

The Charger

CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

PO BX 444

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NOVEMBER 1984

VOLUME 7, NUMBER 8

237th Meeting

DATE: NOVEMBER 13th

PLACE: THE HERMIT CLUB

SPEAKER: PROF. FRANK L. BYRNE, KENT STATE UNIVERSITY

SUBJECT: "COLONEL MARCUS SPIEGEL: AN IMMIGRANT
DEFENDER OF THE 'GOOD OLD FLAG'"

TIME: PRELIMINARIES: 6:00 P.M. DINNER 7:00 P.M.

RESERVATIONS A MUST: CALL 216-243-7404

Colonel Marcus Spiegel was one of many thousands of German immigrants who volunteered and fought in the armies of their adopted country.

He served in two Ohio regiments, one of which was the 120th Ohio, a part of the Army of the Tennessee, and at Vicksburg with the 1st Brigade of Osterhaus' 9th Division of the 13th Corps under McClernand.

Of interest, Colonel Spiegel was the highest ranking Jewish officer in Grant's Army when the latter issued his General Order Number Eleven expelling all Jews from his department.



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Professor Byrne is no stranger to our Round Table. He spoke to us in January, 1978, on the Confederate use of P.W.'s as manpower. He was born May 12, 1928, at Hackensack, New Jersey, and attended schools at Bergenfield, N.J., receiving a B.S. at Trenton, N.J. State College in 1950; his M.A. (History) at the University of Wisconsin in 1951; and a Ph. D. (History) from the same institute in 1957. He taught at Louisiana State, Creighton University and has been at Kent State since 1966. He has published extensively on the Civil War and recently authored the chapter on Civil War Prisons in the William C. Davis Photographic History of the Civil War.

CLEVELAND

CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

1937-1984

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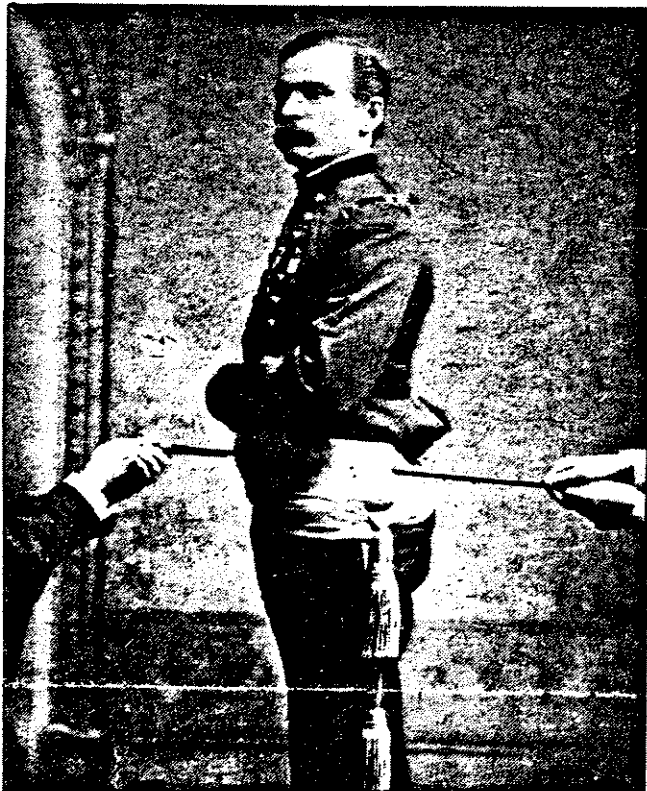
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Dues September to September
\$20 Non-resident \$10



THE ANTIQUE TRADER WEEKLY - DUBUQUE, IA -

August 29, 1979

The October meeting at Member Ken Callahan's was a great success. Dr. Callahan is the consummate host and the 53 members and guests attending were made to feel most welcome.

The program by Gerry Altoff was entitled "Pickett's Charge; a Soldier's Viewpoint." Mr. Altoff divided the room in half and urged one half to imagine themselves as Union soldiers in a Pennsylvania regiment at the stone wall on Cemetery Ridge. The other half was to imagine they were Confederate soldiers in a North Carolina regiment resting in the woods of Seminary Ridge.

Through the use of the speaker's sound and slide show and his running narrative our members could almost feel that "they were there" - first hugging the earth during the massive cannonade and then marching across those rolling hills toward that clump of trees - or crouching behind the wall watching the gray wave approach.

A very fine talk and a most enjoyable meeting.

At this meeting a proposition was presented to have this round table make some monetary contribution to the restoration efforts being made on the Soldiers and Sailors Monument at Cleveland's Public Square. The amount and method to raise it has yet to be decided. Our Executive Committee will entertain any suggestions from the membership.

Our next meeting will be held at the Hermit Club on November 13th. Please don't neglect to call in your reservation. My phone number is 243-7404.

Brian Kowell

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On the left is a rare photo of a Civil War officer showing his unhealed wound with a rod passing through the path of the bullet.

Story on page 7.

This trick (?) will be included in the program of magic at our Ladies' Night in May.

FRED GILL'S BOOK REVIEW

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VIDAL, GORE. LINCOLN, A NOVEL , New York:
Random House, 1984.

This strange book has been on the best seller list for weeks, surely arousing jubilation in the author, his agent and his publisher. However, it made this reader wonder how many of the small army of buyers read all 658 pages, or even how many got beyond the first fifty. This is to be regretted, for despite the pedestrian writing and the curious way Vidal introduces flat fictional characters into the narrative, he does assemble a picture that casts the cold light of real life on Lincoln, the Lincoln unhappily deified by Sandburg and scores of others, including reputable historians, poets and dramatists, many of recent memory.

That Lincoln was the one man with the genius to save the Republic, yes, even to recreate, is certainly beyond question, but he was a great deal more than the gently smiling compassionate letter writer to Mrs. Bixby, more than the deeply brooding worrier about military problems. He was the consummate politician first of all, filled to the overflowing with ambition but tempered with the brains to realize that ambition fairly.

That this brilliantly ambitious politician reshaped the nation under the Constitution to make the United States the world political instrument it is today is the real story, of course, and it is Vidal's earthy recounting of the real life of the times and the man, while cooling the sentimental deification of Lincoln, that point up sharply how and why it happened. Who but Lincoln, this Lincoln and the other sentimentalized one, could have handled the terrifyingly complex situation of the nation in 1860 and distilled from it the political entity we have today, complex as it is, but now a new nation, a new nation, as Lincoln said, from "a new birth of freedom."

It is regrettable that the book is so hard to read, that much of it is so downright boring. There is much here that is compelling in understanding why many things happened the way they did in that long ago time.

Evelyn Waugh once wrote of a fellow writer: "His work is awkward and dull, but it is no fault of his that he has become a public bore." He might have been writing about Vidal and this book. I could not have said it better myself.



REPORT ON FIELD TRIP

By Marty Graham

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I must admit that I felt apprehensive while waiting to be picked up for the trip to Fredericksburg. The fact that I was the trip planner and that I had frequently expressed my concern over the realization that only eight members were making the journey led my wife to rename this gallant group the Cleveland Civil War Card Table. As the weekend progressed there were times I wished I had brought along a pack of cards.

My uneasiness was not lessened by my initial contact with "Chirpy," the desk clerk at the motel. When she quickly jumped from a southern to a German with an unintelligible accent, I knew this would be a weekend long remembered.

Upon arriving in Fredericksburg it was raining and cold. We were told that this was the first steady rain in about two months. The 60 or less degrees was a change from the 90° weather the area had experienced only two days before. More than once we were blamed for bringing the weather south with us. Needless to say, the atmospheric condition lasted through the weekend.

There were many highlights during the trip. The three that come quickest to mind were the Friday tour of Chancellorsville with Robert Krick, the Saturday night presentation of the cavalry actions preceding the Battle of Gettysburg by John Divine, and the inspection of the painting and site of the death of Maxcy Gregg which was expertly narrated by the painter himself, member George Skoch.

Bob Krick knows his subject well and did an excellent job in explaining and directing us around the area of one of the most complex battles of the war. The "restaurant" he took us to for lunch did not live up to its prior billing but did little to detract from the day.

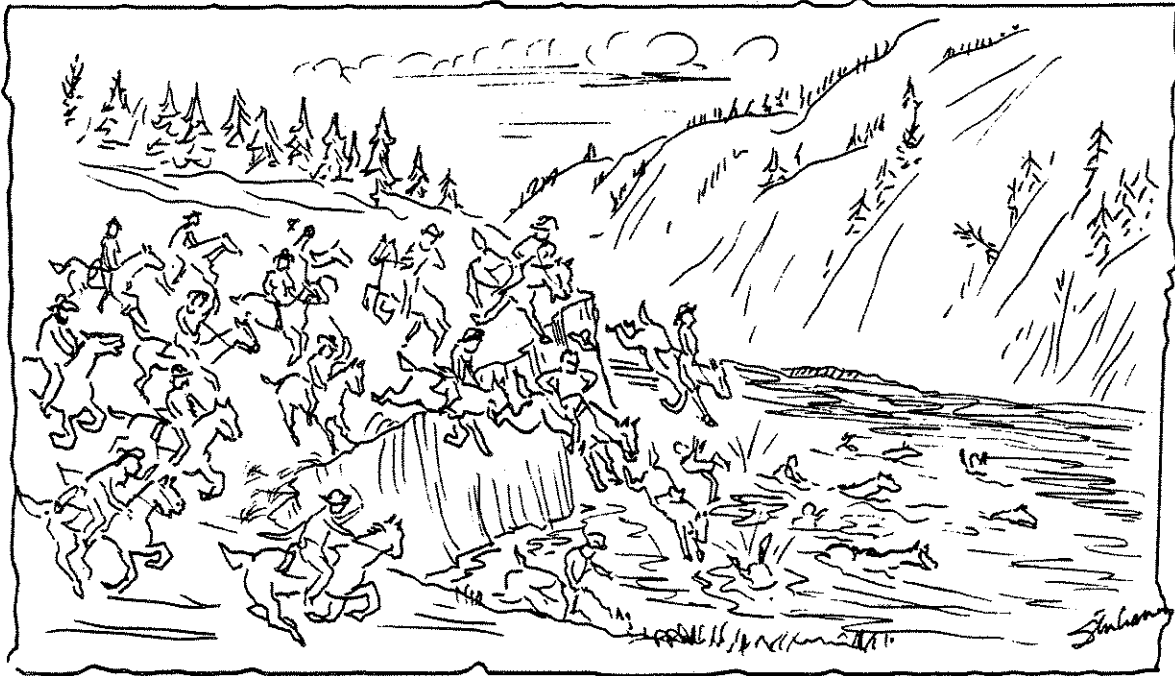
But the rain continued to fall.

Another Park Service employee, Ed Raus, took us around the Fredericksburg, Wilderness and Spottsylvania Battlefields on Saturday. This was also the day George shared his thoughts with us regarding the death of Maxcy Gregg.

The rain continued to fall.

We were treated that evening to the excellent talk by John Divine, a Civil War historian. His discussion of the above mentioned topic and other subjects relating particularly to Confederate cavalry and Partisan Rangers was a memorable experience.

Continued on page 7



The cavalry fight at Shelbyville, Tennessee, was the liveliest action that marked the retreat of Bragg's Army from Tullahoma to Chattanooga in the summer of 1863.

Major General Joseph Wheeler commanded the rear guard, holding at bay a largely superior force of Federals on the outskirts of Shelbyville in an effort to protect from capture or destruction an immense wagon train of supplies that was filing across the narrow bridge spanning the deep Duck River two miles away.

Once the last wagon crossed, Wheeler retired to the bridge and was about to fire it when Major Rambaut, of General Forrest's staff, rode up and reported that Forrest, with two brigades, was rapidly approaching to escape over the bridge. Taking 500 horsemen from General Martin's division, along with that officer, Wheeler dashed over to the north side of the bridge to try and hold it a little longer. But a large force of Federals swept in and through them, and took the bridge. They soon had a strong blue line across the entrance and along the riverside, with more Federal troops pouring out of Shelbyville. It looked like Wheeler was indeed trapped.

Without hesitation, "Fighting Joe Wheeler," with General Martin at his side, sabres in hand, led the desperate rebel riders through the enemy line, and with no consideration for the distance from the top of the bank, plunged at full speed a sheer fifteen feet down the precipice into the sweeping current.

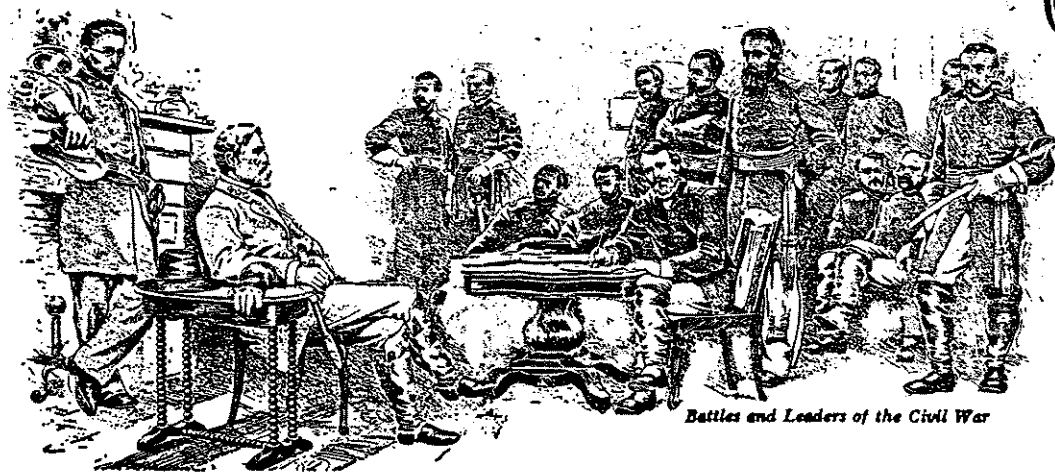
They hit the water with such velocity that horses and riders disappeared some of them to rise no more. Although the Union troops rushed to the edge and fired down at the men and animals struggling below, most of the Confederates, including their intrepid leaders, gained the opposite shore.

Ed. Note: What happened to General Forrest is a tale that will be told at another time.



Please Make Reservation

THE TABLE



One cold and rainy night in the early spring of 1865 General E. O. C. Ord sat in his tent cursing the war that kept him separated from his wife Molly and their young children. The armies of both sides at Petersburg and Richmond were generally inactive, held so by the muddy and impassable roads. It was mean and windy and food was short everywhere.

Out of the night some sentinels dragged a wet and hungry young Confederate deserter whom they had caught trying to pass by the camp. Shivering in rags and shaking from fatigue and terror, the boy stammered out to the General that he didn't know anything and didn't want to find out anything. He lived a little way to the south in Virginia, hadn't eaten for two days and all he wanted was to quit the damned war and go home.

In this he and the General were talking the same language. "Get him a blanket," roared Ord, "and give him some food. See him through the lines, and put him on the road home." The General, with the rain beating incessantly on his tent sat back and muttered...what a war...to ruin boys like that...and mused over Molly and the comforts of his own home...and forgot the tired lad.

Fate sometime later found General Ord with several other Union officers in the parlor of one Wilmer McLean, in the town of Appomattox, Ct. Hs., Va. McLean himself was the victim of a strange whimsical coincidence. After Bull Run he had moved his family from his home in the middle of that first battlefield to the present place where he figured the "sound of battle would never again reach them."

In the parlor General Grant had seated himself at a marble-topped center table, where he scrawled out the generous terms of surrender that General Lee then accepted.

After the Hero of the South had sadly departed, the importance of the occasion suddenly burst upon the minds of the officers who had just witnessed the scene of the signing. They all wished to have some memento of the event and began offering Mr. McLean money for his furnishings. Of course the table upon which Grant drew up the terms was the most desired.

Handsome offers were made for it, and General Ord could not begin to approach them for he had only \$40 in his pocket. But much to his amazement and the chagrin of the other officers, McLean said he wanted to make a gift of the table to General Ord.

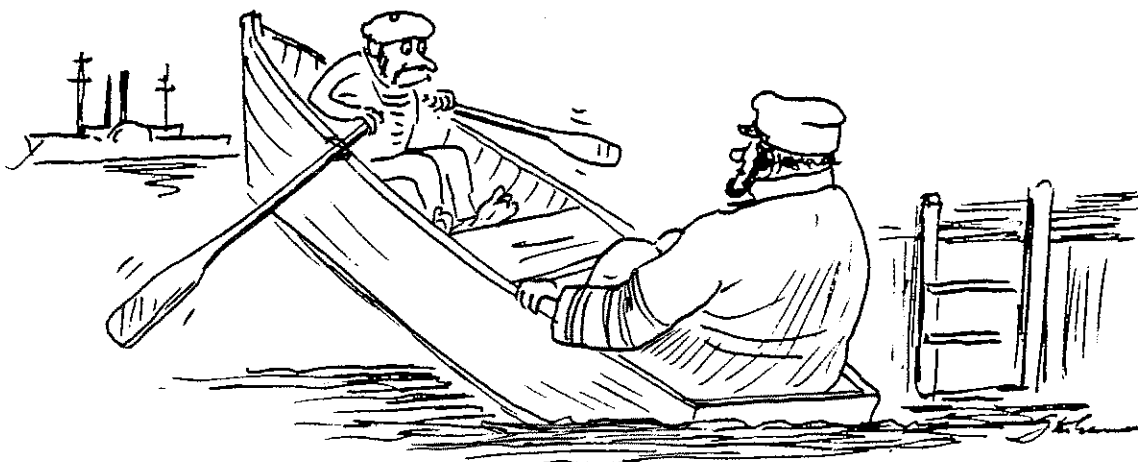
Why Ord? All wanted to know. Because, the owner of the coveted table explained, the starving lad that General Ord, a couple of months before had seen taken care of and sent through the lines to come home, was the son of Mr. McLean, who thanked God for the opportunity to make some return for the kind deed.

The sun began to shine on Sunday, our departure day, making for a pleasant ride home - until we neared Cleveland - and the rain began to fall. At that point I felt that maybe we actually were bringing the weather around with us.

The trip was an experience that I am sure will be remembered by all who took part in it.

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Civil War Smiles by STU CRAMER



"Yes, the General served a nice mess...crabmeat salad, turtle soup, fillet of Sturgeon, roast duck, a thick steak, potatoes, greens, key lime pie, coffee and brandy. Not bad, eh, burp."

ROD THRU GUT

Back on January 3, we published an amusing photograph provided to us by our friend, New York physician John K. Lattimer, showing a Civil War veteran displaying his unhealed wound in a most unorthodox manner (see Fig. 1).

As the "victim" looked directly at the camera with an expression untinged by pain, aides passed a rod through a hole in his left side, demonstrating that a bullet had once passed cleanly through his body, and that its path remained clear.

Recently, we received an interesting follow-up letter from one of our readers, which we share with you this week:

Dear Mr. Holzer: Fancy my surprise to see in your January 3 article an old friend. Since I think I can discern the star of a brigadier general on our Civil War officer's shoulder, I am reasonably sure this is a General Barnum of New York who was an acquaintance of my grandfather. At any rate, General Barnum had a similar wound and was sufficiently proud of it to show it in a photograph, of which he gave a copy to my father, then a child. As I recall, however, in that photo he himself is holding what you term a rod but what was in act-

uality a rope. As my father told the story, the general was, for some reason, instructed never to let the wound close, and so had to draw the rope back and forth through the hole several times each day. It is also my recollection that he sustained his

wound at the Battle of Malvern Hill. In any case, Malvern Hill must have been a significant action in his life, because he named one of his sons Malvern Hill Barnum and the latter, like his father, became a general, probably about the time of World War I. I am sorry I cannot recall the first General Barnum's given name, but with more adequate research resources than are available here. Dr. Lattimer should have no trouble finding it, if indeed he does not already know it. If I ever find the photo my father owned, which is probably among papers in my sister's possession, I would be glad to let Dr. Lattimer see it, should he be interested. — Very Truly Yours, Mrs. Francis J. Ahern, Stanfordville New York.

Dear Mrs. Ahern: It was wonderful to hear from you. Not only did you provide us the opportunity to again publish one of the most unusual photographs we have ever seen, but you provided important personal insight into the story of the man in the picture — and the circumstances behind his unusual affliction.



As General Jubal Early's men marched towards Gettysburg, a private by the name of James H. Hodam later wrote, "The cherry crop was immense through this part of Pennsylvania, and the great trees often overhung the highway laden with the ripened fruit. The infantry would break off great branches and devour the cherries as they marched along. Regiments thus equipped reminded me of the scene in "Macbeth," where 'Birnam's wood do come to Dunsinane.'"

From Under Two Flags, 1896

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Just before the Battle of the Wilderness, Sgt. Billy Bass received a letter from his wife. She said there was to be a big battle, and so she did so much want to see him before it was fought. When Billy read the letter he said he would also like to see her before the battle, but would a great deal rather see her after the battle.

From Lee's Sharpshooters, thanks to Lone Star Banner
Texas CWRT newsletter

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Authorities claim that from one half to two-thirds of the Europeans who came to America between 1607 and 1750, from New York southward, were indentured servants. (In preparation for a future Charger: an article about this neglected aspect of American history.)

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General George B. McClellan had a horse called Burns; named for a friend who had given the animal to him. As reported in Boatner's Civil War Dictionary, Burns could not be ridden in late afternoon hours. When his accustomed dinner hour rolled around, Burns insisted upon bolting back to camp for his ration of oats, no matter what mission his rider may have been upon. Thanks to CWRT of Kentucky newsletter.

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The sword of Irish revolutionary and Union General Thomas Francis Meagher has been unearthed in a woodlot in Newbury, Vermont. The sword was contained in a case marked "Gen'l Thomas Francis Meagher, Irish Brigade."

Meagher was born in Ireland in 1823. He was imprisoned in Australia before he made his escape and came to New York. There he became a lawyer and the editor of Irish newspapers. He was a captain at the start of the Civil War and later organized an Irish Brigade, of which he was named general.

After the war Meagher was appointed secretary of the Montana Territory by President Andrew Johnson. In 1867 he disappeared, presumably drowned in the Missouri River. How his sword got to Newbury, Vermont, is a mystery. Thanks to Hardtack, Indianapolis CWRT newsletter.

The Civil War Round Table of New York recently published a thirty year commemorative booklet detailing its history, programs and membership, 1951-1981. The 80-page, 8½ x 11 book contains a number of photos and illustrations. It's available for purchase for \$10. If you are interested, write to Guy Di Carlo, Jr., Merrill Lynch, Marketing Services Department, One Liberty Plaza, New York, New York 10080. *Illustrated by Stu Groman*