

# *The Charger*

## CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

P.O. BOX 444, VERMILION, OHIO 44089

OCTOBER 1982

VOLUME 25 NO. 11

218th Meeting

DATE: OCTOBER 12  
 PLACE: THE HERMIT CLUB, DODGE COURT, CLEVELAND  
 SPEAKER: EARL J. COATES  
 SUBJECT: "THE ENIGMA"  
 TIME: COCKTAILS 6:00 P.M. DINNER 7:00 P.M.

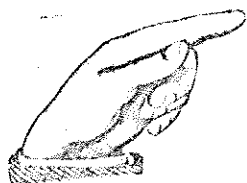
Earl J. Coates spoke to the Club last October on "Supplying Sherman's Army." He is from Baltimore, and is the Curator of the Collection of Historical Equipment at the National Security Agency, and does historical research for that organization. A graduate of Loyola College, Chicago, he has published many articles on the Civil War.

Earl has been a member of the Company of Military Historians since 1962; is a member of the Council of Abandoned Military Posts; the North South Skirmish Association and the Order of Indian Wars. He has addressed many Civil War Round Tables.

His subject (although this may be changed) will be the "Enigma," the story of the secret coding device stolen from the Germans by the British in World War II, and which played a very important part in the Allied victory.

NOTE: The Hermit Club has requested that we now make reservations for our meetings there. Call President Bill Victory to make your reservation:

Office phone..... 623 - 4666  
 Home phone..... 221 - 5419



## Ed Bearss at Brice's Cross Roads

The September meeting, held jointly with the Western Reserve CWRT at the Holiday Inn, was a good one. Because we had an outstanding speaker, the one and only Ed Bearss.

Ed's presentation of "Forrest at Brice's Cross Roads" demonstrated once again why he is such a popular speaker. The most impressive aspect of his talks is his command of facts...he explains the actions of various units of both Confederate and Union forces by their names, numbers, commanders; the times, dates and places, as they move forward into battle...peppered with anecdote and all without notes. His gestures and enthusiasm for the subject communicates to the audience bringing life to his dynamic descriptions.

Bearss set the stage for the encounter at Brice's Cross Roads by reviewing the situation with Sherman marching south to try to destroy Joe Johnson's Army of Tennessee. Realizing the vulnerability of his supply line from Chattanooga, and knowing the uncanny ability of Nathan Bedford Forrest, Sherman ordered General Samuel Sturgis, with an army of about 9 thousand, to leave Memphis, keep Forrest in northern Mississippi and destroy "that Devil," once and for all.

Skirmishing in several places, Forrest finally had his different units, totalling about 3000, where he wanted them, and then laid his plans. Using his familiarity with the country, its weather, and correctly judging his opponent, the wily Confederate expertly executed the approach, the trap, the envelopment, and the follow-up, constantly "keepin' the heat on."

Ed's description of Forrest, his coat slung across the pommel of his saddle, sweating and cussing as he rode back and forth along his lines....of the panic and jumble at Hatchie Bottom, where the Federal wagons floundered...the pile up on the bridge over Tishomingo Creek, was colorful and graphic.



President Bill Victory  
623-4666  
221-5419

Vice Pres. Neil Evans  
752-2296

Secretary Tim Beatty  
Treasurer Brian Kowell  
Sgt.-at-Arms George  
Vourljania

Editor and Illustrator  
of the Charger Stuart  
Cramer

Assistant Editor Hazel  
Cramer 967-5971

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

### A PRIVATE MINI FIELD TRIP TO LINCOLN COUNTRY

At the last meeting Earl Hoover reported on a 2000 mile Abe Lincoln Field Trip he and John Tormey took last summer. Their tour started at Decatur, Ill., where the first settlement has been reconstructed, then to New Salem Village, scenes of A. Lincoln's boyhood; on to Springfield to see Lincoln's law office, and his desk in the legislative chamber. Next on the agenda was Jacksonville, Ill., home and grave of Gen. Benj. Grierson, the Union Raider, and on to Illinois College, oldest in the state; then Galena, home of Gen. U.S. Grant. A most interesting itinerary.



# FRED GILL'S BOOK REVIEW

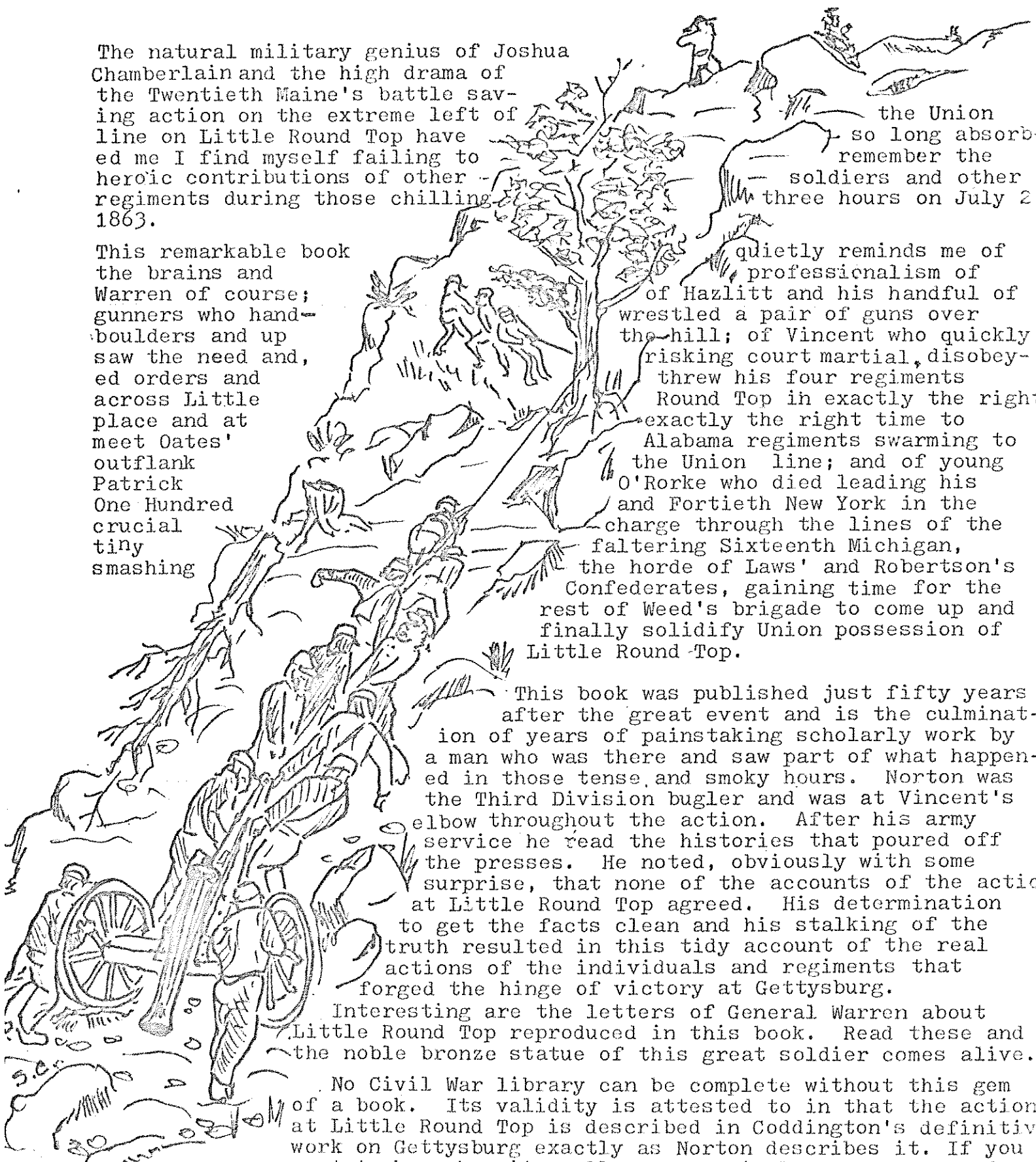
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IT REALLY HAPPENED LIKE THIS

The Attack and Defense of Little Round Top by Oliver Willcox Norton.  
Neale Publishing Co., N.Y. 1913 (Morningside Bookshop 1978.)

The natural military genius of Joshua Chamberlain and the high drama of the Twentieth Maine's battle saving action on the extreme left of line on Little Round Top have ed me I find myself failing to heroic contributions of other regiments during those chilling 1863.

This remarkable book the brains and Warren of course; gunners who hand-boulders and up saw the need and, ed orders and across Little place and at meet Oates' outflank Patrick One Hundred crucial tiny smashing



the Union so long absorb- remember the soldiers and other three hours on July 2, quietly reminds me of professionalism of of Hazlitt and his handful of wrestled a pair of guns over the hill; of Vincent who quickly risking court martial, disobey- threw his four regiments Round Top in exactly the right exactly the right time to Alabama regiments swarming to the Union line; and of young O'Rorke who died leading his and Fortieth New York in the charge through the lines of the faltering Sixteenth Michigan, the horde of Laws' and Robertson's Confederates, gaining time for the rest of Weed's brigade to come up and finally solidify Union possession of Little Round Top.

This book was published just fifty years after the great event and is the culmination of years of painstaking scholarly work by a man who was there and saw part of what happened in those tense and smoky hours. Norton was the Third Division bugler and was at Vincent's elbow throughout the action. After his army service he read the histories that poured off the presses. He noted, obviously with some surprise, that none of the accounts of the action at Little Round Top agreed. His determination to get the facts clean and his stalking of the truth resulted in this tidy account of the real actions of the individuals and regiments that forged the hinge of victory at Gettysburg.

Interesting are the letters of General Warren about Little Round Top reproduced in this book. Read these and the noble bronze statue of this great soldier comes alive.

No Civil War library can be complete without this gem of a book. Its validity is attested to in that the action at Little Round Top is described in Coddington's definitive work on Gettysburg exactly as Norton describes it. If you want to know how it really was at Little Round Top read this book.

# A Piece of Rope

A friend of ours, the Reverend Al Hubler, of Akron, used the following anecdote as a parable in a recent sermon, a story we had never read before:

In 1887, funds were raised to have a statue of the beloved Robert E. Lee created by Jean Antoine Mercié, a distinguished French sculptor, for the city of Richmond. On May 7th, 1890, the beautiful equestrian statue was delivered to the railroad station. The next problem was to haul the bronze to the site at the corner of Monument and Allen Avenues.

Someone suggested that the citizens themselves pull General Lee. Everyone of all classes and ages wanted to take part. A special day was designated, schools were let out, and a holiday was declared. People streamed into the city.

The statue was loaded onto three wagons lashed together, and a block-long rope was fastened to the wagons. People thronged to take hold of the rope, people of all ages, races and walks of life, rich and poor. When the statue was in place, the rope was cut into many small pieces.

For days, months and years, Richmond people would display their small piece of rope and declare, "I had hold of the rope! Did you?" Reverend Hubler, whose sermon title was "A Piece of Rope," likened this to the programs of the Church, which depend upon how many take hold and pull.

On the day of the dedication, thousands of veteran Confederate soldiers, privates and generals alike assembled for a big parade. General Joseph E. Johnson, 83 years old, pulled the cord to unveil the figure of Lee on Traveler. It seemed for a moment that the old commander had suddenly descended from the skies to review his men once more.



This is the second of series "A" of Civil War related cartoons. Any suggestions for a name for them?

# SCENES I'D LIKE TO HAVE SEEN

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As Sherman's army passed from Savannah into South Carolina, General Slocum's advance, far to the south of Sherman, experienced the state's flooded lowlands at their worst. Some divisions struggled all day on marches of two miles, and the drenched and muddy veterans emerged "like hippopotami from the depths of the ooze. Rains were almost unceasing.

Some of Slocum's pickets patrolled their camps in canoes. Men slept standing knee-deep in water. A New York Herald reporter who was searching for headquarters after dark was hailed from a tree, "Hellow, old fellow, you'd better come up and get yourself a roost." The correspondent found Corps Commander Alpheus Williams perched in the crotch of a tree, swathed in a blanket, staff officers perched in limbs all about him. Williams was smoking a cigar, looking as quiet and serene as if he had been in his tent on dry ground.



Above is a passage from Burke Davis' book Sherman's March, Random House, New York, 1980. Sent in by Brian Kowell.

## FIELD TRIP OFF

The Field Trip to Canada mapped out by John Harkness, Bernie Drews, and Don Heckaman had to be postponed because not enough members signed up. The itinerary was to have included Fort Niagara, Forts George and Mississauga, Butler's Barracks, 1812 battlefields, museums, etc.. Rooms and restaurants were lined up. The Club owes this committee a vote of thanks for the effort put into the project.

We wonder whether the whole subject of Field Trips should be submitted to the membership in the light of present day high cost of travel? What are your views?

# THE RAID ON ST. ALBANS

Thumprints From the Bennington, Vt. Banner, 5/28/82 by Member Bob Thum

A question showing up on quiz shows periodically is: What was the northernmost engagement of the Civil War? Sometimes Morgan's raid into Ohio is picked, or perhaps Gettysburg or Antietam. But all good Vermonters know that this strange engagement was fought at St. Albans on Oct. 19, 1864, only 20 miles from the Canadian border.

It was a Keystone Cops affair that had its ludicrous aspects with a full share of Vermont humor. The raid was part of the so-called "Northwest Conspiracy," and, like most aspects of that scattered-brain scheme, was designed to frighten the federal government into detaching troops from the armies of Grant, Sherman and Sheridan to prevent rebellion in the major northern cities and to protect border towns like St. Albans.

For a short time the raid gave northern Vermont a case of jitters, but not a single soldier was detached from the Union armies to defend the border towns. As a deed of derring-do the raid was a sensation. As an effective act of war, it was a failure.

The leader of the raid was one Bennett Young, a 20-year-old Kentucky cavalryman who was captured during Morgan's raid into Ohio July 1863. He was imprisoned in Camp Douglas near Chicago and escaped into Canada in January 1864. An enterprising and ambitious fellow, he enlisted the support of the Confederate government, and his plan was incorporated into the overall above mentioned scheme to divert federal troops away from more important chores.

In October 1864 he and a number of fellow escaped confederate prisoners filtered quietly down into St. Albans, the largest Vermont town near the Canadian border. They wore a bit of Confederate uniform so they would be treated, if captured, as soldiers acting under orders and not shot as spies. They moved rather surreptitiously around the small town for a day or two, living in rooming houses and in general casing the joint. Surprisingly, they excited no suspicions.

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SHORTLY BEFORE bank closing time their plan was put into action. Into the three St. Albans banks they rushed with drawn weapons, demanding large sums of money, and telling the astounded Vermonters



that their town was being taken over by the Confederate States of America. From this time on one might think he was witnessing an old silent movie. The good people of St. Albans could not quite adjust to the fact that their town was in the midst of the great Civil War. One venerable citizen with a long white beard was sitting beside the stove in the bank reading his newspaper.

He was oblivious to the commotion around him as rebel soldiers put the gun to tellers, forced people into the vault where at gunpoint they required the good solid citizens to take an oath to the confederacy. Finally he placed his newspaper on the floor, rose to his feet, tapped a cashier on the shoulder, and asked in a high quavering voice, "What gentlemen are these, Albert? It seems to me that they are quite rude in their manners."

At this point a depositor appeared in the doorway and, observing pistols in the raiders' hands, assumed he

had chanced upon a bank robbery. He turned around and dashed back through the door. There he crashed into a confederate who was running into the bank at full speed. Neither could get by the other and finally both fell to the street, grappling and pummeling each other.

A raider inside the bank saw the melee and rushed out to help his comrade. The old gentleman, seemingly enjoying every minute of this excitement, tottered to the doorway, shook his head at the sight of the two raiders working over the innocent depositor. He shouted out as loud as his ancient voice could make itself heard, "Two against one is not fair play." He came back into the bank and resumed his seat by the stove.

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A VILLAGER rushed Young, who had mounted the Vermonter's horse. Young ordered him to stop and cocked his pistol. No way was the Vermonter going to let Young make off with his horse.

Young fired, and the man clapped his hand to his stomach and staggered back against a store front. He removed his hands from his stomach and the bullet fell to the ground. His belt buckle had saved him. People kept appearing and could not realize this little action was for real. Another old gentleman showed up and was told to halt or he would be shot. "You won't shoot me," stated the old man, smiling, "You've just had too much to drink."

The raiders' retreat to Canada was hastened by two Vermont veterans, one home on leave and another who had been furloughed. They led the pursuit into Canada and even captured Young and were about to lynch him when he was saved by Canadian officials. The raiders were interned in Canada for the duration.

The only casualty of the raid was an unlucky pedestrian hit by a stray bullet. Ironically, it was reported that he was the only southern sympathizer in St. Albans.

## St. Alban's Raiders Descendants Sought

Did one of your ancestors fight for the Confederacy as a member of the St. Alban's Raiders?

The Sons of Confederate Veterans, a national organization, is looking for descendants of Confederate soldiers who

penetrated Union territory on October 19, 1864 and raided the bank at St. Alban's, Vermont.

The St. Alban's Raiders are being posthumously awarded the Confederate Medal of Honor by the Sons of Confederate Veterans.

# First Bay of Pigs

More than a century before the Bay of Pigs incident in 1961, another group of Cuban exiles with U.S. military backing failed in an attempt to conquer Cuba.

The exiles' leader, Narciso López, launched two attacks from the U.S.. Many Americans were in favor of taking Cuba from Spain, and the U.S. government did little to stop López.

López offered leadership of one expedition to Robert E. Lee and to Jefferson Davis, but both turned it down. So López himself led the invaders, many of them Americans.

In 1850, he landed in Cuba with 600 men but was driven off. A year later, he tried again with 400 men, hoping to aid the revolution led by the lawyer-patriot Joaquin de Agüero. A group under W. L. Crittenden, nephew of the U.S. Attorney General, was captured first. The 50 prisoners were shot, and their fingers and skull pieces were nailed up as warnings to others.

López and his men were captured in 1851. Lopez was strangled with a sharp metal collar tightened by a screw. Cuba did not win its independence from Spain until 1902 - with a slight assist by William Randolph Hearst.

From Parade Magazine. No other authentication .

## A Memorial Day Dilemma



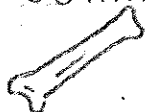
On frequent trips to Ithaca, New York, where our daughter resides, your editors have passed through Waterloo, New York, where a big sign proclaims this as the original home of the first Memorial Day. We have even read that President Lyndon Johnson and Governor Nelson Rockefeller proclaimed this as the birthplace of (originally Decoration Day) and resolutions to that effect were adopted by Congress on June 2, 1967. So we always wisely remarked something like, "How about that!" as we passed through Waterloo.

Then last May our smugness was shattered by a clipping and letter from member Earl Hoover, enclosing a program he had presented for the Cleveland Rotary Club, with an article he'd written for the Cleveland Plain Dealer attesting to the fact that the first celebration of this Day occurred at Arlington Cemetery, where the featured orator was none other than Ohio's own General James A. Garfield! How could such authorities as these produce such a quiddity?

Now comes a clipping from member, Co-Founder and Past-President of the Cleveland Civil War Round Table, Jack Cullen, from Boalsburg, Pennsylvania with a picture of a sign declaring that Boalsburg, an American Village, is the Birthplace of Memorial Day. The story is that five years before the establishing of May 30th as Memorial Day, the ladies of this village strewed flowers on the graves of the 148th Pennsylvania Volunteers, as recorded in a History of the 148th Pa. Vols. on May 5, 1868.

Ye gods, it looks like from now on we'll have to take route #98 and go around Waterloo so as not to get into any arguments.

### CORRECTION



Last month in the article on clippings sent in, we credited the clip about the reenactment of the battle at Ft. Myers, Fla. to Ray Swanson, when it was really Ray Channing who sent it in. Got our Rays mixed. *Sorry, RAY*



In 1965 Jacques Rollinger of Company B, 47th New York Volunteers, appeared before the pension board with this record of his mishaps: in 1862 he was cut by a saber on his right forearm and left thigh. Shortly afterward he was shot in the right thigh. In 1863 he suffered a sword cut that severed his spinal muscles. Next, he was captured in Missouri by outlaws who lacerated his chest with burning sticks. Rollinger escaped to Florida, where he was hit in the right leg by a shell fragment. While collapsing from the blow, he was shot just below the heart. Then he was accidentally bayoneted by a comrade, piercing his liver. Finally, he was shot through the neck. During his long convalescence, Rollinger liked to entertain his friends by blowing jets of water through the holes in his neck. Rollinger's main complaint before the pension board, however, was of a stiff knee.

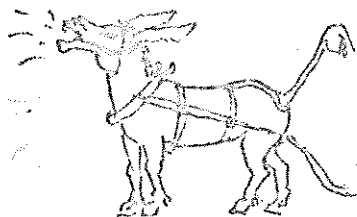


- From Dr. H. Cramer, Ithaca, New York

\* \* \* \* \*

After the War, General Grant, in his travels, had a long talk with Germany's Chancellor Bismark about the obsolescence of the bayonet. How come they're still using 'em? -Around the World With General Grant, I.

\* \* \* \* \*



On a dangerous night march, Stonewall Jackson feared that the mules hauling his wagons might bray as they approached a nearby Federal camp. Claiborne Mason volunteered to solve his problem. He asked Jackson for a few hanks of strong cord and about 50 men. He had the men loop the cord around the mules' legs and tie down their tails. Jackson's army passed the Federals with no noise from the animals. Mason explained, "Mule never brays until he lifts his tail, General."

-From the Quarterly Review of the Lee-Jackson Foundation

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Probably the dumbest looking military hat in the War was the "Hardee Hat" that became the symbol of the "Iron Brigade." This famous fighting unit originally formed of the 19th Indiana and the 2nd, 6th and 7th Wisconsin Volunteers, first known as the "Black Hat Brigade," was the first western unit attached to the eastern army. At South Mountain they earned the proud title of "Iron Brigade" and lived up to the name at Antietam, giving up 42% of their numbers. They were then reinforced by the 24th Michigan, which was welded by blood into the unit at Fredericksburg and helped add to its honors at Chancellorsville. On the fateful 1st of July, the Brigade was decimated at Gettysburg....but by then the dumb-looking hats had been discarded.



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Union General Thomas A. Smyth was born in Ireland and came to the U.S.A at the age of 22. Seven years later he answered the call to arms with a volunteer company from Delaware, rapidly advancing in grade. On April 7, 1865, two days before Lee's surrender at Appomattox, Smyth, by then a Brigadier General of volunteers, was inspecting a skirmish line at Farmville, Virginia, when he was shot in the mouth by a Confederate sharpshooter. Forty-eight hours later, on the day that the guns of Virginia fell silent, Smyth died. The last Federal General to be killed in the war.

-Generals in Blue, by Ezra Warner

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Don't forget to call Bill Victory and make a reservation for Oct. 12