

The Charger

CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

P.O. Box 444, Vermilion, Ohio 44089

MARCH 1985

Volume 7 Number 12

241st Meeting

DATE: March 12th

PLACE: The Hermit Club

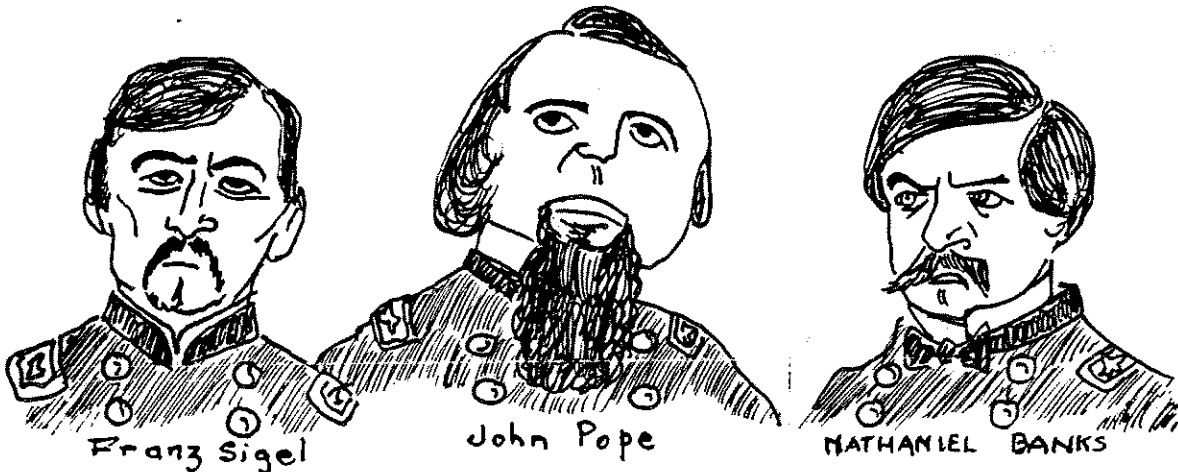
SPEAKER: Robert K. Krick

SUBJECT: Cedar Mountain

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

RESERVATIONS: Hell Yes. Call 216-243-7404

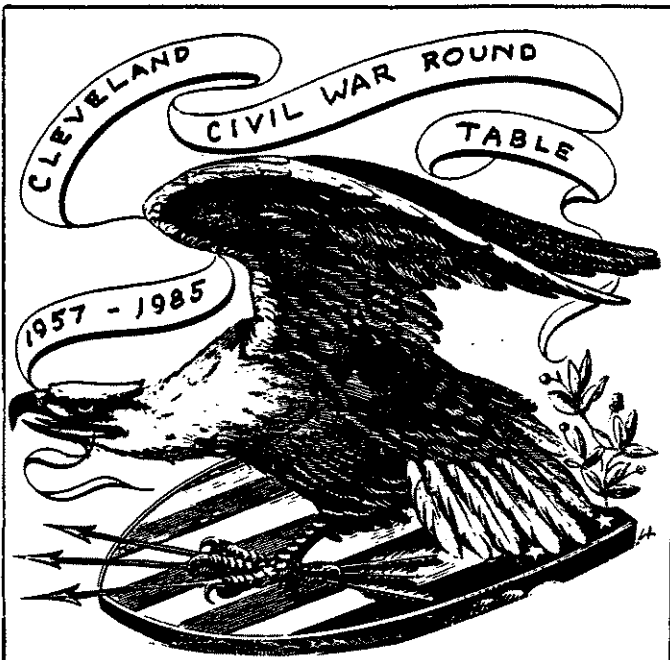
THE BATTLE OF CEDAR MOUNTAIN



How would you like to have gone into battle in an army commanded by this trio from Abe's stable of stars?

This battle, sometimes referred to as "Slaughter Mountain," although these were two different peaks, was a prelude to and part of the Second Manassas Campaign. The fighting, for the most part, took place between the base of this mountain range and the river "Cedar Run." It was essentially between the old antagonists Stonewall Jackson and Nathaniel Banks, and while there is no doubt that it was a Jackson victory - Banks was driven back and retreated at the end of the day - it is interesting that for the first time the famous "Stonewall Brigade" was at one point routed. There is not too much information on this battle, and our speaker, Bob Krick, is preparing a full story about it for publication.





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ROBERT K. KRICK, AUTHOR

Our speaker this month is Mr. Robert K. Krick, an old friend. Chief Historian of the Frederickburg-Spotsylvania National Military Park, he is the author of many Civil War books and articles, as well as editor of numerous publications. He received his B.A. in History at Pacific Union College and an M.A. in Military History from San Jose State University.

He is probably, since the death of Douglas Southall Freeman, our country's foremost authority on the Army of Northern Virginia.

Bob has spoken to our club on E.P. Alexander's diary, William Blakesdale, and he conducted our last fieldtrip to Chancellorsville, in October. As a token of appreciation for the many things he did for our group on that occasion, those on the fieldtrip have commissioned member George Skoch to make a Civil War miniature to be presented to Bob this March.

Despite continued warnings of the worst possible February weather, twenty-five members heard our Treasurer Marty Graham speak on Jackson's Valley Campaign with emphasis on the battles of Cross Keys and Port Republic.

Marty's presentation was clear, concise, loaded with facts and aided by slides. Even more impressive, it was delivered without a single note!

Marty chronicled how the armies arrived at the two battles. How Ewell's Division boldly confronted Fremont and how 60-year-old Isaac Trimble, seething with impatience, attacked Fremont's flank, causing Fremont's superior numbers to recoil. How Jackson was almost captured by Carroll's cavalry at Port Republic and was almost blasted into oblivion by a single Federal cannon. And how Jackson, without reconnoitering, attacked Shields' vanguard under Tyler and was almost defeated in the poorly managed Battle of Port Republic. Jackson was very lucky throughout his Valley Campaign or as he himself said to Ewell, "General, he who does not see the hand of God in this is blind, sir, blind."

One veteran of our Round Table told me later, "Some of our very best programs are given by members themselves."

This was just such a case. The only regret of the evening was that more members could not have been able to hear Marty's fine talk.

Brian Kowell

FRED GILL'S BOOK REVIEW

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The Last Word

Coddington, Edwin B. The Gettysburg Campaign: A Study in Command

New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968.

How many books have been written about Gettysburg? Hundreds upon hundreds probably and it must be daunting to today's historian interested in the campaign to face this babel of paper. Over a century after that tempestuous time there cannot be any new sources to help our historian bolster his views. Coddington faced this bleak prospect but then in his searching - and what a drill it must have been - he stumbled upon Col. John B. Bachelder. This new name appeared in the work of a few historians. Bachelder had been at Gettysburg in 1863 but Coddington found no one who knew much about him.

This electrified Coddington's curiosity and he went to work. Now, behold, he fell into a Golconda, a mine of treasures almost beyond a scholar's dream. Coddington was led to Bachelder's home state and at the New Hampshire Historical Society he unearthed Bachelder's unfinished manuscript about Gettysburg and bundles and boxes of notes on conversations with Rebel and Yank wounded who stayed in Gettysburg and nearby places after the battle. There were scores of letters and memoirs from soldiers of both armies and an amazing colored drawing of the battlefield on which Bachelder marked the positions and movements of every regiment, troop and battery during the three days. Here was a record of the battle unexcelled anywhere, slowly mouldering away, and Bachelder's spirit must have glowed when Coddington opened the boxes and began applying the tools of scholarship to the contents.



Col. Bachelder - the title was honorary, for he was not a soldier - had been recording actions of the Army of the Potomac for some time - came to Gettysburg the day after the battle and spent the next three months gathering the material that had lain rotting slowly for a hundred years in a New Hampshire storage room. Bachelder later became Superintendent of Tablets and Legends for the Gettysburg Battlefield Memorial Association, a private veterans' group, and still later was appointed Government Historian of the Battle of Gettysburg, a position Coddington reports, "entailing more wind than substance." Late in 1962 the historians at the Gettysburg National Military Park "had only vague notions about him." You can give your head a little shake at that.



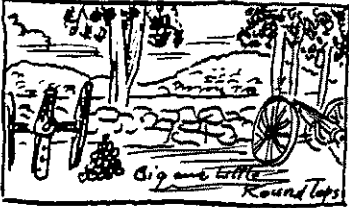
But what a book this is! Read it and you will have little doubt that it is the definitive work on Gettysburg, and it seems to be safe to say it will remain so for all time. This is a supreme accomplishment for the author, who, sadly, did not live to see its publication. I have heard college librarians say they could not keep copies of the book on their shelves; savvy history students lifted them, resisting faculty wrath and punitive fines. Today the original edition is being sought on the rare book market.

Read this unique book once and you will return to it not only again, but again and again. Read the inescapable truth of Hooker's masterful rebuilding of the Army of the Potomac after Chancellorsville so that Meade on that day in late June inherited an efficient battle-ready

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force. Read that great chapter on the little remarked Rebel plunder of Pennsylvania. Note Coddington's wonder at why Lee did not use the half of Stuart's cavalry that did not accompany Stuart on his vainglorious and senseless gallop.

Here is the nub of Coddington's thesis: He writes: "It was a crucial Union victory primarily (underlining mine) because of effective leadership of Union forces and not only because the North was the lucky beneficiary of Lee's unfortunate mistakes. How, really, could Lee have expected remarkable feats of coordinated action when his orders left so much to his commanders?" In this matter Coddington quotes Lee: "General Meade will commit no blunders on my front and if I make one he will make haste to take advantage of it." That says it all.



Coddington has great praise for Meade's cautious approach to the battle itself and to the fact that he did not needlessly let Lee escape, contrary to much contemporary opinion. It was too late and too dangerous. Men were simply too exhausted to risk pursuit.

Early in the book Coddington writes this: "Under a beloved and respected leader, it (the Army of Northern Virginia) had become convinced of its invincibility and supremely confident of its ability to annihilate the despicable enemy. Here perhaps was the fatal defect, the attitude that breeds over-confidence, which in turn leads to mistakes when the foe proves worthy of his mettle."

In the book you will not hear the terrible voices of the guns, smell the smoke, see the blood or hear the bugles. These things Coddington leaves to others. His smooth, swift-moving prose tells convincingly that the battle marked the end of Lee's invincibility and the recovery of the self confidence of the Army of the Potomac and that the battle was won because Meade was the better commander.

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RE-ENACTMENT COMING UP

On May 11 - 12, '85. Ohio's Guernsey Cty. will celebrate its 175th Anniversary. As a part of this, the Ohio Valley CWRT and the Southeastern Ohio CWRT are sponsoring a re-enactment* and Relic and Display Show. Those interested in the latter should contact Herb Parkinson, 120 Taylor Lane, St. Clairsville, Ohio 43950.

* * *

The Annual National Congress of Round Tables will be held the first week of October, 1985, at Fredericksburg, Va.

Can You Find Yourself in This Picture?



The Rebel charge was fierce.

From one of several photos illustrating an article about the fourth annual re-enactment of the Brookville Raid that appeared in the Suncoast News, Jan., 1985. Thanks to friends John and Louise D'Aquila, of Spring Hill, Florida

* Don't ask me what they're re-enacting!

SCENES I'D LIKE TO HAVE SEEN

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September, 1862 - South Mountain, Maryland.

Lee, invading Maryland, to cover his line of communication had divided his army, sending half of it under Jackson to take Harpers Ferry. Jackson's army was divided into three prongs, and the remainder of the Army of Northern Virginia was also divided and several miles apart. Unknown to Lee, his orders #191, giving the disposition of all these forces, had fallen into the hands of Union General McClellan. To Lee's surprise, McClellan for once was acting decisively and was approaching rapidly with his entire army. South Mountain stood between the two, and Lee knew that he must hold up the Federals until his own army was reunited.

As the vanguard of the two forces struggled back and forth through the woodlots and pastures and cornfields around Fox's Gap, the two rival army commanders arrived at the eastern and western bases of South Mountain to feed men into the spreading conflict. Near Boonsboro, General Lee was sitting on "Traveler" by the roadside as John B. Hood's Texas Brigade marched past and he raised his hat to them.

A few miles away on the other side of the mountain, on a knoll alongside the National Road, George McClellan was also watching his army march past on its way to the fight. The troops of Hooker's First Corps raised cheer upon cheer when they saw the martial figure on his great black horse "Daniel Webster." It was the kind of setting the Young Napoleon loved above all others, and he embraced the drama of it, raising his arm and pointing steadily toward the smoke-wreathed mountain ahead.

"It was like a great scene in a play, with the roar of the guns for accompaniment," one of Hooker's men recalled, and he ranked it as one of the unforgettable moments of the war.

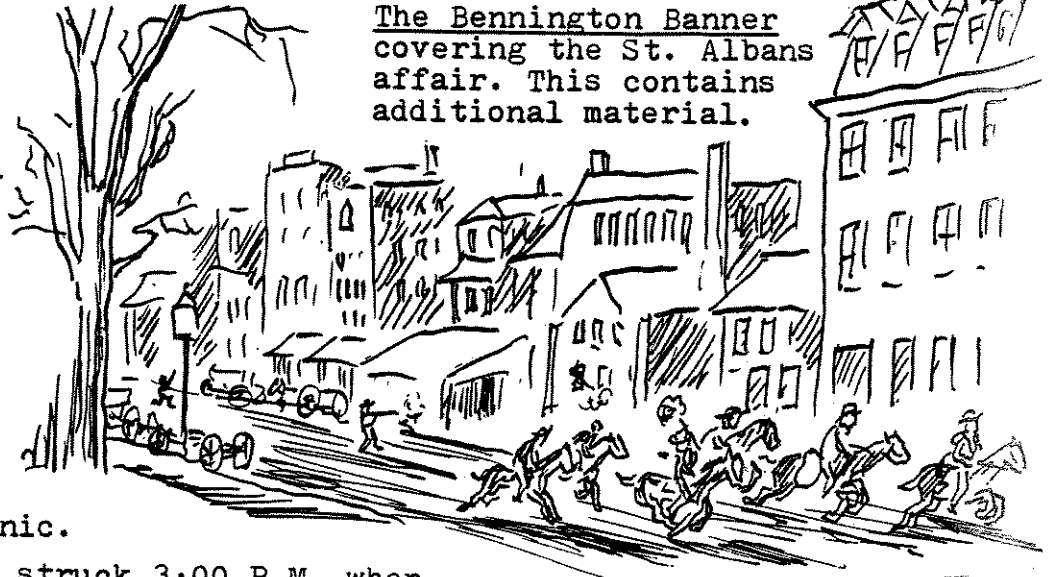
From Stephen W. Sears, Landscape Turned Red (Antietam)
(book presented to me by reader Art Crow)

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REBELS RAID VERMONT

In the Oct., 1982 Charger was a reproduction of Bob Thum's column from The Bennington Banner covering the St. Albans affair. This contains additional material.

On October 19, 1864, a small band of Confederate soldiers shattered the tranquility of St. Albans, Vt. and brought the Civil War to New England. The raid, planned to make the placid region aware of the war on this election year, caught the citizens completely by surprise, causing considerable panic.



The town clock had just struck 3:00 P.M. when three gray clad soldiers entered each of the three banks, waving their Navy sixes and demanding cash, while on the square others shot off pistols; and still another group rounded up horses from the livery stables.

There were 22 of these bold Confederates led by 21-year-old Lieutenant Bennett Young, of Kentucky. The raiders had come down from Canada, 15 miles away, a few days before in civilian garb, mingling with the natives and learning the habits of the town, putting up at local hotels and homes.

On the day of the raid most of the leading citizens of St. Albans were gone for the day - some to Montpelier where the Legislature was in session and others to Burlington where several important cases were being pleaded. After those who were in town realized that this was no joke, a few came out with guns, some firing from the windows. One man was killed and several wounded, including a few of the raiders.

It was all over in 25 or 30 minutes. The rebels, gathering their loot and stolen horses, galloped north out of town toward Sheldon, though not before trying to set fire to some of the wood buildings, tossing small bottles of "Greek Fire" on them. No serious damage resulted. This liquid phosphoric compound also failed them in an attempt to burn the Sheldon bridge, and they found that the Sheldon bank was closed and locked by the time they arrived. By now an armed posse of St. Albans men had set out after the Confederates, but they made it across the Missisquoi into Canada near Enosburg.

Accounts of what occurred next differ. Apparently 13 of the raiders were arrested by Canadian authorities, but since Canada was officially neutral in the war, a judge released them on the grounds that he lacked jurisdiction and ordered the \$50,000 that had been seized from them returned.

After 120 years there remain a number of unanswered questions about what happened to all of the money, the amount set by historians somewhere between \$175,000 and \$200,000. Whether any of it reached Richmond is not known. Some believe it was used for other covert actions from Canada; at least some of the stolen money wound up in the pockets of a few of the raiders. The local museum has on display a few of the dollars taken from the Franklin County Bank, turned up by the family of one of the rebels nearly a century later.

The last St. Albans heard of any of the raiders was in 1911. The leader, Bennett, was then a respected Kentucky lawyer, author and railroad executive. The St. Albans mayor invited him to visit the city, but this caused such an uproar that the invitation was withdrawn. Bennett Young died in St. Louis in 1919 at the age of 76.

-Thanks to Bill Chamberlin for sending an article from Vermonter.

Civil War Smiles by STU GRAMER



"This here mule meat makes me want to BRAY."
 "Wal, nobody better say 'whoa' when we're eat'n it."

LET'S DRINK TO THIS YANKEE

Camp William Penn April 7th A.D. 1864.
 We the undersigned of company D 32th Regament
 U.S.C.T. do agree to sine a temporary pledge
 Refusing to touch taist or handel the
 Intoxicating lickquor. For it is a grait shame
 For man to make a practic of Drinking lickquor
 Succp. for it will bring sorrow & distres & disluction
 And beside all this you are shorting your days
 & you are drinking ymsole down to perdition

Friend John Ogden of Ithaca, New York, sent the above which was found in a box of old documents. Whoever the writer was, he did not "sine" the pledge. Probably his better judgment won out.

As Mah Grammpappy 'Tol It

Gen'ral Lee rode up an ast for mah grammpappy, "Whar's the Capm?"

They sez, "He's surrounded by bluebellies an' fiten his way thu!"

After awhile the Gen'ral rode up agin an' ast the same.

"He's still fiten his way thu."

Once agin Gen'ral Lee rid up an' ast, "Is the Capm heah yet?"

An they sez, "Yup, he fit his way back." An' then the Gen'ral sed,

"Then let the battle begin."

Correction

Fred Gill questioned our quotation in last month's "C.W.Smiles." John Bartlett's Familiar Quotations has Lincoln saying, "It is true that you may fool all of the people some of the time; you can even fool all of the people part of the time; but you can't fool all of the people all of the time."

Complimentary and kind words about the Charger appeared in The Call, newsletter of the San Gabriel Valley (Cal.) CWRT. Its editor is John Zweers, a well-known California magician. Their Round Table was established in 1961. In addition to being a magician and Civil War buff, John is also a student of Abraham Lincoln's life and works.

OLLAPOROX

In 1861 George R. Poulton wrote the song "Aura Lee," which became popular in both Union and Confederate Armies. It gained much publicity as the class song of West Point in 1865. Sixty-seven years later it turned up in a musical, "The Three Musketeers" and was adapted to another musical by Hollywood in 1936 in "Come and Get it"; again in 1955 in "The Long Gray Line." The following year Elvis Presley made it an all-time favorite with new lyrics and the title "Love Me Tender."

* * * *

When General Sherman began his campaign for Atlanta the first serious obstacle that General Joe Johnston's Army posed was the Confederate entrenchments at Buzzard's Roost.

Private Charles Benton of Hooker's Corps in Thomas' Army of the Cumberland had thoughts of apprehension as he looked up at the fortified slopes. Benton thought with dread of trying to move against such a position and of his chances of survival if so ordered.

Hovering over Buzzard's Roost was what appeared to be, or what Benton hoped was, just a hawk. No, a companion told him, it was just what he might expect, a buzzard.

"But why does he stay so quiet and so motionless?"

"He's counting us", his friend said cheerfully.

Siege of Atlanta, 1864, by Samuel Carter III

* * * *

During the brief but costly Union assault at Cold Harbor, General William Farran Smith observed coming out of the fray a lone fine-looking sergeant in a new uniform of a "heavy artillery regiment" which had joined the army the day before. As he passed, Smith asked him where he was going. Touching his hat in the most approved military manner, he said, "General, I am going back to the hill to rally."

Battles and Leaders, Vol. IV. Thanks to Brian Kowell for both the above.

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The Fourth Annual Midwest Civil War Round Table Conference will be held on Saturday, May 4, 1985, at the Hilton Hotel and Convention Center at Kalamazoo, Michigan. Contact this office for details.

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A young farm lad named Cooney Rootes, of Waynesboro, Pa. (a town not far from Gettysburg) was drafted. He paid for a substitute, but later was drafted again. This time he had no money to pay for another substitute. He tried to get out of it by trying to convince the draft officer that his eyesight was so poor that he should be exempted. He told the officer, pointing to a cow: "You see that cow over there? My eyes are so bad I don't know if it is a cow or a horse!"

"You'll do, Cooney," laughed the officer, "Come along."

Thanks to the Cincinnati CWRT's Canister

