many of us enjoy his long-time popular column "War in Words" in the Civil War Times Illustrated.

A native of Danville, Virginia, "Bud" Robertson attended Randolph-Macon College, where he received his Master's degree, and then a PH.D. from Emory University, where he studied with the late noted Dr. Bell I. Wiley.

Our speaker was appointed by the late President Kennedy as Executive Director of the U.S. Civil War Centennial Commission, 1961-1965. He received the Harry S. Truman Award for meritorious service in the field of Civil War History and is the recipient of the Nevins-Freeman Award for contributions to C.W. study. He is currently chairman, Department of History, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University; at Blacksburg, Virginia.

Dr. Robertson is no stranger to the Cleveland Civil War Round Table; his first appearance was on Nov. 20, 1961; then on March 9, 1972; next April 10th, 1973, and last, Dec. 10, 1974. "The best recommendation in the world is a return engagement." We are in for a treat comes April 12, 1983

Please Make Reservation

CALL BILL VICTORY AT 221 - 5419



Tie Sinks Longstreet Back Into Limbo

Ed Troxell is certainly to be complimented for conceiving and bringing about a program that attracted the largest attendance of the year. Charlie Clarke and Jim Chapman lived up to expectations, both well-prepared and formidable as well as entertaining in their arguments as to whether General Longstreet should have been court-martialed for his actions at Gettysburg. What it amounted to was a detailed review of the events the second day of that battle.


Charlie, with a large map, went over all of Longstreet's delays in carrying out Lee's vague orders for getting the First Corps into position for the attack along the Emmetsburg Road. He pointed out that when Lee returned from conferring with Ewell at 11:00 A.M. to find that Longstreet had not done anything, the commanding general gave Longstreet a direct order to get started, although he did give permission to wait an hour for Laws to come up, Clarke claimed that regardless of the circumstances as they later developed, Longstreet disobeyed the order by his petulant delays extending over a 12 hour period.

Jim, in defending Longstreet, pointed out how that general had been maligned after the war, and that two myths should be challenged in considering Longstreet's actions: (1) Lee's infallibility and (2) the invincibility of the Confederate soldier. Both have influenced historians and Lee apologists.

Chapman touched on Lee's non-appreciation of the Union command and position; his failure to reconnoiter the topography properly and his failure to modify his plans as a different situation developed. Longstreet obeyed Lee's orders regardless of the fact that he knew they were wrong, and that Division Commanders Hood and McLaws on the field agreed with him. He did attack vigorously and at the day's end did occupy the territory that Sickles had moved into.

Ed Troxell called it a tie (as everyone expected) and presented the two participants each with a gift book. As usual, the question and answer period was superfluous.

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Dues: \$20 Sept. to Sept.
Non-resident members \$10

Clarke-Chapman Debate Draws Year's Top Crowd

President Bill Victory opened the meeting by calling upon our Treasurer Brian Kowell for a report. The Club is in good financial shape. Bill reported that the Cramers had agreed to continue editing the Charger for another year, with Brian volunteering to take over the mechanics of producing the newsletter. He then introduced Program Chairman Ed Troxell, who read the specifications for the debate.

FRED GILL'S BOOK REVIEW

Smith, Page. Trial by Fire, A People's History of the Civil War and Reconstruction, New York: McGraw Hill, 1982.

This is a formidable book. Two inches thick, weighing about three pounds and bearing 996 pages not counting the introduction, bibliography and index, it is no book to curl up with before the fire on a cold winter night. It is nevertheless a book for all of us to read if we want to widen our knowledge of those shakiest years of the nation.

The author, who wrote that superb biography of John Adams, has undertaken a stupendous job, a comprehensive history of the United States, in which this is only the fifth volume. He has produced two volumes on the Revolution, one on the young Republic and a fourth on the ante-bellum years. He wrote the story, not in the straight line way most historians go, but does it by interspersing his views with the words of the people of the time, pertinent and living words from letters and diaries. All this instills a refreshing breath of life to the author's descriptions of the battles, military, political and social of those perilous times.

It is my hunch the author took a cue from that useful and revealing work edited by Commanger and Morris about twenty years ago, The Spirit of Seventy-Six, which is the story of the Revolution as told by participants. There are essays in this work by its editors, only a few paragraphs connecting the letters, diaries and documents of the soldiers and statesmen of the time. Here, however, Smith sets down his own ideas and opinions buttressed by words of the witnesses to Civil War events. His view of the Reconstruction is, to say the least, bound to stir argument, but it is artfully and carefully thought out, and I must agree with him that it had to be tried. Also I am heartened by his view that Grant was in many ways a better general than Lee, a view obscured these days by the almost idiotic deification of Lee.

This is a truly engrossing book and, while it is nothing to read idly, we can profit from it in our obsession with our favorite war.

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Next Meeting Ladies' Night
May 10th

SCENES I'D LIKE TO HAVE SEEN



WITH HOOD'S TEXAS BRIGADE AT 2ND MANASSAS

As serious and successful as the slaughter of the 5th New York Zouaves was, at least one Texan managed to salvage a piece of grim humor from the episode. Sidney Virgil Patrick and a comrade, both of Co. E of the 5th Texas, after helping disperse the Zouaves with a well-aimed volley, chased a couple of the fancily uniformed survivors across Young's Branch and up the opposite bank. As the New Yorkers hastily plunged across the creek their

big red pantaloons filled with water until their legs "looked like balloons." Patrick and his companion then proceeded to drill several shots through the baggy britches of the smaller of the two Zouaves who lagged behind his longer-legged comrade. According to Patrick's accomplice, the little New Yorker "was not crippled, however, for he went up the hill like a rabbit, and at every jump the water squirted (from holes in his pants) like one of those garden fountains." Patrick's companion, who admitted that he was "too scared to see the fun of it," observed that Patrick "was laughing fit to kill himself." Even though engaged the rest of the day in hotly contested actions, Patrick continued to grin whenever he thought of "that Zouave and his waterworks."

- From the book, Hood's Texas Brigade: Lee's Grenadier Guard. Thanks to Brian Kowell.

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General Henry Heth, leading a Confederate Division in the Battle of Gettysburg, was hit on the head by a Union bullet. But his life was saved because he was wearing a hat two sizes too large with newspaper folded inside the



sweatband. The paper deflected the bullet and the General, unconscious for thirty hours, recovered and lived another twenty-five years.

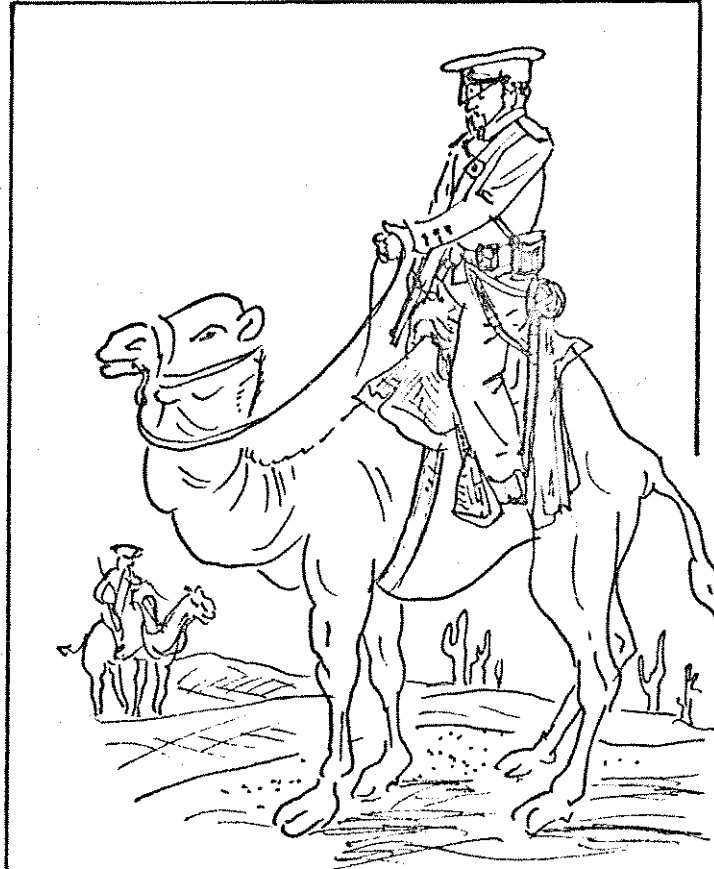
THE CAMELS ARE COMING

After the Mexican War ended, the U.S. took over territory occupied by the Comanche and Apache Indians who were hostile to the incursion of white settlers. Travelers going west had a choice of routes, the trail south across the high plains, or north along the Oregon Trail. For transportation they used horses and oxen, the latter proving to be better but slower. Supplies had to be transported hundreds of miles to the far-flung outposts, and a Colonel Crossman had an idea for improving the means of travel. He wrote to Washington suggesting the use of camels. Jefferson Davis, then Secretary of War, had the same idea, and petitioned Congress to buy the camels. The result was that in 1855 \$30,000 was allocated for this purpose.

Two young men were selected to go to Asia Minor and make the purchase. A ship was outfitted with camel stalls and they set out. In London, Gwynn Heep, one of the men, took time out to visit the zoo to study camels, after which the team set out for Tunis, where they acquired their first one, "Tulli." The British at that time were involved in the Crimean War and were using 25,000 of the dromedaries; so Heep and his companion David Porter went on to Turkey where the supply was more plentiful. But here they learned that there was an edict prohibiting the export of any camels!

In February 1856 they secretly loaded 33 animals onto their ship in spite of the Turk authorities, and took off for Houston. Several camels perished during the journey, but when they arrived the count showed 34, thanks to several newborn calves.

It was immediately discovered that camels and horses do not mix. The camels had an odor the horses did not like (same can be said for elephants). They also had a tendency to lose their coats and contract skin diseases easily. A veterinarian advised that Fort Verde would be a better place for them and they were soon sent there. A second load of 44 camels then arrived in the U.S. under the charge of one Edward Beale. He also had charge of a survey he found the beasts adaptable to the country. They could travel 35-50 days without water and with very little forage. They were also able to swim and were immune to snake bites. Because of all these advantages, he took the herd on his survey project, covering 4,000 miles, a trip made without accident.



A MYTH There never was a U.S. Camel Corps. The first connection the camels had with the military was in Ft. Tejon where they joined the "F" Company of a Dragoons Unit, assigned to escort them. They were used as beasts of burden, not mounts. A design for a Camel Corps uniform was submitted to the Secretary of War in 1854, two years before the camels reached the United States. This uniform was to be brown, or unbleached cotton or linen, but was never issued.

(continued on Page 6)

The camels continued to be used to haul supplies, but the teamsters hated and feared them; their appearance on the roads stamped wagon and pack trains. When the War came, General Twiggs turned over the U.S. forces and materiel to the Texas Rangers, including about half the camels, valued at \$20,000. The Confederates neglected their camels and eventually turned them loose. It is said that the Indians "got 'em," but evidently not all, because today there is a greasejoint in Taos that sells camelburgers!

What happened to the others? They were sent to Benicia where 36 were auctioned off for \$1,900.00. Two were sold to a traveling circus; others were used for camel racing (the Arabian camel can be trained to run very fast, as witness the exploits of Lawrence of Arabia in WW I.). Some were taken to Virginia City where they carried salt for the mines. Even there they were not popular, for a law was passed stating "No camel allowed on the street after 9 p.m.!" Camels can be very vicious; in fact, one trooper was killed when he tried to overload. They can kick 360 degrees in any direction with any leg. (same as a giraffe)

With the coming of the war most of them were neglected, but there are descendants to this day, and in East Sacramento, California, on Florin Rd., there are 33. They were acquired from Louis Goebel, brother of George Goebel, the comedian, who rented camels to film companies. He gave them to a Harry Shannon, President of the A.P.P.I.A., whose members wear the Company "F" uniforms. They race the camels at Virginia City the second week of each September.

And what is the A.P.P.I.A.? The Association for the Protection of Indigenous Animals, namely - CAMELS.

Thanks to the San Francisco CWRT for much of the above material.



Civil War Smiles by STU CRAMER

"Many a true word
is said in jest-
but not by
Old Jack."



Thumprints

By Member Bob Thum

From the Bennington Banner

DORSET.

HILDENE, the estate of Robert Todd Lincoln in Manchester, is a place close to my heart. I attended one of the first meetings of Friends of Hildene shortly after my wife and I arrived in Vermont in the bitter winter of 1976. For almost three years the local group negotiated with the Christian Science Church and finally in 1978 consummated the purchase of the 412-acre estate.

I am happy to say it is one of the most gratifying accomplishments of my life to see this beautiful place restored and giving so much pleasure to the citizens of the North Shire and the tourists who visit it during the summer and fall months.

Many amusing things have happened during the few years of Hildene's restored life. I remember when I met with the president of Friends of Hildene one day after we had advertised for an executive director. This job was of the utmost importance to the future of our undertaking, and both the president and I, as treasurer, were working with great care toward the selection of the person for this most important position.

I arrived at the president's home, looked out and saw a car drive up with the license plate FOH. I questioned the presidente as to his new license plate, and he looked out into the winter snow in bewilderment. He stated he knew nothing of this strange car and its Friends of Hildene abbreviated plate. In walked the driver, who was the applicant for the executive director's job. He had applied for the FOH plate with, apparently, the utmost confidence he would get the job. The president and I were overwhelmed by his sureness of himself, hired him and have never regretted the decision.

In 1979, our first full year of operation, this same executive director who, lives in the big house with his family, heard the front doorbell ring. He came down and saw a little old lady, well in her 70s. She said that her husband had let her out of the car on Route 7. She was to walk into Hildene, and he would be back in an hour or so to pick her up. Down the long mile she tramped, thinking she would be upon the house at the next turn of the road. Forty-five minutes later the poor little thing arrived at the front door of the mansion, exhausted, and shortly after was met by her faithful husband who had spent the hour at the local friendly gas station, drug store and who knows where else.

THE DIRECTOR of his family live upstairs in the big house and have to listen to the tour guides as they come by the stairway to their quarters. This stairway happens to house the dumb waiter, and this unique device is a source of much curiosity to the people being guided through the house. The director's wife can quote verbatim the spiel that is given each tour as the docent (tour guide) pauses at this spot and relates the fact that the dumb waiter was used to haul wood from the basement to the first and second floor fireplaces and how Mary Lincoln (Peggy) Beckwith electrified the elevator in 1965 to carry a crippled dog from first to second floor.

This same location houses a door that leads to the basement where the executive director's family does its laundry. One fine day the director's mother-in-law came up from the laundry and, hearing a tour in progress, paused behind the basement door until the tour proceeded beyond that point. A tourist got overly curious, opened the door and was frightened out of her wits to see this person standing behind the door at the top of the cellar stairs. She screamed in fright, and the tour guide rushed out to tell someone in charge that there was a stranger lurking in the basement of Hildene.

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SPEAKING of strange persons lurking in the mansion, my son went there one night to work on the organ restoration, found all the doors locked, and slid into an old ice chute. Into the basement he made his way and then up to the main hall to work on the organ. The director leaped out of his bed when he heard the organ playing in the middle of the night. (The ice chute has since been secured.)

Last but not least, our chief preservation expert came to view the progress made on the restoration of the mansion. Everything, of course, has to be authentic, but we had, prior to the touring season, placed some draperies in one of the bedrooms until the originals could be drycleaned and replaced. The preservation architect, expert indeed, marvelled at the replacement draperies, and shouted to all within earshot how these magnificent hangings had stood the test of time. No one had the heart to tell them they were only temporary hangings.

THOSE FATEFUL APRIL DATE

1861

War Starts	April 12	Ft. Sumter fired up
	13	Ft. Sumter surrende
	19	Lincoln declared bl
		ade..Soldiers and c
		ilians clashed in B
		imore..Harper's Fer
		evacuated by Feds.
	20	Feds burned Norfolk
		Navy Yard and ships

1862

April	1	McClellan's Army of
		the Potomac landed a
		Ft. Monroe to start
		Peninsular Campaign
	6	Battle of Shiloh
	7	Island 10 fell to F
	12	Great locomotive ch
	25	New Orleans fell.

1863

April	2	Richmond bread riot
	17	Grierson's Raid
	20	West Virginia joine
		the Union.
	28	Hooker's Army of th
		Potomac crossed th
		Rappahannock heade
		for .Chancellorsvil
	30	Grant's forces cro
		sed the Mississipp
		below Vicksburg.

1864

April	11	Bank's Red River
		Campaign failed
	12	Forrest captured
		Ft. Pillow - alleg
		"massacre"
	30	Army of the Potoma
		under Grant and Me
		moved across the
		Rapidan

1865

April	1	Battle of Five For
	2	Richmond and Peters
		burg evacuated
	9	Lee surrendered at
		Appomattox.
	12	Mobile surrendered
		to Canby.
	14	Assassination of
		President Lincoln
	15	Andrew Johnson beca
		President.
	26	Joe Johnson surrend
		his army to Shermar
	27	The <u>Sultana</u> disaste

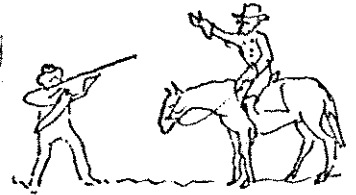
War Ends



During a retrograde action, a Confederate General confronted one of his men hastening to the rear. "Halt there, turn around and get back to the front, you bastard," he shouted. The man stopped, cocked his rifle and aimed it at the officer's head. "Lookee here gineral, when a man calls me a name sich as that, it's his last departin' word," said the fellow, squinting down the barrel. "Oh put up yer gun," the General replied, "I didn't mean anything. I jes' fergot your other name."

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Five hundred thousand immigrants served in northern armies. Between 36,000 and 50,000 Germans were in identifiable units. In the first two years the papers were full of talk about units made up of ethnic groups. But by the third year the groups became more homogenized and were melted into other units and retained no single identity.



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While this story is appearing in the April issue, it is being written on St. Patrick's Day:

At the Battle of Prairie Grove, December 7, 1862, were two Irishmen from St. Louis - splendid strapping fellows, full of fun and devilment. They had the very day of enlistment made a solemn agreement between each other to go into every fight, side by side, succor one another in distress, and in event of a wound that was not mortal, the one unhurt should bear the other from the field. Charging furiously down the hill after the retreating Federals, the older, Jerry, received an ugly bullet through his right thigh, falling heavily. True to his promise, the younger, Larry, gathered him up immediately, threw him across his back, and started for the rear. Meeting Dr. Spencer Brown, engaged busily among the wounded, the doctor said to him:

"Ah! Larry, and why are you taking a dead man from the field?"

"Dead! - and faith he's not so aisy kilt."

"But look and see for yourself."

The faithful comrade turned slowly around to get a glance at his companion's face and, sure enough, during the retreat a cannon ball had taken his head off smoothly and evenly without Larry knowing the slightest thing about it. A wondering, half curious expression came over his countenance, as if he did not half understand matters; then, gently laying down the mutilated burden, he said with great gravity,

"Begorrah, but he told me he was wounded in the leg!"

From Botkin, B.A.. A Civil War Treasury of Tales, Legends and Folklore, New York: Promontory Press, 1960.

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One day during the hot summer of 1862, the Stonewall Brigade was making a forced march and infantrymen were gasping in the heat and dust. Two Irishmen were talking.

"I wish all the Yankees was in hell!" one snorted.

"And faith," said the other, "I don't wish anything of the sort."

"The divil you don't," the first answered. "And why not?"

"Because, Old Jack would have us standing picket at the gate, and it's hot enough right here." - Thanks to the CWRT of The District of Columbia