



The Charger

CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

P.O.Box 444, Vermilion, Ohio 44089

DECEMBER 1983

VOLUME 6 NUMBER 11

229th Meeting

DATE: TUESDAY, DECEMBER 13

PLACE: THE HERMIT CLUB

SPEAKER: GUY DI CARLO

TIME: PRELIMINARIES 6:00 P.M.

DINNER: 8:00 P.M.

RESERVATIONS: CALL NEIL EVANS 621 - 0150



Guy Di Carlo Speaker For December Meeting

That headline tells you we will have a great meeting.

Guy was one of the sparkplugs that got our Club going in 1957, serving as secretary for many years and editing the newsletter (grinding them out on his own mimeograph). He served as our president and was always influential in making the field trips a success.


Although we all rejoiced in his promotion at Merrill Lynch when he was moved to the New York main office, we felt his loss to the Club. None of us was surprised when he made his presence felt at the New York Civil War Round Table. He was soon editing their newsletter The Dispatch and was recently the president of that organization.

Be sure to make the December meeting and help welcome Guy Di Carlo.

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Civil War Quiz: Who were the best dressed Confederate soldiers in the middle of the war? See page 2 for the answer.

The Emancipation Proclamation Freed No Slaves



CLEVELAND
CIVIL WAR
ROUND-TABLE
1957 - 1983

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

Dr. Melvin Drimmer, Professor of History at Cleveland State, was our November speaker. He gave an excellent talk on the Emancipation Proclamation, providing many interesting statistics. He mentioned, for instance, that there were large sections of the South where there were no blacks, while in others the ratio was 16-1. Lincoln's main purpose, in his pre-election debates and speeches, was to stop the expansion of slavery. The President was under tremendous pressure to declare an emancipation, but he waited for an opportune time, when the public seemed to be turning to that view, and then he took advantage of the Battle of Antietam to issue it. The Declaration satisfied the abolitionists and enabled the Union forces to enlist the slaves of the secessionists. Many slaves escaped to the North, and thousands were liberated by the advancing Federal troops; but it was not until the 13th Amendment took effect in 1865 that slavery was abolished.

ANSWER TO THE BEST DRESSED CONFEDERATES
 In the October issue of Drumbeat, the newsletter of the South Carolina CWRT, this quotation appeared: "The United States Government provided thousands of uniforms for Confederate prisoners, these conforming to Confederate regulations in every way except for the buttons. Thus many 'exchanged' prisoners rejoined the Confederate army wearing uniforms supplied by the Union!" From Haythornthwaite, Philip J. Uniforms of the Civil War, 1861-1865. New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1975.
 Ed. Note: Wonder where this English author got his information? Do YOU know?



FRED GILL'S BOOK REVIEW

A SNEAKY BUSINESS

Smith, Joseph Burkholder. The Plot to Steal Florida, New York: Arbor House, 1983.

If you have thought that American covert political operations began with the OSS and were refined by the CIA, this account of the shenanigans surrounding James Madison's attempt to acquire Florida will swiftly disabuse you of that primitive notion.

Madison, our fourth president, father of the Constitution, the towering political philosopher, and, by courtesy at least, a Founding Father, evokes a picture of a noble statue calmly and confidently gazing into the future, reflecting the very soul of rectitude. A slightly different picture is painted in this book, a new consideration of Madison's little remembered dark side. The author should know, for he was with the CIA for twenty-three years and is certainly competent to trace the fading success of Madison's shadowed scheme and to assess the curious agents in charge.

Like his mentor Jefferson, Madison was also a very practical politician and a pragmatist. In this guise the author demonstrates that Madison was truly the inventor of the covert operations and was canny, like other presidents, in choosing people to conduct them so that he was never sullied by the backwash if the agents stumbled and the operation blew up.

Madison's idea was to lure Americans from Georgia and Louisiana to settle in East and West Florida, then tenuously held by Spain. There they could claim large tracts of land, start plantations, establish little so-called republics and then ask to be absorbed by the United States. He commissioned an old Georgia general, George Matthews, as case officer, giving him both written and oral orders, the oral orders, of course, being the ones Madison needed to conceal. This Matthews was a queer character, nearly illiterate but very smart. He must have cut a strange figure, clad as he was in old-fashioned knee breeches and a three corner hat, but he knew all the important people, including the Spaniards to whom he passed himself off as an accredited American government representative. He even had a hundred thousand dollars for bribes, laundered, to be sure, by James Monroe, Madison's slippery little Secretary of State. In Georgia, Matthews appealed to the Georgians' natural cupidity and preyed on their exaggerated fear of a slave revolt, inflamed by Touissant L'Overture's stunning rebellion in Haiti.

Things went well at first, but when the going got rough, Madison left Matthews and the mis-led colonists high and dry on the beach rather than give them military support that would have turned the tide. He decided to scuttle the whole operation to avoid embarrassment if it came out that the people involved were almost exclusively Americans.

Maybe you cannot blame Madison or Kennedy too much but in both cases you cannot blame Matthews and the CIA operations people in the Bay of Pigs imbroglio for feeling they were hustled. Matthews, at the height of his passionate anger, when Madison fired him, threatened to go to Washington and tell his story to DeWitt Clinton, who was running against Madison in 1813. Some CIA honchos certainly must have felt like taking similar action.

The author covers the trail of this awkward business in more detail than you need to know and you wonder at the irony of it all when Florida fell into our laps in 1819 by the skillful diplomacy of John Quincy Adams and Albert Gallatin.

Continued on page 5

A Matter of Opinion

The advertisement at the right appeared in a Jacksonville, Florida newspaper that was sent up here by one of our members. Although not expressed, its underlying thought represents exactly my (S.P.Cramer's) personal opinion of the cowardly act of our Washington politicians -All of 'em- in recently sumitting to what amounted to BLACKmail. I might add that I do not believe Abraham Lincoln needs any Congressional action to memorialize his contribution to the people.

VICTORY

Good news from the National Park Service. After many complaints about drunk and disorderly visitors in Kennesaw Mountain National Park, the powers that be have decided to ban all alcoholic beverages from the historical areas of the park. The ban is necessary because increased recreational use of the park, particularly in the spring and fall, has led to overcrowding and inappropriate uses of the commemorative parts. Located on the edge of suburban Atlanta, Kennesaw Mountain's average visitation is about 900,000. The great majority are not visitors at all, but users. They come with coolers filled with beer, radios, footballs, frisbees, blankets, and lawn chairs. There have been riots, fights and even a murder. For many many months the Civil War Round Table Associates has been urging C.W. buffs to write to legislators and the N.P.S. to correct this. Your letters DO help.



ABRAHAM LINCOLN



could become a National hero, and his birthday could become a National holiday with your help and support. Congressional leaders would eulogize and honor the memory of our slain president if enough concerned Americans demanded it with a flood-tide of letters, telegrams and phone calls.

But if you fail to respond, how will they know that you even care?

Did you know:

- (1) President Lincoln never hated the South.
- (2) He never punished Confederate Pres. Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee or Gen. Nathaniel Bedford Forrest.
- (3) Mr. Lincoln — the woodsman, farmer and lawyer, loved the West, respected its people, and was keenly interested in its expansion & development — he honored the rights of our proud American Indians and other minorities ... would have been the first one to decorate two Jimn Marine here Ira Hayes of Arizona.
- (4) Abe Lincoln was never suspected or accused of Communist association — would never have tolerated the sealing of any police record of any suspected subversive individual or group.
- (5) No one can deny that "Honest Abe" was a loyal, red-blooded American who gave his life to preserve the Union. He sought not to split, divide and conquer, but to comfort & build.
- (6) Lincoln was a Christian, a patriot and a statesman. At no time was Abraham Lincoln considered a street rabble-rouser, a trouble maker or an agent of anti-American ideology. He never participated in a riot.
- (7) Honest historians agree, that if Mr. Lincoln had survived the assassin's bullet, he would have been re-elected with a land-slide; and would have garnered a substantial vote from the South, as well as from most of our great Western states.

INDEED, PRESIDENT LINCOLN WAS A GREAT LEADER OF A GREAT NATION, AND SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED AS A NATIONAL HERO BY THE PRESENT CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES. IF YOU AGREE, CALL FOR ADDITIONAL INFO:

(904) 356-5181 OR 641-8426.


— Or better still, write: —

CONSERVATIVE CITIZENS COUNCIL

Post Office Box 711
Jacksonville, Fla. 32201

(Warren H. Folks, Regional Director)

Scenes I'd Like to Have Seen



During the Peninsula Campaign Professor Lowe made daily ascensions in his captive balloon. Occasionally an officer would go up to make observations of the rebel lines, and it was customary for Confederate gunners to try and elevate their cannon in an effort to shoot down the pesky snoopers. One morning a shell was lobbed up and came down into the cook-house at General Henry Slocum's headquarters, scattering the camp kettles and demoralizing the cooks.

The most exciting event during this period was a balloon reconnaissance by General Fitz-John Porter, who was an enthusiastic advocate of this new military device. At 5:00 A.M. on April 11, 1862, the General took his seat in the basket, unaccompanied by anyone else, supposing that the usual number of ropes were attached to it, whereas there was only one. The rope was let out to its full length of about 900 yards, when suddenly it snapped - and up shot the balloon. The men below looked up in astonishment, and the general looked down with equal bewilderment.

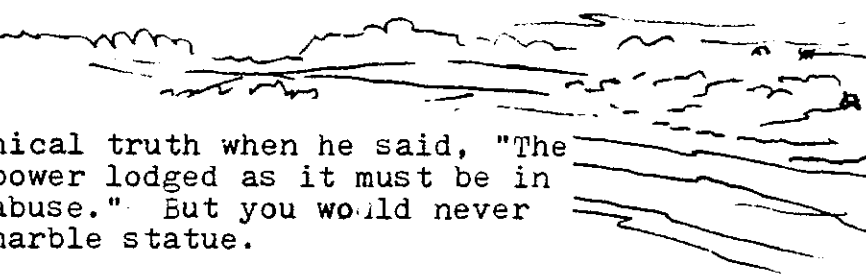
The balloon rose with great rapidity and then the wind caught it and carried it directly over the enemy lines. By this time every staff officer and hundreds of others had poured out of their tents and anxiously watched as the run-away took General Porter right into the hands of the rebels, who were firing furiously trying to reach him.

Porter threw out some ballast and soon rose out of reach of the bullets. Fortunately a counter-current of air struck the balloon and its course was reversed. Its retreat from rebeldom was rapid, and when safely over his own lines, the General opened the valve, the gas escaped and down he came, landing on top of a shelter tent. He crawled out of a mass of collapsed oil silk, quite unharmed.

That must have been a sight worth seeing!

BOOK REVIEW CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Madison spelled out the philosophical truth when he said, "The essence of government is power and power lodged as it must be in human hands will ever be liable to abuse." But you would never guess this as you look at the cool marble statue.



THAT TORY BOB THUM

Don't shoot, fellows. I am a member of the Seth Warner Muzzleloaders and have as much pride in the Green Mountain Boys as any newcomer is allowed.

I wish in no way to detract from the pride of Bennington residents in the participation of their forefathers in the Battle of Bennington, fought in Walloomsac, N.Y. about five miles west of Bennington. But I am tired of hearing it referred to as "the great American victory which is regarded by historians as the turning point of the Revolutionary War."

This is quoted from your newspaper and is not true.

The Battle of Bennington, so-called, was an engagement where Burgoyne's forces lost 200 killed and 700 captured in an ill advised foraging expedition to obtain supplies from the town of Bennington. The subsequent battle of Saratoga, when Burgoyne surrendered his entire force of 5,000 to General Gates, is considered by most historians as the turning point of the Revolutionary War. The French decision to enter the war on the side of the colonists is usually credited to this surrender.

ROBERT THUM

Dorset.

To the Editor of The Banner:-

Through the years the Charger has from time to time reproduced some of our member Bob Thum's weekly columns from the Bennington (Vt.) Banner. Bob is a life-long student of the Revolutionary and Civil Wars and knows whereof he writes.

Last summer he wrote about the noted Tory, Skene, master of Skenesboro, and of how Skene conned General Burgoyne at Ft. Ticonderoga to take his army up Lake Champlain to its headwaters at Skenesboro to gain access to the Hudson River in the 1777 campaign. As Skene figured, Burgoyne had his army build a road which would later benefit the Tory commerce with New York.

But the building of this road so delayed Burgoyne's advance that he was trapped at Stillwater (Battle of Saratoga) and was forced to surrender his entire army. Prior to this Skene had advocated to Burgoyne that by sending a force over to Bennington the British commander would pick up necessary supplies and enough horses to remount his dragoons. The ensuing Battle of Bennington lost the British about 1000 troops.

The Benningtonians discount this entirely and when Bob wrote that the Battle of Bennington was NOT the turning point of the war, the letters to the editor on the right are a sample of the storm of protests that resulted.

Bob, in the talks he presents on "That Scoundral Skene," claims the latter won the war for George Washington.

Thum is jealous

To the Editor of The Banner:-

Dear Mr. Thum from Dorset!

Don't show jealousy of the Battle of Bennington! Real envy shows! Don't you know the Battle of Bennington was fought because New Yorkers claimed land to the Connecticut River, and Remember Baker, Ira Allen and cousin Ethan Allen got together a gang called the Green Mountain Boys and pushed them back over the line? That was the Bennington Battle. Historians don't regard it as a turning point in the Revolutionary War. The Bennington Battle was a battle of survival for the strip of Vermont which the Battle of Bennington was fought for! So don't belittle the "battle" fought at the end of the Revolutionary War!

My own grandfather was a Green Mountain Boy and he should know. He told me! So leave us our cherished celebration!

FRANK BAKER

Question for Thum

To the Editor of The Banner:-

With reference to Robert Thum's letter of Aug. 18 in your paper, I would like to ask him the following question. If the result of the Battle were otherwise, do you think we would now be under Yankee domicile and government or under British domain and control?

REUBEN LEVIN

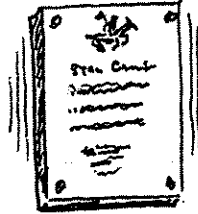
Civil War Smiles by STU GRAMER

What do you mean, "Your guess is as good as mine"? My guess is a hell of a lot better than your guess!



At the October meeting President Neil Evans presented your editor with a gift from the Club, but in my flusterfication I neglected to hold it up to show the assemblage. It was a handsome plaque inscribed:

Stuart Cramer
In Appreciation of Your Outstanding
Efforts and Dedication to The
Organization and Especially for the
Publication of the "Charger"
Newsletter



My sincere thanks!

S.P.C.

The Cleveland Civil
War Round Table

We all owe a thank you to the others who make the Charger possible: Hazel Cramer, the Assistant Editor, who does the proofreading and edits the editor; Brian Kowell, who picks up the envelopes addressed by Jim Chapman and his secretary Janet Letsky, then comes out to Vermilion, takes the Chargers home where he and his wife Pam fold, stuff, stick and stamp; Fred Gill, who for years has provided us with his popular, pithy book reviews; Martha Dayton, of the Vermilion Board of Education, who runs off 135 times 8 pages on her time off; and Bob Snodell of Chicago, who sets the heads for us.

MEMBER GEO. SKOCH HAS ARTICLE IN C. W. TIMES ILL.

In the November 1983 issue of The Civil War Times Illustrated magazine our member George Skoch has an article entitled "The Man Who Fed the South."

His story is about Lucius B. Northrop, Commissary General of the Confederate States Army - disliked by almost everyone, from General Lee down to the hungriest of "Lee's miserables." A personal friend of Jefferson Davis, Northrop faced an increasingly difficult job for four years, what with growing food shortages and lack of transport. His irascible and contentious nature didn't help and made him one of the most unpopular people in the entire Confederacy.

George Skoch traces Northrop's dismal career from West Point to his death in 1894, a friendless invalid, whose stated sentiment was "I abhor the U.S. Government and hate Americans generally." His four-year failure as a commissary general (Gen. Lee and other commanders recommended his replacement time and again) is another indictment of Jefferson Davis for his poor judgment and bull-headedness.

* * * * *



A fervid chaplain in an Indiana outfit kept boring his captive congregation sermon after sermon about baptism. Finally a group of the men went to him and asked that he preach on some other subject the following Sunday. He gladly agreed and asked what they would like. They hadn't thought that far ahead, so one soldier blurrtd out "pills," thinking there certainly could be no connection between pills and baptism.

So the next Sunday the chaplain began, "There are big pills and little pills, also bitter pills and sweet pills, cheap pills and expensive pills. Another pill is gosPILL - which brings me to the subject of baptism."

From W.T. Winterbothom's Memoirs

* * *

IN JANUARY WE WILL HAVE OUR ANNUAL BOOK AND ARTIFACTS SALE, SO BE
GATHERING THE LOODIES YOU WANT TO GET RID OF...

OKLAHOMA

The main street in Washington, Georgia, is named for Robert Toombs, the local Confederate general and hero, whose house still stands. Urging secession, Toombs once told his fellow Southerners, "We can lick those yankees with cornstalks." After the war, when asked what went wrong, he replied, "Those dam Yankees wouldn't fight with cornstalks."

* * * * *

Just at the beginning of the Seven Days Battles, President Lincoln called from the West, Major General John Pope and placed him in command of the three separate armies of Fremont, Banks and McDowell. The union of these armies into one was a wise measure, but the selection of this commander was not, as proved by the disaster at the Second Battle of Bull Run. Pope had spent some time years before the war in Texas drilling for artesian water on the Staked Plains (Llano Estacado) and making over-exaggerated reports of his success. An army song summed up his reputation:

Pope told a flattering tale,
Which proved to be bravado,
About the streams which spouted like ale
On Llano Estacado.

* * * * *

The Virginia State Travel Bureau has been ordered to destroy brochures containing the official state song "Carry Me Back to Old Virginia," because of complaints that the song is racially offensive. The composer of the song, James Bland, who was born in Flushing, New York in 1854, was the son of a freed slave. He wrote the song while living in England in 1875 and never lived in Virginia.

- From the Indianapolis Bushwhacker CWRT

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A report by General H.J. Hunt, Chief of Artillery of the Union Army, estimated that both armies at the Battle of Gettysburg expended 569 tons of various types of shell and ball. A total of 354 Union and 272 Confederate cannons was used. Approximately 10,000 bodies were buried on the battlefield, most of the casualties the result of rifle fire. About 5,000 horses were killed in the three day struggle.

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Victor Hugo's Les Misérables novel was popular on both sides. Some Reb wag inevitably dubbed the Army of Northern Virginia "Lee's Miserables."

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HEADQUARTERS IN THE SADDLE
Major General John Pope

Quote sometime attributed (?) to Lincoln:

"His headquarters are where his hindquarters
should be."

* * * * *

The battlefield of Chantilly, where General Phil Kearny was killed, is now a shopping center.

