



The Charger

CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

P.O. Box 5786, Cleveland, Ohio 44101

OCTOBER 1990

291st MEETING

VOL.12 #2

DATE: Tuesday, October 9, 1990

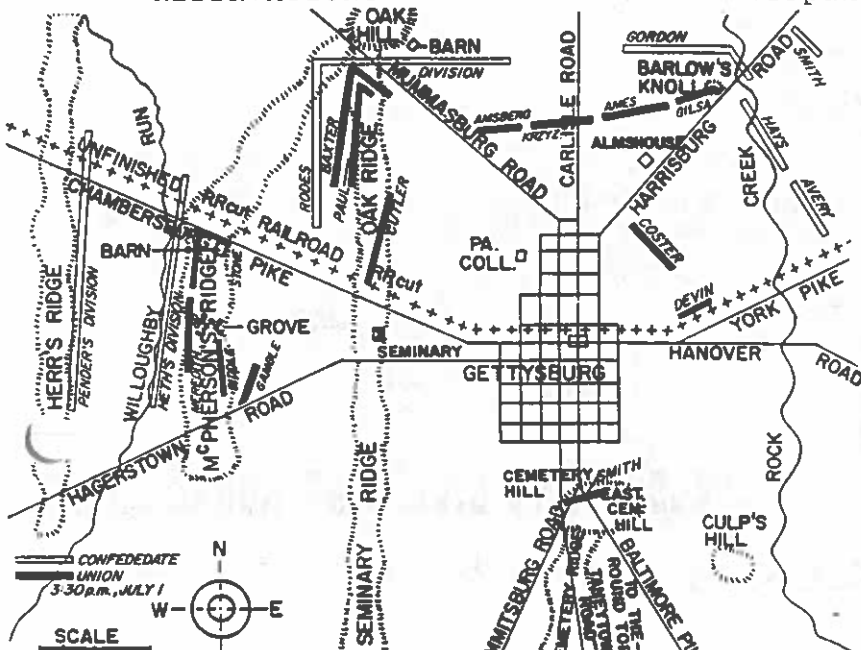
PLACE: The Hermit Club

SUBJECT: "From Chancellorsville to Cemetery Hill: The Eleventh Corps and the First Day of Gettysburg."

SPEAKER: A. Wilson Greene. Mr. Greene is a staff historian at the Fredericksburg National Military Park and is the Executive Director of the Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites. Any Civil War enthusiast who is interested in the preservation of Civil War Battlefields should be a member of this organization. Fortunately, Mr. Greene will have applications available at our meeting. Mr. Greene was born in Chicago, earned a B.A. in American History at Florida State University, and a M.A. at L.S.U. where he was a graduate assistant under T. Harry Williams. He is the author of numerous articles, pamphlets, and reviews in the leading Civil War publications as well as a much sought after battlefield guide.

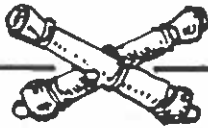
TIME: Drinks 6PM Dinner 7PM

RESERVATIONS: Please call Joe Tirpak at 255-8140. RESERVATIONS ARE A MUST



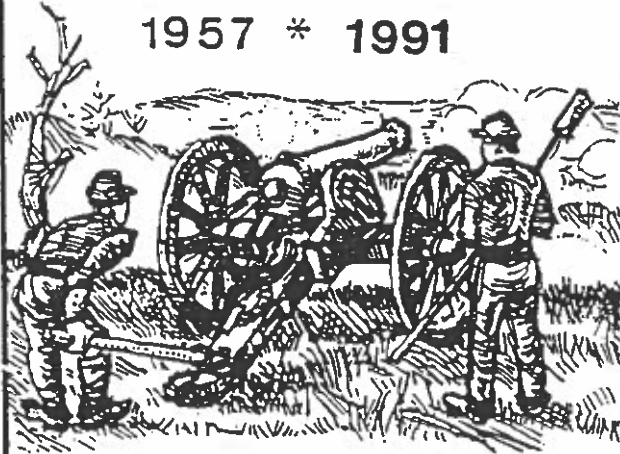
Oliver O. Howard

Last Month's Meeting



CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

1957 * 1991



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New President Joe Tirpak welcomed a record crowd of 65 members and guests to our kick-off meeting held at the home of our gracious host member Ken Callahan.

Our speaker was Dr. James Russell Duncan from the History Dept. of John Carroll Univ. He spoke of the contributions of Black soldiers in the North & South. He went into some detail concerning Robert Gould Shaw and the 54th Massachusetts Regiment.

Dr. Duncan explained that in the Confederacy blacks were used for military labor as well as in agricultural and industrial production. Some blacks supported the Confederate military cause but were never used. Despite Gen. Cleburne's 1864 recommendation of using slaves as soldiers, it wasn't until 6 days before Lee's surrender that Congress approved their use, too late to have effect. Few blacks served, many moved to Union lines whenever possible.

In the North, thousands of black men tried to enlist at the outbreak of war but were turned away by the Lincoln Administration which was influenced by racial prejudice and concern that the loyal border states would rebel. Following the Emancipation Proclamation, 200,000 blacks served (10% of total Union forces) and proved their worth as fighting soldiers and sailors.

Dr. Duncan pointed out the contribution of the 54th Mass. He said it was the pet unit of Gov. Andrews and as such, unlike the film "Glory", did not want for uniform and guns or sleep in tents. The unit set the example of bravery of the black regiments.

Dr. Duncan agreed with Lincoln when he said black soldiers had been decisive in bringing the Union victory.



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CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

P.O. Box 5786, Cleveland, Ohio 44101

A house divided: Youngest Union soldier to die in Civil War was from Acton

By Mark Ellis O'Brien

Editor's note: The Acton Memorial Library was built as a memorial to those Acton men who fought in the Grand Army of the Republic. Dedicated on May 24, 1890, the library will wind up its centennial observances this coming weekend with appropriate festivities.

An afternoon train to Acton on April 15, 1861 carried a Colonel Daniel Jones and a special order from the Governor.

A messenger waited at the station, and later took orders to Captain Daniel Tuttle of Acton. His company of local volunteers was to join the Sixth Massachusetts Regiment and report to Washington by order of the President.

The view from the White House was disturbing. Confederate flags had been hoisted over Arlington and Virginia; across the Potomac enemy campfires flickered at night.

Acton church bells rang in the early morning darkness April 16, 1861. The townspeople said a cheerful farewell to Company E of the old Davis Guards.

The Sixth Massachusetts Regiment was to be the first armed militia company from the Union states to reach Washington in response to the President's call for 75,000 volunteers.

The regiment, comprised of about 700 men, was cheered along the train route south. Boston and New York City were ablaze with enthusiasm. Resistance was met in Baltimore, however.

Switching to a train for Washington meant the cars of soldiers would be pulled through the city by horse.

A month earlier, en route to his inauguration, Abraham Lincoln's private car had also been pulled through the city, but it was unknowingly empty. A detective, convinced the president-elect's life was in danger, had Lincoln, "spirited through that city at night," wrote historian Bruce Catton in the picture history *The Civil War*, published by American Heritage/Bonanza Books.

The Sixth, armed and uniformed, was met by mobs that threw bricks and rocks amid anonymous gunfire from the crowd on the street and from open windows. Restrained initially, the soldiers opened fire, killing and wounding a number of the citizens; the regiment lost four men, with 36 others wounded.

Reaching Washington, the regiment was quartered in the Senate wing of the Capitol.

The Davis Guards

Company E from Acton was known as the Davis Guards — named after Captain Isaac Davis of Acton, the first man to die at the North Bridge April 19, 1775.

That the Davis Guards passed through Baltimore on April 19, 1861, fully armed, their old muskets having been traded for modern army rifles in Boston, added fuel to the local patriotic fervor in favor of the war.

While the Sixth guarded Washington, citizens opposed to the war hung effigies from trees in Concord and Acton. "There is a perfect whirlwind of excitement..." wrote W. H. Gray in a letter to Captain Tuttle at Washington. "This slavery question must be met now and settled forever."

On April 27, Acton Town Meeting voted \$5,000 to take care of families with soldiers away at war. Money was appropriated to send pistols for every man in the Sixth. The meeting had the atmosphere of a rally and the citizens stood to sing "My Country 'tis of Thee."

Ten years earlier, Acton Town Meeting had condemned the Fugitive Slave Law and resolved that, "a compliance with the act for the recovery of Fugitive Slaves would be in opposition to all our cherished ideas of the Declaration of Independence."

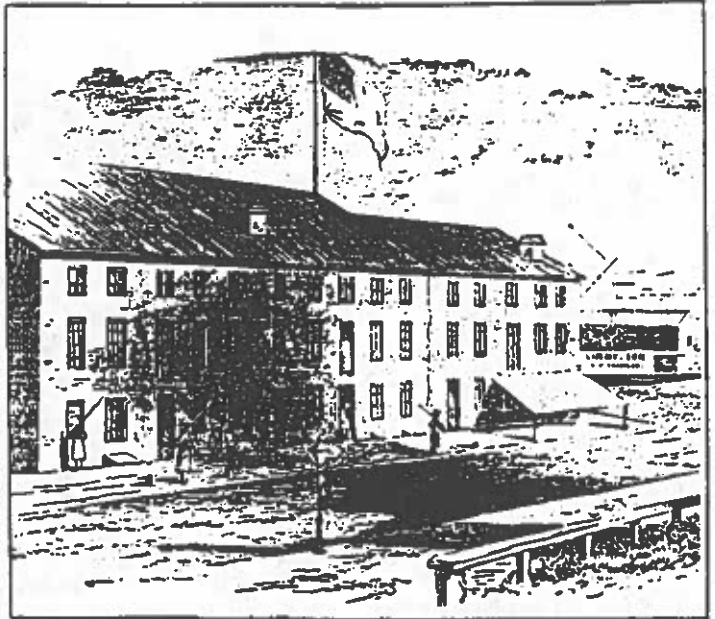
Acton and the Davis Guards became legendary, if only locally. An act of arson in October 1862 claimed Town Hall in Acton Center where the guard had drilled. Consumed also were the hotel, a store and a shoe factory. An anonymous letter had warned of leaving "a black mark on the village," and the incident was regarded by some as the work of Southern infiltrators.

The youngest to die

To join the fight was to be American — patriotic. The horses and men that left Acton amid the sound of bells; the shouts of endorsement, and the barking of dogs must have made a large impression on 12-year-old Thomas Kinsley. As much as he may have wanted to go to war, he was left home in his quiet farm community.

But at age 15 Tom Kinsley joined the army. He collected his bounty of \$325 and left for the South. Army records indicate he was 18 when he registered. He may have lied about his age.

He became one of the youngest men in the Union to die for his country — the youngest to die in service in the Sixth regiment. The only serviceman younger than Kinsley was a boy from Boston who records show was a newspaper reporter and musician.



Libby Prison

It was typical for boys to be drummers and musicians on both sides during the war. A 15-year-old soldier, a private, was unusual.

Kinsley enlisted in February 1864 and was captured by Confederate soldiers. It was odd that he be sent to Richmond's Libby Prison — a facility for Union officers.

Libby Prison

Libby had been a tobacco warehouse and as a prison usually held about 1,200 officers with a space of about 10 by 2 feet allotted to each. The glass-less windows were covered with metal grates. Convicts walked the floor at night to keep warm, sleeping in the daytime. Those who survived incarceration there later described dreaming of attending banquets.

In reality their fare was a bean soup containing something resembling worms. Other meals consisted of dried beef and stale corn bread. Men attempting escape were confined to the cellar where rats were often captured and cooked by negro attendants. (From *Life and Death in Southern Prisons, 1866*, by Robert H. Kellogg Sgt.-Major)

Early in the war, Massachusetts Governor John Andrew wrote to President Lincoln, our men are "neither well fed or well clothed." A prisoner exchange system was worked out but before Richmond fell, nearly 50,000 soldiers, North and South, would die as a result of prison life.

Life at Libby is the subject of a

dramatic painting by David Blythe at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

Thomas Kinsley and his brother Francis both died as a result of imprisonment there. Francis died in Acton in April 1864 about two months after his brother enlisted. He was a farmer as were most Acton men to serve in the war. Of the 216 soldiers credited to Acton, 18 didn't return.

Military records differ on where Thomas Kinsley died. He had been released and was in Union hands somewhere near Washington, too sick to ever come home.

Acton had been the first to respond to the President's call and later supplied a young man as soldier. Military records indicate he was 18 when he died.

But in Acton's Woodlawn burial ground, on a marker that bears his name, his life is recorded including the number of days. Thomas Kinsley was 15.

When Lincoln toured Richmond, on April 4, 1865, the American flag had been raised over Libby Prison. He paused. "Leave it as a monument," he said.

Libby Prison in Richmond, Virginia. A prison for Union officers where two volunteers from Acton were held. Both died as a result of conditions there.

Mark Ellis O'Brien of Littleton is a history buff.

Civil War rehash enjoyable nonetheless

4

NONE DIED IN VAIN: *The Saga of the American Civil War.* By Robert Leckie. Harper & Row. 682 pp., \$29.95.

By **ALLAN PESKIN**

Three questions are raised by a reading of this new one-volume history of the American Civil War.

Question 1. What is the title supposed to mean?

Does Leckie really expect us to believe that not a single one of the estimated 623,026 men who died in America's most terrible conflict laid down his life needlessly?

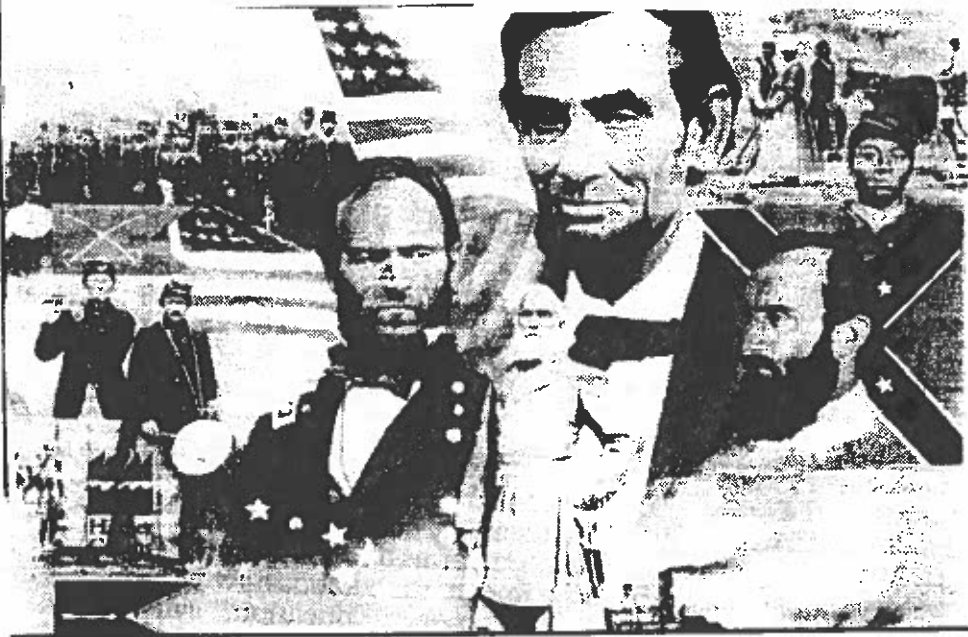
Such an assumption is contradicted on virtually every page of this blood-soaked narrative. From the war's first casualty, a Union private at Fort Sumter accidentally killed during the final salute to the lowered American flag; to Grant's fatalistic soldiers at Cold Harbor who pinned their names and addresses to their uniforms before their obviously futile charge so that their bodies could be identified; to the 278 Rebels blown to bits by the explosion at the Battle of the Crater and the 4,000 Union soldiers trapped inside that mighty pit and shot while trying to claw their way out; to the black soldiers taken prisoner at Fort Pillow who were bayoneted, hanged and bludgeoned to death by their enraged Southern white captors; to all the inglorious victims of measles, mumps and dysentery, as well as those sacrificed by folly, stupidity or bad luck — not even one died in vain?

That's hard to believe, and probably Leckie himself does not believe it. Instead, the title seems to be just an empty paradiddle designed to set some sort of tone for the bugles-and-drums narrative which follows.

Question 2. Why was this book published?

It is not based on any fresh research. It has not uncovered anything new. It has no argument, thesis or point of view. It is a simple, straightforward example of storytelling, but the stories have all been told many times before, and in many cases told better. It lacks the epic sweep of Bruce Catton or Shelby Foote, the comprehensive detail of Allan Nevins' massive "Ordeal of the Union," the historical perspective of the one-volume surveys by David Donald or James McPherson, and the provocative, if sometimes perverse, fresh interpretive insights of Herman Hattaway and Archer Jones' revisionist examination of "How the North Won."

Instead, it is an old-fashioned narrative, crammed with anecdotes and filled with mistakes. (To set the record straight: Winfield Scott was only nominated once for the presidency; Alexander Stephens opposed seces-



"None Died in Vain" is among several new books about the Civil War, which include guides to its battlefields.

sion: Longstreet's corps did not reinforce General Braxton Bragg until after the fall of Chattanooga.)

Question 3. Why, then, is this book so enjoyable?

Because for all his shortcomings, Leckie is a superb storyteller, and in the American Civil War he has the best of all stories to tell. This is our very own epic — an American Iliad, as one writer called it. It has the timeless, perpetual appeal of myth and the towering, complex figures — Grant, Lee, Lincoln, Sherman — who are the stuff of legend. So powerfully does this epic grip our imagination that one finds oneself staying up late into the night, critical judgment suspended, eagerly turning pages even though one knows what the next page will bring.

Of course, no amount of reading can quite take the place of being there. It is one thing to read about Pickett's charge at Gettysburg. It is quite another (and more memorable) thing to walk that ground for oneself, preferably on a steaming hot July day.

Personal inspection of Civil War sites has just been made easier by the simultaneous appearance of two invaluable guidebooks. The first, "The Civil War Battle Guide," edited by Frances H. Kennedy (Houghton Mifflin, \$29.95, cloth; \$16.95, paper), is a handsome, detailed *vade mecum* of 65 battlefields. It boasts clear maps, handsome illustrations and excellent descriptions by outstanding experts (plus a surprising guest appearance by Sen. Sam Nunn of Georgia).

The other guidebook, "A Tour Guide to Civil War," by Alice Cromie (3rd edition, Fledge Hill Press, \$12.95, paper), does not confine itself to the battlefield but describes a tourist attraction that can be connected, however tenuously, to the Civil War. Thus in Cleveland there are references to the tomb of Generals James A. Garfield and Martin L. Siggett at Lakeview Cemetery, the Soldiers and Sailors Monument on Public Square and even the site of the long-demolished Wedd House, where Lincoln once stopped. All in all, there are 12 pages devoted to Ohio sites. Perhaps the most significant, and certainly the most melancholy, is the site of the prison and cemetery at Johnson's Island, near Cedar Point.

If you want to see it, however, you had better move quickly. The site has caught the eye of a condo developer who seems determined to unleash his bulldozers unless the protests come louder than they have been thus far.

Allan Peskin teaches history at Cleveland State University. He is the author of "Garfield" (Kent State University Press) and of the forthcoming "Volunteers," dealing with the Mexican War.

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SCENES I'D LIKE TO HAVE SEEN



Can you imagine a Union General with a name like Jefferson Davis? Your imagination will be further taxed if you have never read that this same person murdered his commanding officer in cold blood -- before numerous witnesses. And even more incredible --- a political cover-up that made Watergate look like amateur night. The murderer was never even reprimanded, and his record never sullied by the deed.

To partly understand the case, you must recognize the political power of Governor Oliver P. Morton of Indiana, who wielded vast influence in Washington, even with President Lincoln. Other actors in the sequence were Major General Don Carlos Buell, Major General Lew Wallace, and Major General Horatio Wright.

The facts are simple and on record. Davis had been sent to Louisville to assist Major General William Nelson in dealing with the panic in that city and to prepare for a battle with an advancing Confederate army under E. Kirby Smith. Nelson accused Davis of not doing his job and relieved him of command. Davis resented Nelson's remarks and challenged him. In reply Nelson slapped Davis, turned and walked up the hotel stairs where the incident took place before Governor Morton and others, who disliked the 300 pound Nelson.

Davis borrowed a revolver and when Nelson came back down the stairs Davis shot him at close range.

Morton went to Washington, after which no charges were made by the government against Davis. However, Davis was briefly put under arrest and later indicted by a circuit court in Louisville. Due to the military situation in the West and the need of Davis' services,

the case was continued from time to time until August of 1864 when it was stricken from the docket and Davis restored to full duty. (Davis' lawyer happened to be Lincoln's friend James Speed.) Davis had commanded a division at Murfreesboro and at Chickamauga during this time. He also became a fast friend of General William Sherman, commanding the 14th Corps on the March to the Sea. From 1867 to 1870 Davis served as commander of the DEpartment of Alaska.

Submitted and illustrated by Stu Cramer



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REPORT ON FIELD TRIP

by Bob Bayless

Thirteen members marched on Richmond last week. On the march were: Bob Bayless, Brian Kowell, Joe Tirpak, Dick McCrea, Norton London, George Staley, Neil Evans, Ken Callahan and his three sons, along with guests Mel Drimmer and Dave Challet.

On Friday, the group visited many of Richmond's historic sites including the Confederate Museum, the Confederate White House, the State Capitol building which survived the fire of 1865, St. John's Church site of Patrick Henry's famous "Liberty or Death" speech, Gen. Lee's post-war residence, St. Paul's Church where services were interrupted by a mud-spattered courier informing Pres. Davis of the break-through at Petersburg, George Washington's impressive monuments both inside and out at the Capitol, Chimborazo Hospital site, and Hollywood Cemetery where are buried Presidents Tyler and Monroe, Jeff Davis, Douglas Southall Freeman, J.E.B. Stuart, Geo. Pickett, and many other notables. (As one of our group said at Hollywood Cemetery, "you could spend an awful long time there" to which one wag replied, "Yeah, an eternity.") That evening the entire crew sailed the James River and dined aboard the Anabelle Lee - a large paddle boat.

Saturday began with our esteemed tour guide, Ed Bearss, conducting 9 of us (we lost the 4 Callahan stragglers) through the entire Seven Days Battles plus Seven Pines. Ed maintained a furious pace throughout the day. It took McClellan seven days while it took us 8 hours. We tramped through woods, fields, and briars which left some of our members weary but wiser at day's end. All encounters were studied - Golding's Farm, Mechanicsville, Gaines Mill, Savage Station, Frayser's Farm, White Oak Swamp, and Malvern Hill. To cap the tour, Ed took us to Yellow Tavern - scene of J.E.B. Stuart's mortal wounding. The site was just 5 minutes from our motel.

Those who could still muster, hosted Ed Bearss for dinner at a Japanese restaurant. A mysterious French woman joined our group for dinner explaining she wanted to learn more about the Civil War. Many thought she wanted something additional!

Having taken Richmond by storm, the Troopers returned triumphantly to Cleveland on Sunday.

More Than You Ever Wanted To Know About

ALEXANDER SCHIMMELFENNIG

Born in Lithaven, Prussia on July 20, 1824, Alexander Schimmelfennig served as an engineer officer in the Prussian Army during the Schleswig-Holstein War. Later, he opposed that same army in the revolution in Baden in 1848. With the revolution a failure, he was forced to flee, first to Switzerland and then to England, he finally came to the U.S. in 1853 taking up residence in Philadelphia. Moving later to Washington D.C., he served as an engineer and draftsman for the War Department.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, Schimmelfennig offered his services to the government and was mustered in as Colonel of the 74th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry. Because of an injury suffered when his horse fell with him and a bout with smallpox, he saw no active service until Second Manassas in which he succeeded to the command of the 1st Brigade of Schurz's Division of Sigel's Corps after Gen. Henry Bohlen was killed at Freeman's Ford.

Schimmelfennig's Brigade missed seeing any action at Antietam and Fredericksburg. Irregardless, in November of 1862, President Lincoln, who remained quite responsive to political, ethnic, and other factors, promoted Schimmelfennig to Brigadier General. When Secretary of War Stanton challenged Lincoln on this selection, Lincoln said: "Well, Mr. Secretary, I concur in pretty much all you say. The only point I make is, that there has got to be something done that will be unquestionably in the interest of the Dutch, and to that end I want Schimmelfennig appointed."

The Secretary replied: "Mr. President, perhaps this Schimmel-what's-his-name is not as highly recommended as some other German officer."

"No matter about that," said Lincoln, "his name will make up for any difference there might be, and I'll take the risk of his coming out all right." Then, with a laugh, he repeated, dwelling upon each syllable of the name, and accenting the last one, "Schem-mel-fen-nig must be appointed."

At Gettysburg on the first day, Schimmelfennig was briefly in command of Schurz's Division when Jubal Early's Division attacked, driving the Yankees through the town in confusion. Struck in the head by a rifle butt while climbing a fence to escape capture, the dazed General crawled under a woodpile in a corner of a pigsty to evade his pursuers. He quickly pulled the blocks of wood over and all around him and hid in this cramped position for two days and nights, secretly being fed by the woman of the house while the Confederates occupied the town. After their withdrawal, he emerged to rejoin his command.

After Gettysburg, Schimmelfennig actively sought and was granted a transfer to South Carolina. Unfortunately while there he contracted malaria and was sent home to convalesce. He recovered in time to return and witness the capitulation of Charleston on February 18, 1865, and was put in temporary command of the city. It was in this capacity when he fell victim to a most virulent type of tuberculosis. He sought relief at Dr. Aaron Smith's Living Springs Water Cure Establishment near Wernersville, Pa., but died there on September 5, 1865 and was buried in Charles Evans Cemetery, Reading, Pa.



GENERALS IN BLUE ERRA WARNER pp 423-24
HOW THE NORTH WON HATTAWAY & JONES pp 502
CRISIS AT THE CROSSROADS HASSLER pp 128



During the Federal retreat through the town of Gettysburg on the late afternoon of July 1, 1863, the only citizen to be killed during the three day battle was pretty, twenty-year-old Jennie Wade, who was struck down by a slug, which passed through two doors and hit her while she was serenely baking bread in the kitchen of her house on Baltimore Street. In another house in town, an artillery shell cleared the supper table just as the brave members of the family had finished their meal, thus saving their having to wash the dishes!

— Crisis at the Crossroads: The First Day at Gettysburg
by Warren W. Hassler pp 128

The story is told of a Union artilleryman on Cemetery Hill whose crew was being annoyed by a Rebel sharpshooter in one of the church steeples. After loading in a shot and turning the gun and sighting on the Rebel's vantage point, the cannoneer bade his men to run around the cannon and turn somersaults to attract the sharpshooter's attention. When the fellow poked out his head to see what the queer action meant, he fired and the shell struck only a foot above his head. Rebel pickets later said that the sharpshooter came down out of the steeple swearing he could not stand such shooting as that.

— A Tourist at Gettysburg by John B. Linn
CWTI Vol xxIx No.4

The 13th Illinois Infantry was known as the "Stealing Regiment". Members of this regiment stole a regimental surgeon's stove, fire and all, while the surgeon's back was turned. The 36th Illinois stole the uniforms of the 24th Wisconsin. Then wearing the clothing of the latter regiment, the troops of the 36th conducted large scale forays into the nearby farming areas. The Wisconsin regiment quite naturally received the blame. You would think this feat alone would usurp the 13th of their title. Not content with this feat of skill, the 36th then stole 36 sheep belonging to a Tennessee farmer and threw the pelts into the tents of the 73rd Illinois, the "Preacher's Regiment". When Colonel James Jaquess of the 73rd could not explain the presence of the pelts, he was ordered to march at the rear of his regiment as punishment.

— Illinois in the Civil War by Victor Hicken pp 83

The Philadelphia Brigade claimed that at Spotsylvania a ragged Rebel jumped out of the opposite trench and came running toward the Union lines. Just as he reached his goal a bullet hit him, and when the Federals came to pick him up he gasped: "I'm sorry you shot me - I was coming over to take the oath of allegiance." His captors confessed that they had no copy of that famous oath, but one of them remarked that they did have a canteen with a little whiskey in it. Reviving, the Confederate sat up and said eagerly: "That will do just as well."

— Cincinnati CWRT newsletter

From The President's Desk



Greetings!

I'm pleased to report that the Round-Table got off to a fine start in September. On September 11th we had a memorable evening at the Callahans with 65 members and guests in attendance. Our host, Ken Callahan, shared some valuable insights with us as to why his marriage has been so successful!!! Something about going out to dinner...? Our speaker, Dr. Russell Duncan, provided a scholarly presentation on "Black Glory in Blue and Grey."

On September 13th a group of 13 hardy veterans left on a fieldtrip to Richmond. We could write a book about this particular trip! I'm sure Bob Bayless "Trip Commander" will share his account with you. As for me, I'm glad I made the trip. Even though I was accused of "pulling rank" several times I want you to know that I used considerable discretion in my field command.

Please plan to join us on Tuesday, October 9th. Our speaker, A. Wilson Green, will address "From Chancellorsville to Cemetery Hill: The Eleventh Corps and the First Day of Gettysburg." This promises to be a very special evening. Please come join us.

Sincerely,

General "J.E.T." Tirpak

P.S. The invoice system is working well! Please check the vital statistics section on the invoice: Name, address, telephone, year you became a member, etc. As soon as most members pay their dues we will issue a new roster. Over 50 members have already done so. Thank you.



THE CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE
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Mentor, OH 44060