



The COURIER OF THE CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

CLEVELAND, OHIO

DECEMBER, 1965

Vol. 9, No. 3

73rd Meeting

DATE:	TUESDAY, DECEMBER 14, 1965	
SPEAKER:	JIM HULSE	
SUBJECT:	LINCOLN, THE PARADOX	
PLACE:	HERMIT CLUB - DODGE COURT	
PRELIMINARIES:	6:00 p.m.	DINNER: 7:00 p.m.

FUTURE MEETINGS & SPEAKERS

74th Meeting

JANUARY 11, 1966

James Barnett
"Germans in the Civil War"

75th Meeting

FEBRUARY 8, 1965

Judge Holmes
"...the strange parallel
in the careers of
Gen. Warren and Gen. Pickett"

DINNER RESERVATIONS

Please use the enclosed, stamped envelope to forward your dinner reservations for the December 14 meeting (\$4.75 per person) for you and your guests. This will help greatly to reduce the usual confusion caused by at-the-table collection.

If your decision to attend can be made only at a time too late for mailing your check, please do not hesitate to come on this account. You can pay JOHN STEVNING on arrival.

NEXT MEETING

Jim Hulse
"Lincoln, the Paradox"

Jim Hulse is a very articulate gentleman who was with the Chicago CWRT for many years, and is still a member whenever he gets to Chicago. Some of you may recall him as a guest at one of our meetings last spring, when Jim engaged some of you in lively discussion following the meeting.

In describing his talk, Jim said it would include "unusual facts about Lincoln and his life. Mainly items unknown to many Civil War students, and, of course, to the general public."

He is a serious student of The War and of Lincoln. His appearance December 14 should be interesting and provocative.

THE CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

FOUNDED FEBRUARY 20, 1957

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MEMO FROM THE PRESIDENT

There has been some discussion among the members in regard to the matter of speech topics. Some have expressed interest in hearing comparisons made between Civil War personalities and their counterparts in other wars. For example, McClellan and Montgomery; Stuart and Patton. Perhaps even similarities between battles.

If you disagree, then let us have your suggestions for future topics at meetings. Some of you are tired of hearing about battles; others don't relish listening to biographies. Can we find a middle road?

While we're on the subject, it has come to our attention that we have never had a presentation on Chancellorsville - at least not in recent years.

Do we have a volunteer to research this most interesting tactical situation? Let's find out if Hooker compares with McClellan, and did the knock on the head have anything to do with his strange conduct in front of Lee?

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PAST MEETING & SPEAKER

The talk given by Cleveland CWRT member Charles Clarke at the last meeting proves once again that our local talent is second to none that can be brought in from the outside. The title of his talk, "Thaddeus Stevens, Villain or Hero?" is a rhetorical question and Charlie Clarke left it pretty well unanswered, which is probably as it should be.

In his talk, this controversial figure was brought to life and we were exposed to the conflicts, ambitions, ideals, and temptations that motivated this legal genius of 100 years ago.

That Charlie Clarke did not attempt to cast his subject into either the role of hero or villain is to the speaker's credit. In the tradition of a Shakespear or a Dostoevsky, he was content to make his subject come to life and let the viewer understand the forces from within and without with which his subject had to contend. Stevens' relationships with his interesting contemporaries were sharply described. His clash with President Johnson was brilliantly highlighted.

Along this line, member Howard Preston in his Plain Dealer column of November 24 discussed a matter which could have been suggested by Clarke's discourse. It follows in full:

IF ABOLITIONISTS HAD WON

The grudging acceptance of Negro suffrage, especially in Southern states; the picture of the Ku Klux Klan riding into the national spotlight again; the general unrest over social conditions - these might well send historians back to their reference books. The consensus ultimately could be that it might have been better all around if the well-known cooler heads had not prevailed 100 years ago at the close of the Civil War.

An entertaining conjecture would be the state of the nation today if the radicals - meaning the hardcore abolitionists - had been able to direct the reconstruction of a nation badly severed after a bitter war.

PAST MEETING & SPEAKER (Con't.)

As every schoolboy knows, the assassination of President Lincoln brought into office Andrew Johnson, the Tennessee Democrat who had been lined up for second place on the Lincoln ticket in 1864 in an effort to appeal to all parts of the electorate.

It has been commonly assumed that President Johnson, in fighting off the demands of Thaddeus Stevens and other Northerners reportedly bent on vengeance instead of fair play for a defeated foe, simply was following Lincoln's benevolent lead.

Now, however, there is a growing inclination to regard Johnson as a weakling, a conniving person who had no real desire to see suffrage of any kind effected except for the defeated Confederacy. History, drew him as a defender of justice for all. At the same time history painted the abolitionists partly with a tar brush; they were freedom-minded but bloodthirsty. They didn't care if the country wallowed in post Civil War violence as long as they got their way.

But 100 years later it has become reasonable to believe that, while Lincoln never would have stood for the evils of the carpetbaggers and the crimes of some of the reconstruction officers, neither would he have allowed the Southern states to repudiate, by state law, all the equality that theoretically was accomplished by force of arms.

It is futile to pretend to know, for a certainty, what any dead president, or dead ribbon clerk for that matter, would have said or done had he managed to live longer. But Johnson almost was removed from office by Senate impeachment, the vote being one short of the two-thirds majority needed. He was, at best, a bungler.

Zealots lose prestige because of their ferocity and because they will stand for no compromise. The abolitionists were zealots. Yet, a leader of the anti-Johnson crowd, tactless and obstinate Ben Wade, was such a fierce idealist that he not only wanted Negro suffrage but also equality for women, abolition of poverty, the eight-hour working day. You thought these were 20th century ideas?

Figure out what would have happened to this country - what it would be like today - if the announced goal of the winners of the war 100 years ago had been realized then instead of being deferred as problems for you and me to cope with in 1965.

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At the conclusion of Charlie's talk, many of the members asked if a transcript would be available in the future. It was indicated that his script might be reproduced, with suitable emendations to include most of the pertinent ad libs which were evidently not included in his prepared outline. Members who were not present would be advised to make every effort to procure a copy, as this talk certainly ranks among the best that it was ever our pleasure to hear.

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ROSTER CORRECTIONS

With our previous mailing of the Courier, you received the 1965-66 Roster. Several errors, mostly of a minor nature, have been pointed out to your humble servants on the executive board. Because of this, a corrected version is in the offing.

Before issuance, it is desirable to approach as near to perfection as possible. Therefore, if any member knows of any error whatsoever, be it the omission of a comma, please pass it along to one of the staff officers who will forward it to the Adjutant, I mean to Guy Di Carlo, Jr.

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