



The Charger

CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

P.O. BOX 5028 • CLEVELAND, OHIO 44101

DECEMBER, 1979

193rd Meeting

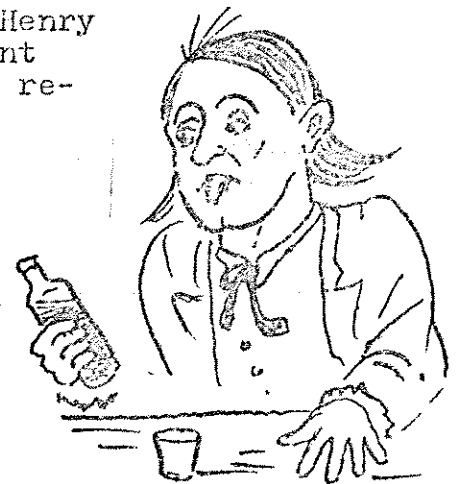
VOLUME 23 NO. 11

DATE: December 11th
SPEAKER: Edward P. Troxell
SUBJECT: Roger Atkinson Pryor, "A Study in Extremes"
PLACE: The Hermit Club. Meeting will be held in
the Card Room (Upstairs, same room where
book sale was held last month).
TIME: Canteen 6:00 P.M. Chow 7:00 P.M.

Member Ed Troxell is no stranger to our speaker's platform. A few years ago he addressed the combined Cleveland and Western Reserve CWRTs on Justice Taney and the Dred Scott Decision.

Ed is a retired partner in the law firm of Jones, Day, Reavis and Pogue. He received his A.B. degree at the College of Idaho; an A.M. and J.D. at the University of Michigan, and is a long-time Civil War buff. He was one of the early members of the CWRT of Washington, D.C., which then included such worthies as Bruce Catton, U.S. Grant III., and Virg Carrington (Pat Jones), author of a fine work on Mosby. We can look forward to a scholarly talk on one of the South's important "characters."

Roger Pryor, the subject of this talk, is a study in extremes; first a southern firebrand, and later the devotee of the cult of sectional wound-healing. O'Henry would have enjoyed the development and redevelopment of General Pryor's character in its many turns and reversals. He survived the War to become one of the greatest trial lawyers of the New York bar!



During the arrangements for the surrender of Fort Sumter, Roger Pryor was sent out as one of General Beauregard's emissaries to conclude the particulars of the ceremony. Sitting at a table in the unused hospital while the forms were being put on paper, he developed a thirst and poured himself a drink from a bottle which he found at his right hand. After he tossed it off he read the label, and discovered that it was iodine of potassium. The Federal surgeon took him outside, very pale, his long hair hanging sideways, and laid him on the grass to apply the stomach pump that saved his life. —From Sheldon Foote's The Civil War. (Maybe Ed Troxell will have a different version of this story.)

CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

Founded Nov. 17, 1957

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The forest at Brice's Cross Roads

Here is another reproduction of member Bob Thum's column in the Bennington Banner. The bard of Bennington describes his last CWRT Field Trip....

ONCE A YEAR in September I take a field trip with the Cleveland chapter of the Civil War Round Table. This is the second oldest chapter in the country and a jolly and erudite group indeed — lawyers, doctors, merchants and thieves. Scoundrels all, we have a great time holed up in motels, the management wisely segregating us from the casual motorist, because we tend to sing bawdy songs late at night and casually walk down the motel aisles with a drink in hand and clothed in nothing more than Civil War kepi and ice bucket.

Our learned docent is one Ed Bearss, a Marine Corps veteran of World War II, who is a walking encyclopedia of information about the Civil War. A senior historian for the National Park Service, he has received innumerable awards as a military historian, and I for one have never heard him stumped on any question put to him by any of our group who have tried to test his mettle as a Civil War expert. We have members of our group who are experts in weapons, uniforms, cavalry, cannon — you name it — but Ed holds his own against any and all questions. He is non pareil.

This group has gone to all the major and many of the minor battlefields of the Civil War in almost a quarter of a century of searching. Books are read prior to the trip, and all arrive at the battlefield prepared to view the site with all background information in mind.

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Book - Artifacts Sale & Quiz Show a Fun Evening

Forty-two members attended the November 13th meeting and enthusiastically bought and sold books, swords, uniforms, buckles and badges and what-nots, as well as enjoying a well-planned quiz show.

Quizmaster Jim Englehart is to be congratulated on his masterful arrangements and handling of the quiz; from buzzers to questions and cool repartee with a vociferous audience. The panel of so-called experts were duly heckled, interrupted and applauded. Bernie Drews and Don Heckama with the help of Treasurer John Harkness made this year's sale a most outstanding one.

The quiz kids were divided into two teams, the Blue and the Gray (what else) with Charlie Clarke, Tim Moran and Stu Cramer on the former, and Bill Chamberlin, Ray Swanson and Frank Gillen the Gray. The Blues won by a slight margin, the audience noisy and helpful to both. Tom Geshke acted as score-keeper and referee, not an easy job with Charlie Clarke and audience-participant John Drinko exchanging protestations which were, as usual, amusing to all. It was an interesting, fun-filled evening.

The real winner was President Chuck Spiegle, who was delighted at the good turn-out. A brief executive meeting followed to discuss what was to be done about members who are delinquent in their dues. If you have not sent them in, and are still interested in continuing your membership, and wish to continue receiving the Charger, why not sit down right now and get up-to-date? Write your checks to John Harkness, at 1585 Riverside Drive, Lakewood, Ohio 44107.

FRED GILL'S BOOK REVIEW

ROASTING A TURKEY

The Civil War Christmas Album selected and edited by Phip Van Dorn Stern: Hawthorne Books, Inc., N.Y., 1961

In a technical sense I suppose this can be called a book. It has good hard covers, pages conveniently numbered, an introduction and a table of contents. It looks like a book, it even feels like a book; but when you get to its insides it turns into a literary mush and a commercial scam. Look first at the publication date. There it is hiding shyly under a line of 12-point black-face type declaring ostentatiously: FIRST EDITION November 1961. Wow, just in time for the Civil War Centennial! How fortuitous! How nice it came out at just this time! Real lucky for all us Civil War aficionados.



Now glance quickly at the headings in the table of contents. Peace. War. Santa Claus In Wartime. Christmas At Home. The First Peacetime Christmas. Oh, all right, not really bad. But now get into reading the stuff under those harmless headings. You come to a couple of so-so letters from Lee to his wife and a daughter (the editor doesn't bother to tell you which one), some of the humdrum verse ever written, four dull paragraphs by Walt Whitman; the philosophy of plum pudding, an interminable cutesy piece by Joel Chandler Harris, and a piece of unabashed treacle entitled, believe me, "Santa Claus Visits The New York Herald Office."

I wonder at the gullibility of man when I think of all the well-intentioned relatives (including one of mine) of Civil War nuts who bought this depressing publication enriching only Mr. Stern and Hawthorne Books, Inc..

This is not the only thing published whose main purpose was to excite cash registers anticipating the late Centennial. Think for a moment about that multi-volumed history of the Civil War by an otherwise unblemished authority. Did this ambitious series really add much even to the general knowledge of the conflict? I bought the first volume, read it, and knew I had been nobbled: but somebody must have been chuckling at the jingle of cash the series made. There are other publications in this shabby class but a rising gorge prevents my listing them.

Oh, yes, I had this "Christmas Album" at our recent book sale priced at one dollar. Half way through the sale I cut the price to half a buck, but still nobody bit! Hurray for you book buyers. You knew a turkey when you saw one.



GOOD!! H R 5048 was passed by the House. Now it goes to the Senate, so keep those cards and letters going to Senators Byrd, Warner and Bumpers to extend the Bull Run Battlefield and the preservation of our other National Military Parks by limiting their use as recreational centers! Eliminate all automobile traffic in these parks...keep them as they were meant to be!

NO FOOD AT AMELIA COURT HOUSE

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General Lee's headquarters were still in Petersburg, 15 miles away, during the Battle of Five Forks, the last important battle of the War. Much has been written about how Pickett and Fitzhugh Lee were attending a "shad bake" two miles from their line when the Confederates were sent reeling back to the outskirts of Petersburg; how after this collapse, Lee realized the end had come for Petersburg and Richmond, and began sending out orders for retreat.

On March 26th Lee had outlined a plan to Jefferson Davis, to abandon these cities and go south to join forces with Joseph E. Johnston in North Carolina and thus possibly save the Confederacy.

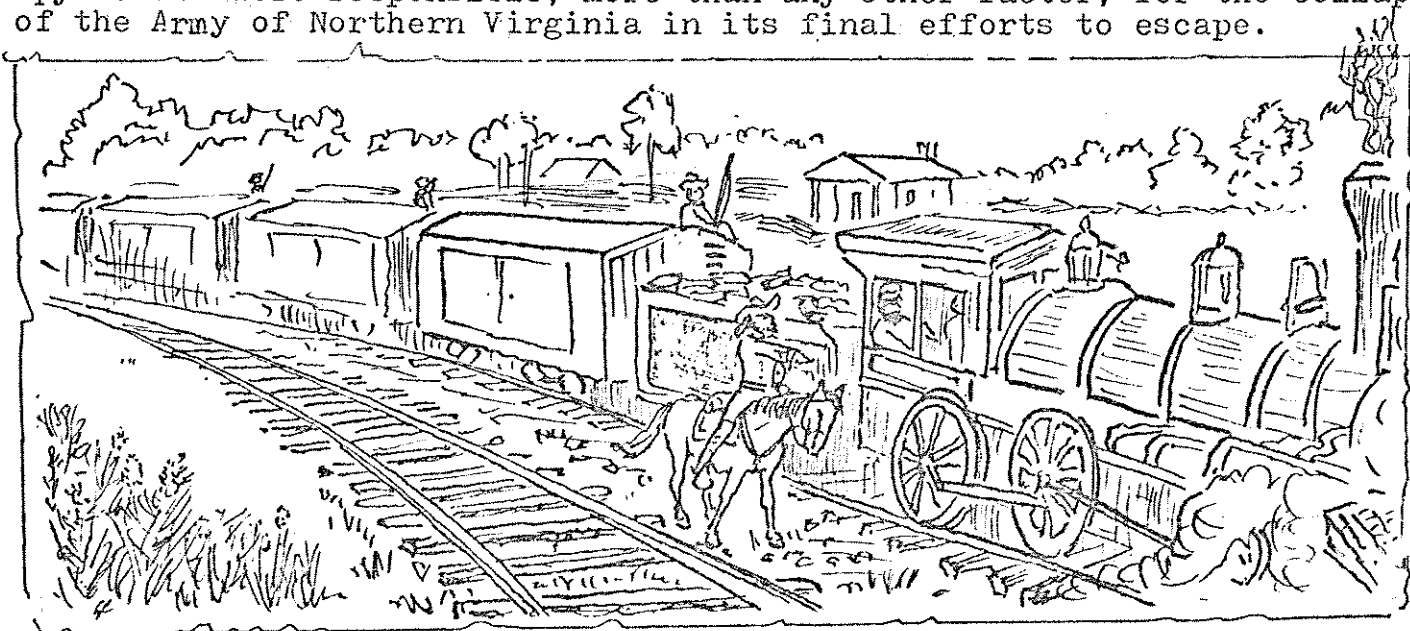
Orders to evacuate went out on April 2, by courier and over such telegraph wires that had not been cut by Sheridan's well-organized saboteurs. And herein lies our story of why Lee's much-needed food supplies never reached him.

The roads from Petersburg and Richmond came together in a triangle at Amelia Court House 36 miles from Richmond. This was the logical rendezvous where troops moving out of the two cities could unite; and the Confederate supply base at Danville, Virginia, was still connected with Amelia Court House by the Southside Railroad. Knowing that his converging armies would be completely out of food, Lee ordered that 25,000 of these essential rations be sent there and held waiting for the half-starved troops when they arrived.

On April 3rd Fitzhugh Lee's cavalry division was smashed, and the next day the hungry, exhausted Confederate soldiers staggered into Amelia Court House. The expected rations were not there. This caused a 24-hour delay while the rebels unsuccessfully foraged for food in the area, a delay that permitted the pursuing Union forces to catch up, and made it possible for Sheridan to push ahead and box Lee off to the south. Junction with Johnston was now virtually impossible.

What happened to the rations? They never left Danville. Because Lee's orders were never received. They were nabbed by Sheridan's spy-scouts.

U.S. Major Harry Young and Sergeant Joseph E. McCabe were the leaders of these bold fellows. Dressed in Confederate uniforms, they ruined Lee's communications from a time before the Battle of Five Forks and during the entire retreat. Cutting telegraph wires, sending confusing messages, misdirecting separated units and intercepting Confederate couriers, the spy-scouts were responsible, more than any other factor, for the collapse of the Army of Northern Virginia in its final efforts to escape.



Lee had to get out of Amelia Court House; so he sent two telegrams to Danville requesting that rations be sent to Burkeville. Wires were down; so he entrusted them to a messenger, who was to carry them to the first available telegraph station. Of course this man was caught by the hovering spy-scouts, and the telegrams extracted from his boot and immediately turned over to Sheridan. Now the General knew where the Confederate Army was headed as well as of its starving condition.

Next, Major Young and another spy-scout were sent with these messages to the nearest Confederate telegraph station still open and instructed to send them to Danville! Here were two couriers in rebel gray with authentic telegrams from General Lee; thus they had no trouble getting the off. Meantime another spy-scout, Sergeant James White, was sent deep into enemy territory.

The supply train had to pass Appomattox Station on its way to Burkeville, and when it arrived, Sergeant White was there to direct it on a route that led directly into a Federal ambush.

Grant met with Sheridan after a dangerous ride across "no man's land," and with the knowledge of the Confederate whereabouts and condition, he was able to deploy his armies in the deadly trap that resulted in the surrender at Appomattox Court House.

Ed. Note: I have not substantiated it, but it is my understanding that the rations provided the Confederates after the surrender were the very same that Sheridan's men had captured.

'Thumprints'

WE WERE fortunate to view the battle of Brice's Cross Roads with expert Ed Bears. This is a battle taught at all military

schools in the world as the classic example of hitting an enemy when he is divided, defeating the parts separately, then pursuing until the retreat becomes a rout. This engagement, small by Civil War battle numbers, occurred in June of 1864 near the little town of Tupelo, Miss. This town is about half way between Birmingham, Ala., and Memphis, Tenn.

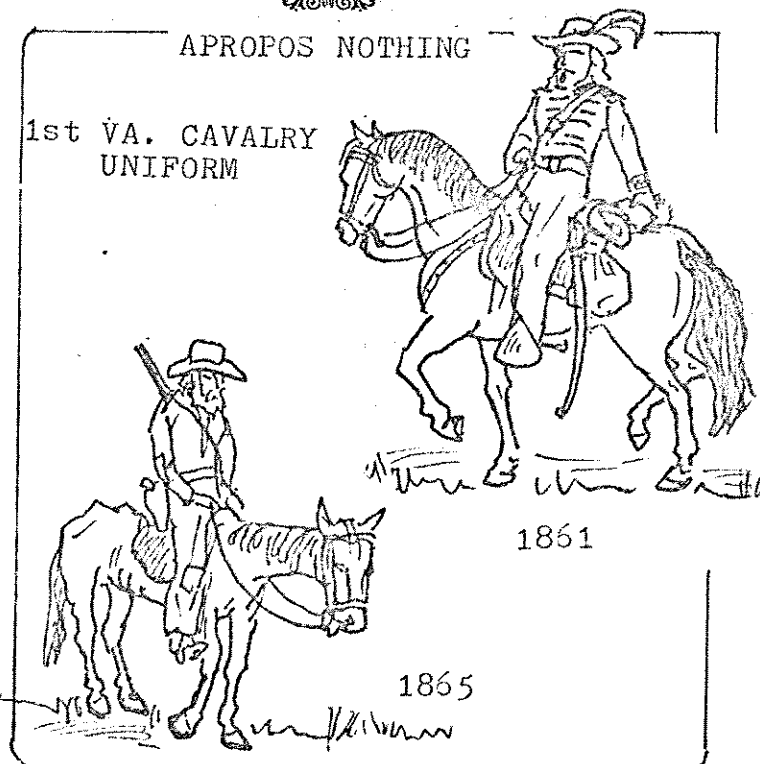
Nathan Bedford Forrest, a self-made man, had entered the Confederate service as a private and risen to the rank of major general by repeated demonstrations of personal bravery, leadership and audacity. He got there "fustest with the mostest." Powerfully built, he was ready to engage the foe personally. No other American general has killed as many enemies with his own hand or has been wounded as often. His words of command as he led a charge were, "Forward, men, and mix with 'em."

Forrest was harrasing Sherman's one track railroad line of communications from Nashville to Chattanooga, and General Sam Sturgis was ordered out with 8,000 men to get "that old devil Forrest." Sturgis is known for two quotations. He once said that fellow General Pope wasn't worth "a pinch of owl's dung," and after he was routed at Brice's Crossroads, he dropped this pearl, "For God's sake, if Forrest will let me alone, I will let him alone."

With 3,500 men, "That Old Devil Forrest" sniffed the weather. It had rained heavily the days before and the roads and lower grounds were bogs. It dawned hot and sultry. He would attack the cavalry of Sturgis at Brice's Crossroads, and when they called for infantry reinforcements, they would arrive exhausted from the double time march in the June heat. Too tired to be effective, they would in turn be defeated, and he would drive them back to the lower areas of Tishomingo Creek and Hatchie Bottom, where he would annihilate them.

Forrest said as his philosophy of fighting, "Get 'em skeered, and then keep the skeer on 'em." With a force of 3,500 men he annihilated an army of 8,000. The retreat of the federal force turned into a rout. Over 1,500 men were captured and most of the artillery, horses, wagon train, ammunition and rifles. General Sturgis abandoned his troops and was back in Nashville without his army to face disgrace for the rest of his life.

These fields we trod this last September, viewing and reliving that hot, sultry June day over one hundred years ago, when That Old Devil Forrest made military history.



BOOTS, BOOTS, BOOTS

6

The following are excerpts from the diary of Pierre Zimmerman, Private, 54th Ohio Volunteers; enlisted Cincinnati, Ohio, Feb. 3, 1862; discharged Feb. 12, 1864. The 4½ page single-spaced, typed copy of the diary was submitted by Elbert Kennard, Batavia, Ohio. The diary dates from Sept. 14, 1863, to Dec. 31, 1863.

Zimmerman's unit foraged on Sept. 14, 1863, left Camp Sherman for the Big Black River Bridge on Sept. 22, 1863; left Vicksburg on Sept. 28, 1863; started their 2nd Tenn. Campaign on Oct. 8, 1863, leaving Memphis, arriving Moscow, Tenn.

They foraged; they "encampt"; they picketed; they stood guard; they sentineled; they "marcht"; and "marcht" again !

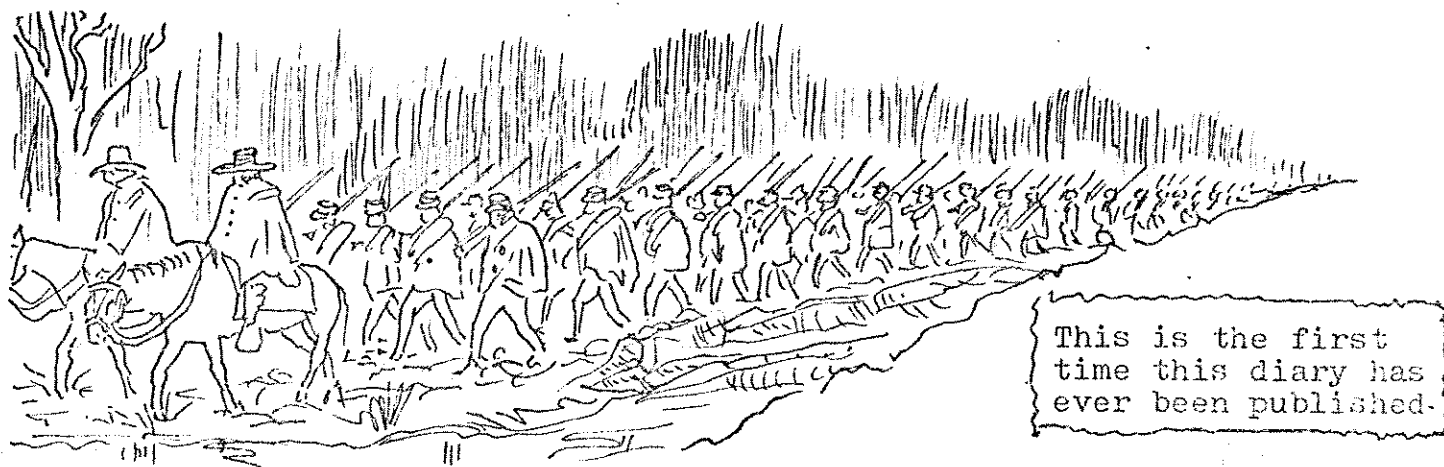
Spelling unchanged:

Oct. 9: to La Grange on cars. Oct. 11: heavy cannonnading heard from distance. Rebs in possession of Colliersville 16 miles from here. Oct. 12: our men recaptured Colliersville. Oct. 13: 9 miles in 2½ hours marcht. held election for govener this evening. Oct. 14: marching orders for Corinth. 16 miles. Oct. 15: marcht 20 miles. Camp 3 miles from Pocohantes. Oct. 16: marcht 25 miles this day. Oct. 17: marcht 4 miles, took dinner, marcht to Glendale. Raining like hell. Oct. 18: marcht 15 miles to Tuke. Oct. 20: 15 miles. crossed the Mississippi line into Alabama. got paid this night. Oct. 21: still in camp today. Raining like hell; on picket. Whole regiment Gen. Osterhaus Division skirmishing all day. Our artillery shelling them. Colonel of the 9 Iowa kild. Oct. 23: raining like hell. Still on picket.

Oct. 24: still on picket. Wether cool and cloudy. Marching put of until next a.m. Oct. 26: started to march at 5 o'clock AM. Rebs ½ of a mile ahead of us all day. Gen. Osterhaus Division skirmishing. Steady canonading all day. Wether clear and cool. Oct. 27: Took up line of march at 7 o'clock AM. Gen. Osterhaus Division in front skirmishing all day. Gen. Smith division trying to flank the rebs. Several rebs killed. To Tuscombis toward old camp. rebs followed. Oct. 29: in camp today attacked by rebs. Orders to march out on right flank. Back to camp this evening. Oct. 30: Took up march until dark from 7 o'clock AM toward the Tennessee River. Encampt 4 mile from Chickisaw. Oct. 31: Took up march at 8 o'clock AM to Chickisaw. 4 mile. Marcht to Estburg (East Port). 2 mile. Whole regiment another try loading gears on boats.

Nov. 16: marcht 10 mile. Nov. 17: to Bridgeport. Nov. 18: still in camp today. wether clear and cool. Nov. 19: crossed the Tennessee River. 5 mile. Nov. 20: past Niger Jack cave. 12 mile. rain. Nov. 21: marcht 8 mile. Encampt in sight of Lookout Mt. raining. Nov. 22: 3 mile. Nov. 23: 3 mile to Racoon Mt. Heavy cannonnading on our left. Nov. 24: heavy cannonnading and musketry. Still in camp. Nov. 25: got in front at 5 o'clock. Kild and wounded pretty thick. Nov. 20: started after rebs at 10 o'clock. Marcht until 10 o'clock PM. Nov. 22: marcht

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8 mile after Bragg. Nov. 28: 1 mile to Chickamauga. Burnt the rail-
road. Raining. Nov. 29: Took up march at 7 o'clock AM. Marcht until
noon. Stopt until night. Drew our last rations. marcht until midnight.
Got orders to help Burnside. Marcht 18 mile.



This is the first
time this diary has
ever been published.

Nov. 30: Marcht 15 mile, through Cleveland, Tenn. Dec. 1:
through Charleston, Tenn. 15 mile. Dec. 2: Through Calhoun,
Tenn. 22 mile. Dec. 3: marcht through Philadelphia. Encampt at
Little Tennessee River. 15 mile. Dec. 4: marcht 11 o'clock at
night. Crossed Little Tenn. River. Encampt in Morgantown. 2
mile. Dec. 5: 15 mile. Raining. Dec. 6: 2 mile. Dec. 7:
Back toward Chattanooga. Crossed the Tenn. River. 19 mile today.
Dec. 8: waded a creek. Marcht 18 mile. Cold and rain. Dec.
9: marcht 8 mile. Past the ironworks. Into North Carolina over
mountains. 13 mile. Dec. 11: Still in camp today. Windy and cool.
Dec. 12: Back to the ironworks. Dec. 13: 13 mile yesterday. 15
mile today. Rain. Dec. 14: 16 mile. Clear and cool. Dec. 15:
marcht through Charleston. Marcht 18 mile. Dec. 16: marcht through
Cleveland. 13 mile. Warm and clear.

Dec. 17: Marcht through Ottawa, Tenn. 17 mile today. Wet and cold.
Dec. 18: Through Chatanooga, got on pothoos and orrd 8 mile down river.
Encampt until morning. Windy and cold. Dec. 19: Started orring down
river at 7 o'clock AM. Orrd 50 mile. Landed at Bridgeport. Dec. 20:
Still in camp today. Clear and cold wether. Dec. 21: through Dec.
25: Still in camp. Clear and cold. Cloudy and cold. Cloudy and warm.
Raining. Dec. 26: marcht through Stevenson, Alabama. 14 miles today.
Dec. 27: marcht through Stevenson. 4 miles. And built a bridge across a
stream. Dec. 28: marcht to Belle Point, Alabama. Raining. Dec. 29:
Dec. 30: Dec. 31: Still in camp. wether rainy, cloudy and cold. Cold and
snow.

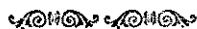
Holidays came, Holidays went; but futility, discomfort, boredom,
and monotony remained constant.

How about that, readers?

WHAT WOULD YOUR REACTION HAVE BEEN? HOW WOULD YOUR DIARY HAVE READ?



Land mines, or "torpedoes," infuriated General Sherman. The device that enraged Napoleon was the "caltrop," a four-pronged iron gadget which looked like one of a little girl's "jacks," but each pointed prong was about 4" long. One of the prongs always stuck upright when on the ground, and would cripple any horse that stepped on it. Piercing the softer underpart of the hoof, a caltrop caused the horse to fall forward, throwing the rider and laming the animal sometimes permanently. This writer has found no reference to their use in the Civil War, but it is highly unlikely that they were NOT used. In World War II they were quite commonly used to puncture tires.



Scrappy little General William Mahone, whose Confederate Division was one of the few cohesive organizations on the retreat to Appomattox, was notorious for the undisguised luxury in which he maintained himself. Late on April 7th the artillerist Lt. William T. Pogue found Mahone sheltering himself under a poplar tree from a passing thunder shower and in a towering rage, abusing and swearing at the Yankees, who, he had just learned, had that morning captured his headquarters wagon with his attached cow. The furious general was particularly upset because his cow had been taken, which was a very serious loss, for he was not able, in his delicate condition of health, to eat anything but tea, crackers and fresh milk.

William T. Pogue, Gunner with Stonewall, Reminiscences
McCowatt-Mercer, 1957



When Union General Miles' men captured the Confederate wagon train, they found in General Mahone's headquarters wagon \$255,000 in new, unused Confederate money. Thinking it was the Confederate Treasury, they spread blankets, divided it up and proceeded to gamble like kings; \$10,000 being the usual ante. Among other things, a miniature daguerreotype of Mahone's wife was found, which General Miles gallantly sent through the lines to his retreating opponent.

Miles, Personal Recollections, Chicago-Werner, 1896



Major General Prince Camille Armand Jules Marie de Polignac was the only alien to attain high Confederate rank (William M. Browne and Pat Cleburne were foreign-born but naturalized Americans). He was a son of Prince Jules Auguste Armand Marie de Polignac, President of the French King Charles X's council of ministers, and an English mother. Twenty-nine when he came to the Confederacy, he had already distinguished himself in the Crimean War.

In July, 1861, he was commissioned lieutenant-colonel of infantry and made Chief of Staff to General Beauregard. After fighting at Corinth, he was promoted to brigadier general in January, 1863, and later served under Richard Taylor in the 1864 Red River Campaign. Given command of a Texas brigade of unhappy dismounted cavalry, he was received with hostility and nicknamed "Polecat," although the latter may have resulted from the soldiers' inability to pronounce Polignac. However, he soon won their respect, and on April 8, 1864, at the Battle of Sabine Crossroads, Louisiana, when Mouton was killed, he moved up to divisional command and broke the Federal right. As a result he was promoted to major general in June. In March, 1865, he was sent to Europe in a vain attempt to obtain French aid, and after the War he studied mathematics, in which field he achieved some reputation. When, in 1913, he died in Paris, he was the last of all Confederate major generals.