

The Charger

CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

PO BX 444

VERMILION OH 44089

OCTOBER 1984

VOLUME 7, NUMBER 7

236th Meeting

Please Make Reservation

DATE: OCTOBER 9th

PLACE: RESIDENCE OF DR. KEN CALLAHAN
(See page 2 for directions)

SPEAKER: GERARD T. ALTOFF
Supervisory Park Ranger at
Perry's Victory and International
Peace Memorial, Put-in-Bay, Ohio

SUBJECT: "Pickett's Charge, A Participant's
Viewpoint."

TIME: Preliminaries: 6:00 P.M., Dinner: 7:00 P.M.

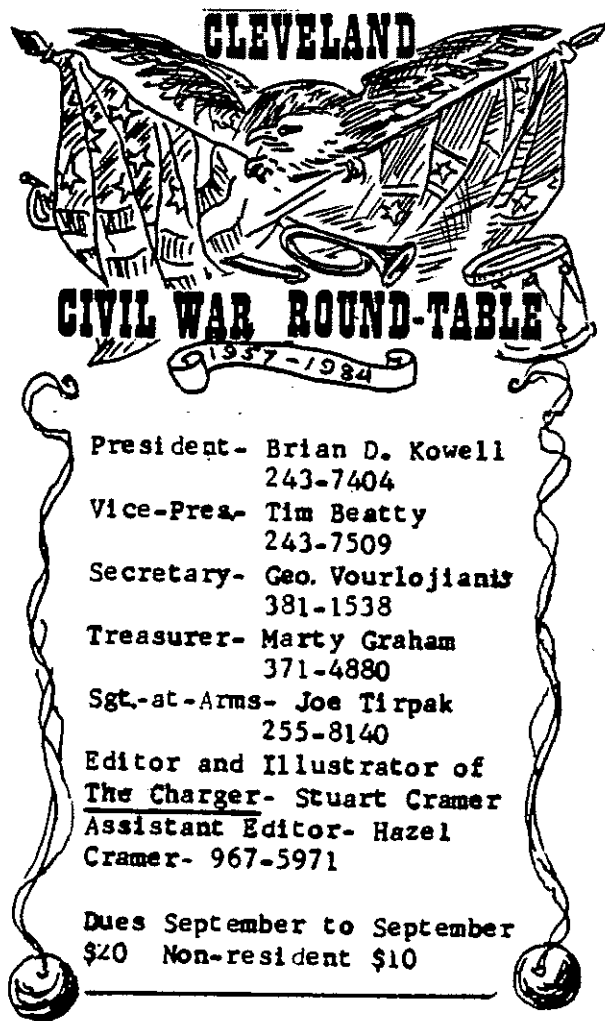
PRICE: \$17.00, which includes drinks



Our speaker Gerard T. Altoff, was born and raised in the Gettysburg area. He attended Dixie College in St. George, Utah, and served four years in the U.S. Coast Guard, including a tour in Viet Nam. He has been with the National Park Service since 1972 and has worked at Zion National Park in Utah, Theodore Roosevelt National Park in North Dakota and is presently the Chief Ranger at Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial at Put-in-Bay. Mr. Altoff states that he is very much looking forward to this program as it is his favorite field of study and interest.

Pickett: "General Longstreet, shall I advance?" Longstreet said nothing; he merely bowed his head in affirmation. Pickett saluted and said, "Then I shall lead my division forward, sir."

The Gettysburg Campaign, by Coddington

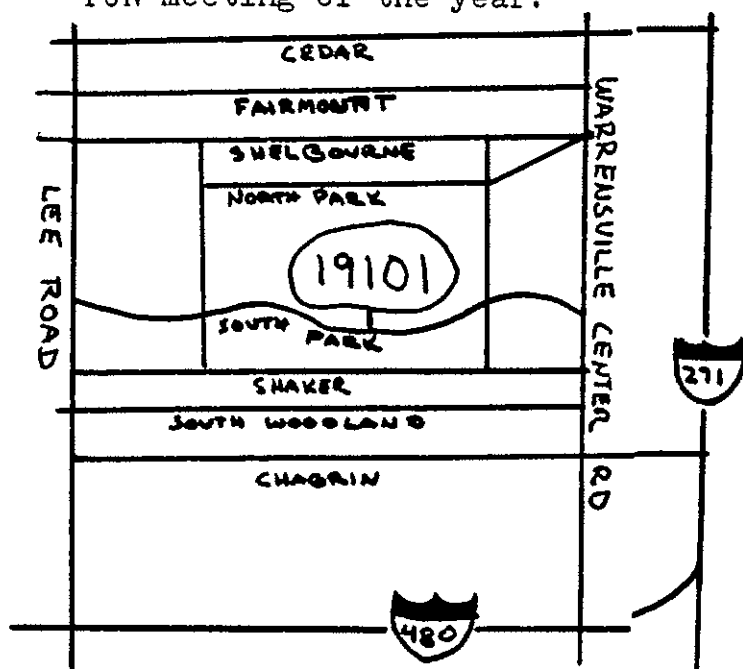


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Dues September to September
\$20 Non-resident \$10

HOW TO GET THERE

All those who have attended the meetings at Ken Callahan's beautiful home claim it is the FUN meeting of the year.



BEARSS SCORES AGAIN AT SEPTEMBER MEETING

"Derailing Grant"

Once again Ed Bearss brought to life an important little slice of Civil War history with his distinctive style. Presented in story telling form he set forth the facts, figures and with astute conclusions the exploits of Generals Nathan Bedford Forrest and Earl Van Dorn during the last week of December, 1862.

Providing us with maps, Ed traced day by day the simultaneous raids of the Confederate cavalrymen, Van Dorn against Grant's huge supply depot at Holly Springs, Mississippi, and Forrest's foray into Tennessee to wreck the Mobile and Ohio Railroad as well as taking all the Union garrisons on the way, both vital to Grant's armies moving against Vicksburg.

Strategically, these successful raids set back the Union campaign for Vicksburg many months. Historian Bearss's presentation was indeed unique; his thorough knowledge of the details, the names, dates and places, with asides about the characters involved, provided an entertaining and informative experience for all.

This was a joint meeting of the Cleveland and Western Reserve Round Table



Reservations an absolute must. Call Brian Kowell at 243- 7404 !!!!!!!!!!!!!

Your Dues Are Due NOW

Where the Girls Are Not

A small group of local historians celebrated an anniversary this month. It was the 10th birthday for the Civil War Round Table of Cleveland, a group originally organized by John W. Cullen and the late Ken Grant. On the 10th anniversary it is reasonably healthy and still searching, still curious, still replaying history.

Formalizing a mutual interest in the background, the fighting and the aftermath of the War Between the States was an uncertain venture. How many people really were engrossed in the 1861-65 period to the extent of forming a looseleaf society to meet and talk about it each month? Would such a group have any zip left after the centennial of the Civil War with all the whoopla of that occasion?



HOWARD PRESTON

The answer has been affirmative, no small feat since only 65 of 190 such Round Tables survived the centennial. Cullen and Grant put together a nucleus of a permanent historical organization, finding willing members among bankers, lawyers, doctors, engineers, newspapermen, stock brokers, teachers, draftsmen, judges, salesmen. They are rich, poor and average-income people. The first president was a purchasing agent and the current one is a physician. Locally, as nationally, the Johnny-come-lately history bugs have been weeded out.

NATURALLY, FROM THIS association has sprung firm friendships. But the primary reason for the Round Table's existence, to further knowledge of American history during one of its most turbulent periods, has been maintained. Scarcely a

Civil War expert worth mentioning has not addressed the group at least once. Members who specialize in certain aspects of the Civil War have presented papers on their favorite subjects.

All in all, the organization—which had to put a limit on membership in order to keep the meeting informal—has surprised itself with its success. Members have helped put on historical programs for schools and for municipalities and one, the late beloved Bob Warren, even donated his farmland as the site one year for the big national North-South shooting match. Each year the Round Table has sponsored a field trip to some battle area for on-the-spot review.

THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL sides of historical years have not been neglected. And the original framers of the club's constitution, in their wisdom, did not forget the ladies. They barred females from membership (which almost led to picketing early in the game) but arranged for one special ladies' night program each year. The latter always has been a pleasant affair and in a small way is acknowledgement that women play roles in the tragic drama of war.

As it heads into its second decade, the Round Table is considering branching out, both ways, from 1861-65. Should it take in the Spanish-American War at one end and the Revolutionary War at the other? This expansion could broaden the membership and bring new expression to the table.

The aim remains, to find out why the nation has ticked the way it has in order to anticipate the future without taking sides or guessing what some long dead patriot would do today if he were here. It's an altruistic intention. Happy new decade.

Most of us have, at one time or another, had to explain just what a Civil War Round Table is all about. Too often, our non-history oriented friends when informed we are going to a meeting or on a field trip will, with raised eyebrows and gaping mouth, say something like, "You're going to do WHAT?"

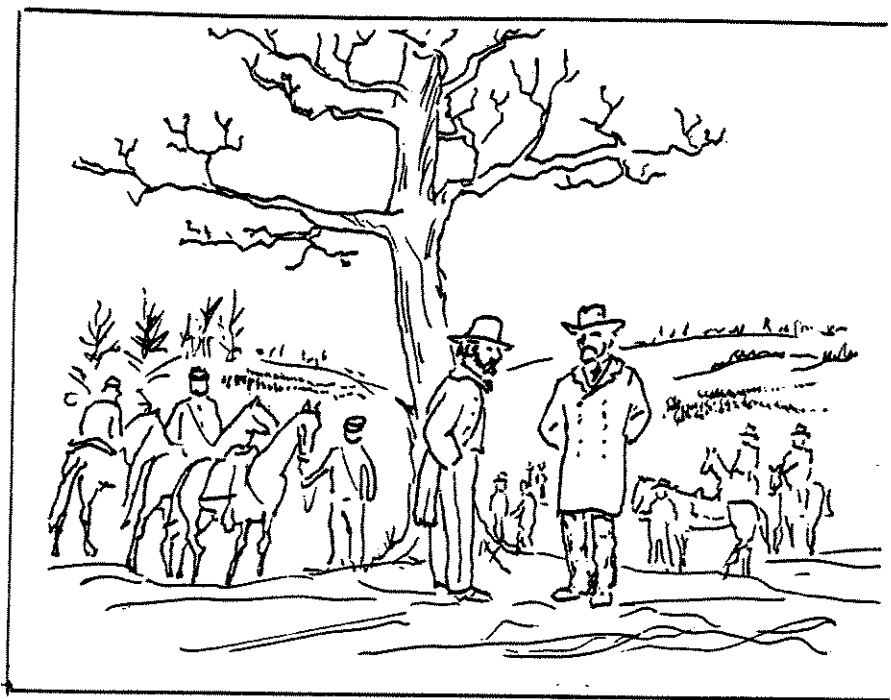
Bill Schlesinger sent in the above clipping by our late member Howard Preston, which pretty well explains what we are. It also touches on the now ripe subject of sharing membership with the opposite sex.

The Charger is exchanged with some 27 other RT news letters, four of which have lady editors, members of other Round Tables. We also know of at least four of these clubs who have lady presidents, all of whom are exceptionally good ones!

This question of opening up the membership has already been brought up in an executive meeting, requiring a change in our constitution. It would be interesting to have an expression of opinion from our readers. Or better still, from the Cleveland Civil War Round Table's ladies themselves? (Our Advisor on Statistical Trivia, Col. Junius Stupnagle, gives 10 to 1 odds that none of our ladies would want to join.)

SCENES I'D LIKE TO HAVE SEEN

6
2



There are two popular paintings depicting the dramatic meeting between Generals Grant and Lee at Appomattox. Both drawings show the famous antagonists mounted on their noble chargers under an apple tree with elements of their armies looking on. One, rendered in 1872, shows a very stylized Lee (I do not know the artist), and the other, painted by Stanley Arthurs in 1922, has been sold by the thousands as a color postcard.

An eye-witness account of this "great happening" was published as a part of an interview in the 1930's, a part of the W.P.A.'s Federal Works Project, in a book entitled The Negro in Virginia and more recently in Weevils in the Wheat (University of Virginia, 1976.)

One Tom Hester, a Jamaica born black, who grew up in Suffolk, Virginia, was the alleged witness. He supposedly served first in the Confederate Army and later with the Union as a free-lance horse handler. As he told it to the W.P.A. interviewer in darky dialect:

"Gen'ral Lee tipped his hat fust, an' Gen'ral Grant got offen hissen. Gen'ral Lee got on a new uniform wid gold braid an' lots of buttons, but Gen'ral Grant got on a' old blue coat dat's so dirty it look black. Dey stood dere talkin' 'bout half an hour, an den dey shake hands an us what was watchin' know dat Lee done give up...Gen'ral Lee rode ovah to de rebel side, an' Gen'ral Grant rode ovah to our side, an' de wah was ovah."

Hester also revealed that he went back to the same spot the next day in hope of cutting a branch from the apple tree as a keepsake, "But dere wasn't no sign of it - jes' a hole in de groun'."

That bit about Grant's coat being so dirty it looked black - warned me...dusty and maybe sweat-stained, but not dirty black. Southern writers always loved to dwell on the contrast between the uniforms of these two, as though to somehow mitigate the fact that grimy Grant had whipped the hell out of God-like Lee. So I started nosing the books and found in Grant's Personal Memoires, Vol.II page 488 the following:

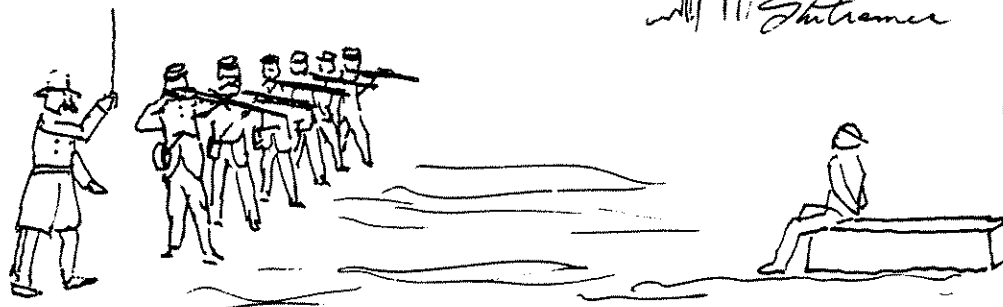
"Wars produce many stories of fiction, some of which are told until they are believed to be true. The war of the rebellion was no exception to this rule, and the story of the apple tree is one of those fictions..." He goes on to tell that there was in fact an apple orchard on the side of the hill

continued on page 7

FURTHER CAMP PUNISHMENTS FOR NON-RESERVATIONISTS

5

Seventy-two members and guests attended the September meeting at The Holiday Inn. Of these 21 were from the W.R. Round Table. We regret to report that in spite of threatening the camp punishments meted out to Civil War soldiers, some of our members still did not call in reservations. So we are continuing the threat of disciplinary action. The spread-eagle treatment might make a good reminder; or hanging by the thumbs so only the toes touch the ground; or standing on a barrel; tied behind a wagon; riding a rail; or a night in the stocks.... and if any or all of these do not cure this bad habit, we suggest a final solution:



CALL NOW

BRIAN KOWELL
216-243-7404

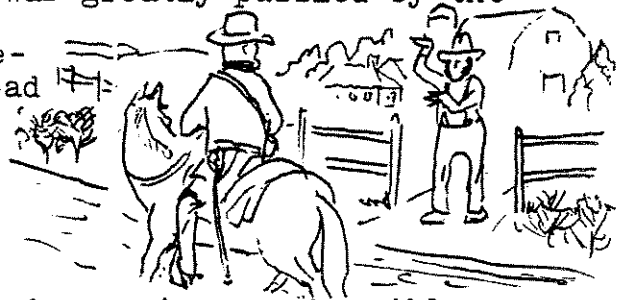
He must have
a head count
48 hours before

GETTYSBURG EPISODES

6

Tuesday, June 30, 1863. Many roads in Maryland and Pennsylvania were clogged with long columns of troops, all these roads running in the general direction of Gettysburg. One of the marching units was a Confederate army led by General Jubal Early, who had started out from York that morning.

As Old Jube rode along through the pleasant summer countryside, with its prosperous-looking farms, he was greatly puzzled by the strange antics of some of the farmers. Time after time, he would see a middle-aged or elderly man standing by the road making mysterious gestures with his hands. The brandishing of a clenched fist in the direction of the invaders would have been understandable. A friendly wave of the hand would have been surprising. But these bizaare gestures with which he was being greeted were incomprehensible. Finally, Old Jube's curiosity got the better of him; so he stopped and asked one of the demonstrators the meaning of his actions.



The key to the mystery was readily supplied. A few days previously a smooth-talking stranger had passed through that area peddling "invasion insurance." For a very reasonable premium, the insured was instructed in certain ritual gestures alleged to be the signs of recognition used by members of the secret organization sympathetic toward the South and known as Knights of the Golden Circle. By the use of these signs the initiate could protect his property against molestation by the Rebels.

The fact that General Lee had given strict orders against such actions towards the civilian population, and those orders obeyed, gave credence to the con as word spread ahead that the signs did work.

Wednesday, July 1st, 1863. Major Gerber, a staff officer of the 1st Corps, had lost his horse and was retreating with the rest through the town of Gettysburg. Behind him, not so far, was a body of Rebels. The doors of a Lutheran Church stood invitingly open and he dodged in. Pews and aisles were jammed with wounded. He noticed a surgeon's sash hanging on the back of a pew. He unbuckled his sword belt, put the sash around his waist, grabbed a canteen and held it to the lips of a wounded man.



A detachment of Rebels appeared in the doorway, but Gerber paid them no mind and passed on to another patient. The Rebs wouldn't bother a surgeon in the performance of his duty.

The long arm of coincidence reached out to tap him on the shoulder, and the arm was clad in Confederate gray. He turned to face a rebel officer and recognized a boyhood chum, a Baltimorean named Gilbert.

"Gerber, where in the devil did you ever study medicine?" So the jig was up. Only, it wasn't. Gilmore muttered in his ear, "Play your game, Gerber. It's all right." Then the Rebels departed.

From The Shaping of a Battle: Gettysburg, by Montgomery

very crooked and straggly line. To form a better line, the captain sang out, "Close up, please, close up." The wenches thought the order meant the personal search was about to begin. So they giggled and simpered and lifted their dresses - all the clothes they had on - pretty high. The captain shouted, "That ain't what I mean." One of the young ladies was so shocked, thinking she might be next, that she spoke up and said she hid the jewelry to keep it from away from the Yanks. From that day on, it was fun for us boys. We only had to call out to the captain, "Close up," to make him swear."

* * * * *

CIVIL WAR SMILES by STU CRAMER



Do you know what you just said? You just said something very important.

Report on 1984 Field Trip

Since this Charger will be in your hands before we can get a report of the highlights of the 1984 Field Trip, we will defer that until the November issue. At that time we will learn what these troops did and saw:

George Skoch, Brian Kowell, Bob Bayless, Ted Bolwinkleman, David Wood and his son-in-law, Terry Monroe, Cliff Riel, Dick McCrae, Tom Van Sickle and Marty Graham.

* * * * *

FRED GILL'S BOOK REVIEW

Fred Gill's book reviews will be resumed after he gets his new glasses.

* * * * *

SCENES I'D LIKE TO HAVE SEEN

occupied by Confederate forces, and that Grant's staff officer, when he rode up under a flag of truce to deliver a message, found General Lee resting under one of the trees.

Douglas S. Freeman, in his definitive biography R.E. LEE, Vol. IV. page 150, relates of Lee and Grant's meeting the day after the surrender in the McLean house, where they met for the first time in eighteen years. The meeting on April 10th took place on a little knoll to the right of the road to Lynchburg, between the lines of the two armies. There is no mention of an apple tree there.



OLLAROUND

8

Joke that went the rounds of Civil War camps:

An old maid and her niece were captured by Union soldiers who were preparing to rape them. When the niece began to yell, the old maid told her, "Hesh up, these sojers got their orders. War is war."

* * * * *

Before the spring offensive of 1864 the Army of the Potomac underwent a reorganization. Two of the five corps were broken up and distributed among the remaining three. The result was painful to men in outfits which were thus abolished or lost their identity in the shuffle. Although the recommendation had been made by Meade before General Grant left Tennessee, the resentful soldiers put the blame on the new General-in-Chief. At the first large scale review in early April the men of one absorbed outfit wore their old corps badge on the crown of their caps, as usual, but - as Grant could see as soon as they swung past him - pinned the new patch to the seat of their trousers.

From The Civil War: A Narrative, by Shelby Foote. Vol. II

* * * * *

During a post-war tour of duty in France, General James Gavin (famous commander of the 82nd Airborne at Normandy,) was shown some water colors done by Prince de Joinville, a French nobleman, who recorded his impressions of the American Civil War while he was an observer with the Union Army.

"Joinville was always editorializing in his paintings," Gavin said, pointing out a picture of General George A. Custer.

"Here's Custer. Look at him - no belt, no weapon, his ankles showing between his trousers and his boots. See how Joinville chose to paint him mounted, from behind. That's so we will see what Joinville saw - a horse's arse!"

From Yankee Magazine, June 1984. Thanks to Brian Kowell

* * * * *

From one of Fred Gill's Florida spies comes an article that appeared in the St. Petersburg Times a month or two ago. You will be happy to learn that the state's first statue to the Confederate dead still stands. In the late 1860's, a Ladies Memorial Association was formed in the town of Euchee Anna, at that time the Walton County seat (about 120 miles west of Tallahassee,) to honor the 90 fallen Rebels of the county. After much opposition from the carpetbag government in control at the time, the stout-hearted ladies prevailed and built their memorial. The monument was moved twice, but now it stands near the courthouse of the present county seat at DeFuniak Springs, five miles from Euchee Anna on U.S. Route 90.

* * * * *

From an article that appeared in The Saturday Evening Post, May 20, 1961. Your editor's apology to the person who sent this in for not jotting his name for due credit. The article was based upon a manuscript composed of letters from a private Robert Hale Strong, of Naperville, Illinois, of the 105th Illinois Volunteers. This is just one of the interesting anecdotes contained in the article. This incident occurred during Sherman's March.

"At one place where we foraged and pretty well cleaned the range of everything to eat, the lady of the house accused us of stealing some jewelry. The captain in charge denied it, said if anything was stolen her girl or slaves had got it, and he would have them searched. The old lady and several daughters and a dozen wenches were standing close to the house. Our captain stormed and ordered the wenches to get into line. They formed a

continued on page 7