

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

P. O. BOX 5028, CLEVELAND, OHIO 44101

OCTOBER 1985

VOLUME 8 NUMBER 5

245th Meeting

DATE: OCTOBER 8th

PLACE: Home of Member Dr. Callahan (see map pg. 2)

SPEAKER: Dr. David Skagg

SUBJECT: "Little Round Top Revisited "

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



Our speaker Professor David Skaggs has been teaching history at Bowling Green University since 1965. His classes have included courses on the Colonial era, the Revolution, and Early 19th Century. He has also taught Military History and has a long standing interest in the Civil War. During the 1985-86 school year he is on leave and will be working with the State Department in Washington D.C.. Professor Skaggs is well-known for his warm and friendly style.

His talk entitled "Little Round Top Revisited" will highlight the actions of the 20th Maine.

This should be an outstanding program, and as always, a fun meeting at the home of Ken Callahan.

**RESERVATIONS A MUST
CALL TIM BEATTY AT 243-7509**



1985 - 1986

President - Tim Beatty
 Vice-Pres. - Geo. Vourlojianis
 Secretary - Marty Graham
 Treasurer - Doug Baldwin
 Sgt. at-Arms - Ken Callahan

Executive Committee:
 Dr. Vansickle, Jack Allison,
 Jock Collins, Dave Wood.

Editor and Illustrator of the
Charger - Stuart Cramer,
 Assistant Editor - Hazel Cramer.
 216-967-5971.

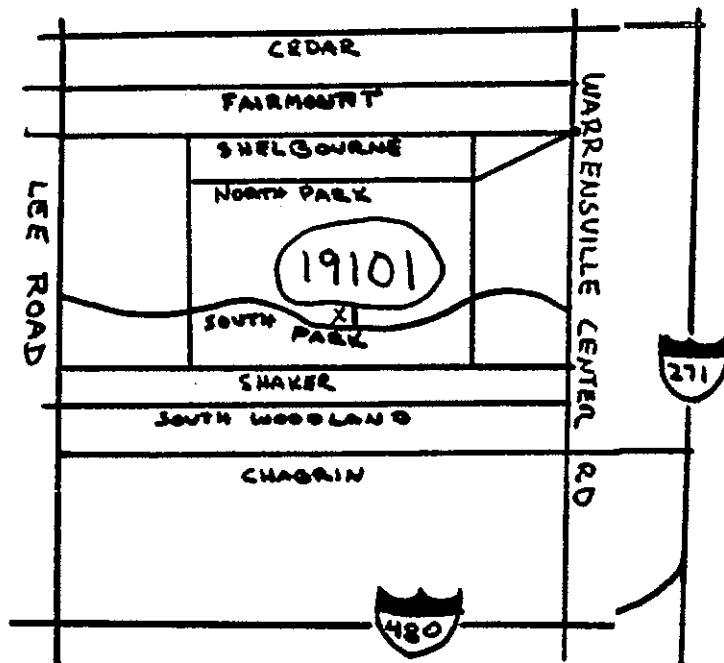
Dues - September to September
 \$20. Non-resident - \$10.

We had very good attendance at the September meeting. The speaker Thomas Van Aken was great. Along with a couple of rib-tickling stories, he traced Abraham Lincoln's visits to Ohio and told some interesting stories about the prominent Ohioans with whom Lincoln had to deal. A most successful meeting.

The November meeting will be held at the Hermit Club where member Ken Callahan will talk on the Western Front of World War I.

HOW TO GET THERE

Ken Callahan's address is 19101 South Park Blvd., Shaker Heights.



CIVIL WAR SMILES by STU CRAMER



"Hit it. I'm hungry."

FRED GILL'S BOOK REVIEW

3

ROASTING A CHESTNUT

Woodward, C. Van, and-Elisabeth Muhlenfeld.
The Private Mary Chesnut - Unpublished Civil War
Diaries. Oxford University Press, 1984.

Three years ago I was suckered into reading C. Van Woodward's editing of the famous - or is it infamous? - Chesnut journals. Well, here we go again. Once more Professor Woodward has coaxed another sterile bloom from Madame Chestnut's desert.

As I observed in the review of Mary Chesnut's Civil War, that book is a "classic example of historical scholarship." Well, this is another. It may delight scholars. It may eventitillate doctoral candidates. But it neither delights nor titillates your untiring reviewer. I find it difficult to imagine future Civil War historians or even simple Civil War buffs relying on this book for anything but trivial and incidental information. It certainly offers no insights. It adds practically nothing to our picture of Confederate military and political figures. The jacket blurb says these hitherto unpublished journals "left the most vivid account we have of the death throes of a society." If Mrs. Chesnut's endless prattle, her dithering babble, her self-serving notes on her health and her charm with her charming ways vividly describes a society's death throes, then what about the depredation of the Shenandoah Valley, the burning of Columbia, the investment of Richmond, the desolation trailing Sherman's army, the clarity of the message of Appomattox?

The host of vivid accounts of these and a thousand other events better describe the real death throes of Southern society than does the pitter-patter of Mrs. Chesnut's misty locutions. There are only distant whispers of the crumbling of her society in the writings of this Confederate lady of high station. Perhaps this is enough to account for the endurance of diaries.

You do not have to read this book to know what happened in the South any more than you have to read the lately published fatuous books about Custer to know what happened at Little Big Horn.

* * * *

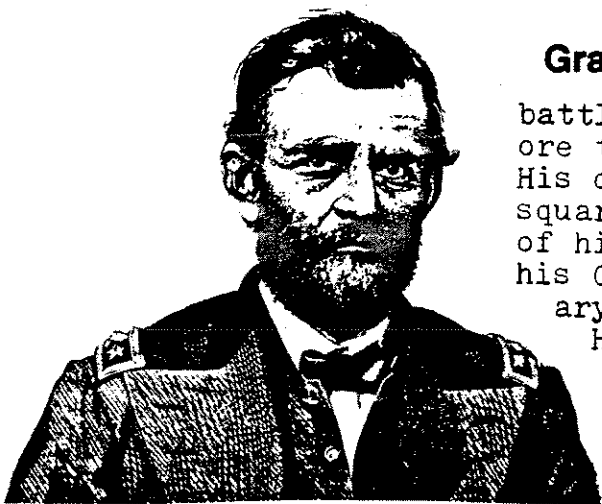
Grant

One hundred years ago General Ulysses S. Grant died after a final triumphant battle, the most heroic he ever waged. Three weeks before the end he completed his Memoirs under extreme pain. His dogged tenacity was motivated by a determination to square all accounts and provide for the financial future of his family. Anyone who has read the two volumes of his Civil War experiences must recognize them as literary masterpieces and a measure of the inner man.

Hundreds of books have been written about him trying to explain his military and civilian conduct; some praising, others maligning. Today we must not overlook the fact that he was a world-wide hero, with tremendous popularity after two terms as President and that he was regarded as the savior of the Union. Over a million

people attended the five-hour funeral procession in New York City. His generalship, sometimes questioned because of narrow points of view, limited research, or regional bias cannot be questioned because it resulted in victory. In all his common-sense decisions, he never lost track of the ultimate goal of peace.

S.C.





Late afternoon, July 2nd, 1863.
Little Round Top.

There had been charges and counter-charges up and down the slope; five times the Confederates drove the 20th from their position, and each time they rallied and drove back, twice coming to the point of furious hand-to-hand combat. There came a lull when the Alabamians drew back down to gather strength for another attempt.

The 20th had lost a third of its strength and they saw their dead and wounded out in front of them, mingled with those of their enemy. There were hoarse cries of "Ammunition!" up and down the line, and soldiers were scrambling around looking for cartridges in the boxes of the dead and wounded. Colonel Joshua Chamberlain saw his men fire their last rounds and then look back at him as if to say, "What now?"

Chamberlain stepped to the colors and his voice rang out, "Bayonet!"

There was a moment of hesitation along the line, an intaking of breath like that of a man about to plunge into a cold, dark river. But along with it there was a rattling of bayonet shanks on steel. A lieutenant sprang out in front of the line with his sword flashing, and this seems to have been the spark. The

colors rose in front. A few men got up. They began to shout. The left wing, which was fighting off an attack at the time, suddenly charged, drove off its opponents and kept on until it swung around abreast of the right wing. Then the regiment plunged down the slope in a great right wheel.

The Confederate troops at the bottom of the slope were taken completely off guard. There was no time to fire a decisive volley and the Maine bayonets were shining in their faces almost before they knew what had happened. For a moment they fought in a daze. Then before the roaring down-ward lunging assault, they gave backward. The men were running, tripping, falling. The Confederate line broke in confusion.

From The Twentieth Maine by John J. Pullen

* * * * *

Your Dues Are Due NOW

Send check to Doug Baldwin, 7790 W. 130 St. Cleve. 44130

WHEN GRANT WAS LAID TO REST

The following moving letter was written by Union General Joshua L. Chamberlain after attending the funeral of U.S. Grant. The original was hand written on stationery of the Victoria Hotel, New York City. The following typescript copy is printed with the permission of the Maine State Museum of Augusta, Maine.

New York 8 Aug. 85

My Dear Fanny: -

The great scene is over. Grant is laid in his tomb. You may imagine -- few others can -- how strange that seems to me.

That emblem of strength & stubborn resolution yielding to human weakness & passing helplessly away to dust. I wish you could have seen the faces of Sherman & Sheridan and Hancock as they stood over that bier before the body was laid away.

What thoughts -- what memories -- what monitions passed through those minds! The pageant and the tribute of honor were grand -- worthy of a great nation. I wish now very much that I had brought Wyllys with me.

This is the last of the great scenes. At least for this generation. I will tell you more about it when I get rested a little, or after I come home. By Genl Hancock's kind attention I was treated with marked distinction -- too much, in fact.

I had a carriage directly in the group of cabinet ministers & the most distinguished men of the country. It chanced that I was far ahead of the Governors of states & the officers of the army. I would not have chosen that position because it was too much. But Genl Hancock's staff officer did not seem to understand that I was only a private citizen.

I was also in the same line with the Senators chosen as chief mourners. It strangely happened that Governor Connor of Maine was left out without notice & without provision by carriage for a place in the procession. I stopped my carriage when I saw him & took him & the commander of the Grand Army into my carriage & my place -- far ahead of that to which they would have fallen if they had had a carriage!

By this means they had a chance to see the whole ceremony & at the burial service they were with me not ten feet from the central scene, the casket before the tomb-door, while the last services were said -- the last prayer offered -- the bugler stepped to the front & sounded with trembling lips the tattoo! The evening roll call -- you

remember -- the end of the day -- the signal of silence & darkness.

They who stood about -- most of them -- could not feel all that said to me. I looked in vain for a face that seemed to express what I was feeling. But not till I saw the faces of Sherman & Sheridan & Hancock did I meet that response, & that deepened my own feeling.

The great men of the nation were there. But nothing seemed great to me -- but what was gone; except the multitudes that crowded miles on miles, & the tokens of mourning that overshadowed the city.

Grant himself seemed greater now than ever. And he is.

I am glad I saw it all, & was admitted to a near place.

Do not think me foolish & egotistic. It is not that spirit that prompts me to speak of myself; but you know I have had great & deep experiences -- & some of my life has gone into the history of the days that are past.

I shall probably go to Phila. & West Virginia next. Address care of M.C.C. Church, Parkersburg, West Va. Good night & all blessings.

Yours, J.L.C.

Thanks to the Milwaukee CWRT newsletter

Major General George H. Thomas, "The Rock of Chickamauga".....the monument and resting site of this Civil War hero at Oakwood Cemetery in Troy, N.Y. is in disrepair. Since 1983 several responsible supporters of the general, including the New York Civil War Round Table, have organized an effort to rehabilitate the gravesite. Your support is requested to help finance the project. Donations, which are tax deductible, should be forwarded to:

Thomas Gravesite Fund
Civil War Round Table of New York
c/o George Craig
83-12 St. James Street
Elmhurst, New York 11373

We received the above from Guy DiCarlo.



During the first half of the 1860's the Indians in the west grew mighty restless. Only a small detachment of U.S. regulars stayed out there during the War, so there wasn't much control. However, the Navajos were taken off the warpath for good in 1863 by no less a person than Kit Carson. Temporarily commissioned as a colonel in the New Mexico militia, he led a group of citizens serving as temporary militiamen and herded what Navajos they could find into Canon de Chilly and adjacent Canon de Muete. Carson and his men held the some 600 Indians in the quicksand between the towering, smooth red granite walls until thoroughly cowed, then marched them out of Navajo country to Fort Sumner. In all he captured around 7,000 men, women and children, about half the tribe.

* * * * *

There is no documentary evidence that Joe Johnston and Jefferson Davis ever fought over a bargirl when they were cadets at West Point. There is ample evidence that Johnston and Robert E. Lee were close friends, not only at the Academy, but when on later duty together during the Mexican War; at Fortress Monroe and as roommates on several occasions prior to the Civil War. There was always a mutual respect between the old comrades even in their declining years.

From A Different Valour, by Govan and Livingood

* * * * *

In 1896 General James Longstreet was 76 years old. Long widowed, he found favor in the eyes of a young Georgia beauty, Helen Dortch. They were married, and after his death she fought gallantly to preserve his reputation. During World War II she took a job as a riveter in a bomber plant.

* * * * *

Col. John S. (Rip) Ford fought in the Texas War of Independence, the Mexican War and was a Texas Ranger. Ford did devastating work against the Commanche Indians. Between wars he dabbled in medicine, law, newspaper editing and politics. He led the 2nd Texas Cavalry in the last Confederate victory...a little more than a month after Appomattox.

* * * * *

After he had become a nationally famous general, the politicians began to worry that General Grant might be bitten by the presidential bug. When asked what his post war plans were, Grant replied, "I'd like to run for mayor of Galena."

* * * * *

Civil War newspaper reporters were often known to manufacture news when they had nothing to write about. One particularly offensive journalist was Wayne P. Isham, of the Chicago Times. At one point one of his pieces was considered by General Grant as "false in fact and mischievous in character," and the General ordered Sherman, then Commander of the District of Memphis (where the offender was located) to arrest the author and send him to the Alton Penitentiary. General Sherman, who had a decided hatred of newspapermen, happily slapped Isham in the slammer. What would these two generals do to our TV news commentators today?

