



THE CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

P. O. BOX 5028, CLEVELAND, OHIO 44101

APRIL, 1977

Vol. 20 No. 8

----- 171st Meeting -----

Date: Tuesday, April 12

Speaker: Prof. Louis A. Barone

Subject: Reconstruction in the South -- Triumph or Tragedy?

Place: Roman Gardens - 12207 Mayfield - in "Little Italy"

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

WHEN SAM TILDEN GOT SHAFTED IN THE WORMLEY HOTEL, WAS THE PERIOD THEN ENDING THE MOST CONTROVERSIAL IN AMERICAN HISTORY? Professor Barone will discuss the much debated Reconstruction era, including such matters as the military occupation of the South, the role of the black man in the "new" South, the assassination of Lincoln, the impeachment of Andrew Johnson, and the "compromise" of 1877.

Louis Barone returns to our Round Table by popular request as a result of his talk over a year ago. He is Chairman of the Department of History at Baldwin-Wallace College. A native of Batavia, New York, Barone received his Ph.D. at State University of New York at Buffalo.

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IMPORTANT -- NOTE CHANGE OF LOCATION
For the April meeting we will make our
annual trek to our favorite pizzeria.
(No refund in case of gastritis.)

Reservations are urgently requested;
call Charlie Spiegle at 464-5335

AN EGREGIOUS ERROR & A BOO-BOO

In a recent Newsletter about the fact that the Cleveland CWRT is now 20 years old, a list of charter members still active was included. The list failed to include Guy DiCarlo! In view of the fact that Guy's contributions to the viability of our Round Table are unmatched, a most humble apology is extended. Apparently this happened because he is not listed among our members paying dues ... for good reason as Guy is an Honorary Life Member and as such is exempt from paying dues.

Also omitted from the list of Charter members still active was Richard Hoover. Dick is an out of town member, since he is usually abroad in the U. S. consular service.

LOYALTY

Last October the Hagerstown CWRT celebrated its 20th anniversary. Charles Gabe was present as he always is. Mr. Gabe has not missed a single meeting of the Hagerstown group in 20 years!

OL' BEDFORD AND THE MULES

An order went out from General Hood's quartermaster reducing the number of mules in the wagons and ordering all surplus mules to be turned over to the quartermaster of transportation. General Forrest ignored the order. A day later a young officer visited Forrest wanting to know why the mules had not been sent. For awhile the air was blue. Stripped of all its profanity, Forrest's reply was: "Go back to your quarters and don't come here again or send anybody here about mules. The order will not be obeyed; and, moreover, if Major Ewing bothers me further about this matter, I'll come down to his office, tie his long legs into a double bowknot around his neck and choke him to death with his own shins..."

SECOND BATTLE OF OLUSTEE

Charter members Jack Cullen and Bill Schlesinger separately sent clippings about the reenactment of Olustee, a battlefield both of them have visited in the past.

The re-enactment of the Battle of Olustee was fought at 1:30 p.m. Feb. 20, at Olustee State Park on U.S. Highway 90 west of Sanderson.

The Battle of Olustee was fought by Confederate and Union soldiers for control of Florida on Feb. 20, 1864.

Given the number of combatants and the duration of the engagement, it was the bloodiest Civil War battle in the area.

The re-enactment of the battle concluded a two-day encampment hosted by the 1st Regiment of Florida Volunteers, the official color guard of the

Kirby-Smith Camp of the Sons of Confederate Veterans at Jacksonville.

On Saturday, the 200 to 300 men who took part in the 117th-anniversary shootout set up authentic Confederate and Union campsites.

The battle kept open supply routes for beef, pork and cotton to Confederate forces fighting in other states.

THEODORE LYMAN DESCRIBES GEORGE ARMSTRONG CUSTER

"This officer is one of the funniest-looking beings you ever saw, and looks like a circus rider gone mad! He wears a huzzar jacket and tight trousers, of faded black velvet trimmed with tarnished gold lace."

THE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE OF CLEVELAND, OHIO

FOUNDED FEBRUARY 19, 1957

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NEWSLETTER
EDITORIAL COMMITTEE: Neville Bayless, Ray Swanson
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44101

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PEREGRINATIONS OF THE GREAT SEAL OF THE CONFEDERACY

In February of 1861 a special committee of the Provisional Congress of the Confederacy was created to suggest a national flag and a Great Seal for the infant government. Priority went to the flag and, as a result, consideration of the Seal was repeatedly deferred.

Finally, however, it was the proposal of Secretary of State Judah P. Benjamin that prevailed: "I propose for our seal a cavalier. Let it be copied from our equestrian statue of the noblest cavalier of the South. A copy of Washington as mounted on his charger on the monument in the Capitol Square." The statue was that most famous one by Thomas Crawford.

Despite the acceptance of Benjamin's proposal, the final resolution was not passed until April of 1863. It read, in part, "the seal...shall

consist of a device representing an equestrian portrait of Washington (after the statue which surmounts his monument in the Capitol Square, at Richmond), surrounded with a wreath composed of the principal agricultural products of the Confederacy...and having around its margin the words: 'The Confederate States of America, twenty-second February, eighteen hundred and sixty-two,' with the following motto: 'Deo Vindice' (with God as our defender)."

"...under no circumstances to run the risk of its being captured."

It was decided that the Seal was to be created in England, so Benjamin empowered his Commissioner in London, James M. Mason, to expedite production. But for more reasons than can be counted, the production was anything but expeditious.

In fact, it was not until July 6, 1864, that Mason could write concerning the work of Mr. Foley, R.A. (the designer), and Joseph S. Wyon (the engraver) that "I have the pleasure to inform you that I send by Lieutenant Chapman, C.S.N., who bears this, the Seal of the Confederate States, at last completed...Chapman is charged under no circumstances to run the risk of its being captured. He takes the route to Bermuda, via Halifax, to sail on Saturday, the 9th instant, and I ship through Messrs. Fraser, Trenholm & Co., by steamer that takes him to Halifax, two boxes containing the iron press, with a full supply of wax and other materials for the use of the seal."

The embattled Confederacy was literally in flames when the Great Seal was finally delivered, too late ever to be used, except as an expensive and emotional ornament on the desk of Secretary Judah Benjamin's. The exact cost to the Confederacy was 122 pounds 10 shillings, or approximately \$700.

Saved by a lady's bustle?

In April of 1865, Richmond fell and State Department dispersing clerk William J. Bromwell hid three trunks and four boxes of records at Danville Female College. They and the Seal eventually ended up in six specially made strongboxes in Charlotte, N.C. (Some years afterward, Mrs. Bromwell disclosed that she had carried the Seal of the Confederacy out of Richmond hidden in her bustle.)

Bromwell practiced law for a while with lackluster success until he came under the employ of Col. John T. Pickett, a Washington lawyer who also dealt in Confederate "curios and records." Twice the records were offered to the federal government but were turned down because the asking price was half a million dollars.

In 1872, however, interest was rekindled when it was felt the records could disprove the validity of claims by Southerners who said they had remained loyal to the Union. Following extensive negotiations, Pickett, representing an "anonymous party", came to an agreement with the U.S. Government, which was represented by Commander Thomas O. Selfridge, U.S.N. However, the Government insisted on examining the papers to prove their authenticity before concluding the purchase.

A Strange Journey into Canada

One fear Pickett had was that the papers would be confiscated. He had maintained that they were in Hamilton, Ontario, when in fact they had been hidden in Washington, D.C., by Bromwell several years earlier...To protect himself and his property, Pickett conceived an elaborate subterfuge. He had the Confederate papers loaded on a forward car of the very same train he and Selfridge boarded for Hamilton, Ontario.

The moment he saw the papers Selfridge immediately recognized their authenticity. Pickett, never a man to leave very much to chance, gave the Great Seal of the Confederacy to Selfridge "as a token of his appreciation" for his help in the negotiations.

Not content with his sale of the Confederate papers, Pickett in May of 1873 arranged to take temporary possession of the Seal from Selfridge in order to make 1,000 electrotypes copies of its Counter Seal. The thin, imitative copies were done in gold, silver and copper. Cases of tin, leather and gutta-percha were made to hold them and they were sold across the South. Selfridge regained possession of the Seal in the fall of 1873 after Pickett had exacted the Masonic oath of secrecy from electrotyper Samuel H. Black of New York.

"to create the impression"

To calm Selfridges nerves, if not his conscience, about possessing the Seal, Pickett wrote him on May 24, 1873: "There is no danger of the 'aforesaid' being known to be in your possession. In the public notice of it which I shall make, when my electrotypes shall be ready...it is my purpose to create the impression that I still hold the 'article.' This will cause 'fun.' You will only have to keep quiet. I presume it will, ultimately, find its way into possession of the Government...When you tire of the 'bauble' let me know, and my offer will hold good."

It was not until late 1911 that retired Admiral Selfridge, fearing he was about to be found out anyway, disclosed that he did have the "bauble." He agreed to relinquish it...provided the Seal be given to a suitable institution for the "consideration" of \$3,000!

The "suitable institution" was the White House of the Confederacy, where the Great Seal has been displayed for the last 65 years as one of the Museum's most prized and closely guarded exhibits.

AMMO SUPPLY PROBLEMS ... "IT CAN'T BE DONE"

Among the reasons why General Ripley, Chief of Ordnance, objected to arming Hiram Berdan's command with repeating rifles was the difficulty of ammunition supply. Throughout history, whenever a weapon with greatly increased rate of fire has been introduced those responsible for supply of ammunition have objected to its adoption as posing an impossible supply problem on the battlefield, but always the problem has been solved. At the beginning of World War II the same objection was made to the M-1 semiautomatic rifle, and now the individual soldier carries a weapon with many times the rate of fire of the M-1.

Historical light on this recurring problem is shed by the recent discovery in the British archives of an exchange of memoranda, dated in 1345, the year before the Battle of Crécy, between King Edward III and his Master of Missile Supply, Count des Flèches. With spelling, punctuation, syntax and vocabulary modernized, pertinent portions of the exchange are as follows:

King Edward to Count des Flèches. For the forthcoming French campaign I have decided to reduce the proportion of cavalry greatly and arm at least three-quarters of the infantry with the Welsh longbow. See attached memo from the Chief of the General Staff for details. Make thy plans accordingly.

Count to King. May it please Your Grace (Editor's Note: English Kings were not addressed as Your Majesty until the reign of Henry VII.), Your Grace cannot do this to us. Consultation with my staff experts revealeth that it would create an impossible arrow supply problem. A longbowman shooteth as many as 12 arrows in each minute, whereas a crossbowman dischargeth only two or three. Now if Your Grace were to arm most of the archers with the crossbow and create only a small - say 300 strong - picked corps of longbowmen to serve as snipers, we could solve the supply problem.

King to Count. Longbowman not only shoot four or five times as fast as crossbowman but they kill at about twice the range. Find a way to supply them, or thou and thy "staff experts" will find thyself in the front rank of the archers in the first battle - armed with crossbows.

Count to King. Your Grace, it pleaseth me greatly to inform Your Grace that, under my supervision, my staff hath solved the problem which Your Grace hath been pleased to present to us. Attached is a draft of a new War Establishment (Editor's Note: British equivalent of U. S. Table of Organization) which, Your Grace will note, provideth greatly increased numbers of arrow cart and pack animal squads, as well as more serfs to carry bundles of arrows in the forward areas and to recover spent arrows for re-use. Orders have been placed for the required carts and animals, but to provide the latter it may be necessary to dismount some of the knights. I take it that Your Grace will approve this drastic measure.

King to Count. Thou takest it correctly. Get on with thy plan, but in case it worketh not, start practicing with a crossbow.

-District of Columbia CWRT Newsletter

THUMBNAIL REVIEWS

Grant's "Memoirs": Vini, vidi, vici!

Sherman's "Memoirs": Shake the hand that refused to shake the hand of the Secretary of War.

Sheridan's "Memoirs": We shoulda won in a walk, but I couldn't be every place at once.

J. Davis, "Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government": We wuz robbed!

Clifford Dowdey, "Lee's Last Campaign", "All God's Chillun's got faults - 'cept Marse Robert."

ENGINEERS HAVE HAIRY EARS ... AND TALK GOBBLEDEGOOK

A recent issue of Civil Engineering, organ of the American Society of Civil Engineers, carried the following comment on THE tower at Gettysburg:

"Because the battlefield is itself the monument, the tower designed by Robert B. Balter Co. was made to blend unobtrusively into the gently rolling terrain. Accordingly, a light weblike network of steel pipe forming a hyperboloid of revolution was selected. Being a doubly curved surface, it achieves the stiffness of a shell structure, and, being a ruled quadric surface, it could be fabricated from straightline members."

