



The Charger

CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

P. O. BOX 5766 • CLEVELAND, OHIO 44101

DECEMBER, '81 - JANUARY, 1982

VOLUME 25 NUMBER 5

212th MEETING

DATE: TUESDAY, JANUARY 12th

PROGRAM: MOVIE, John Wayne; "She Wore a Yellow Ribbon"

PLACE: THE HERMIT CLUB

TIME: GET-TOGETHER 6:00 P.M. DINNER: 7:00 P.M.



Action packed scenes of the United States Cavalry in settings that will remind one of Frederick Remington's paintings has made the movie we are to see at the next meeting a classic. Directed by John Ford, "She Wore a Yellow Ribbon" was produced in 1949, and since that time this award-winning picture has been considered the all-time best cavalry-in-the-west ever made. One of the exciting scenes is the attack on an Indian Village. John Wayne, by the way, plays the part of a veteran officer, and is not the romantic interest. Should provide an evening of good entertainment.



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Non-resident members, \$5.00



NOVEMBER BOOK-ARTIFACTS SALE AND ANNUAL QUIZZ CONTEST.

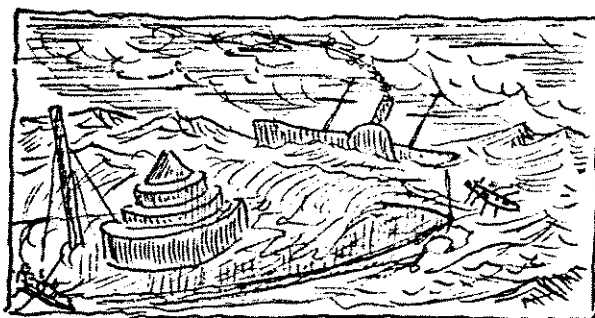
A good crowd turned out for this event. An unusually large display of artifacts and very old books were in evidence, resulting in many happy buyers and sellers. The quizz, as usual, garnered a lot of laughs and repartee. Only one over-enthusiastic kibitzer gave a loud answer, but was duly squelched. Tim Moran is to be complimented on providing the questions.

December Meeting

Retired Navy Captain Ernest W. Peterkin gave a most interesting talk at the December meeting on the exploration of the wreck of the "Monitor." It was located by the State of North Carolina and the Smithsonian Institute off Cape Hatteras resting upside-down on its turret in over 200 feet of water.

Peterkin's talk was illustrated by many slides including sonar photographs, and also a movie film about the famous ironclad.

The speaker, one of the few people to have been on the sunken wreck, showed pictures of the many artifacts recovered, including an oil lamp with the red glass that was probably being displayed when the ship foundered. It is believed that the "Monitor" was mistakenly depth bombed during World War II which caused further damage to the wreck.



On New Year's Eve, 1862, the "Monitor" was lost in a gale off Cape Hatteras. The ironclad was being towed by the "Rhode Island," from Newport News to Beauford, where it was to join the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron to reduce the forts at Wilmington and permanently close off that port.

Book Review

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This must be the only excuse for the raid: Patton had learned his son-in-law, Lt. Col. John Waters, captured in Africa, was in the camp and he had to rescue him, even at the price of a couple of hundred other Americans. But here's the irony of it. Waters was shot by the Germans in the confusion when Baum came up and Patton had to fly in a medical team to rescue him.

And then, when Baum was recovering from his ordeal in a hospital, Patton reneged on the Congressional Medal. Baum got another Silver Star but a public recounting would have had to accompany a Congressional Medal recommendation.

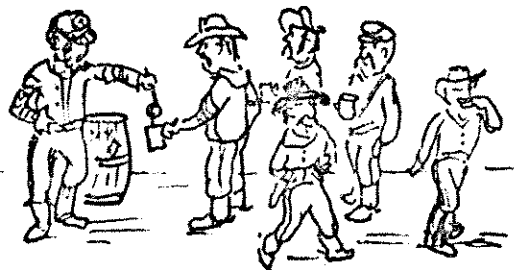
What gall! What magnificent selfishness! There is little question that Patton was a military genius, a true historical figure. He was also a true blue unscrupulous bastard. But then so was Napoleon and Wellington, and probably Caesar and Alexander too.

The book is padded with some extraneous copy about the adventures of one of the authors but center stage is Abe Baum and his valiant band. Read about it, even when it makes you fume at Patton.

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Editor's Note:

In examining Portrait of Patton, by Harry H. Semmes, and Patton: Ordeal and Triumph, by Ladislav Farago, I found conflicting reports on the attempt to rescue the prisoners held at the camp near Hammelburg. According to Patton's diary, the action took place on March 26, 27 and 28, 1945. On March 30 they learned from the German radio that the attempt had aborted. On April 4th some of the prisoners who had escaped began to filter into the lines of the American Seventh Army. General Patch called Patton on that day and reported that some of the escapees had informed him that John Waters had been wounded and recaptured. On April 5th Hammelburg was taken, and Waters was released, and flown to a hospital in Paris, where Patton visited him on April 17th while on a 24-hour leave.



In many of the western outposts during the Civil War and Indian Wars, U.S. troopers on fatigue duty were issued a gill (4 oz) of whiskey in the morning, and if they didn't shirk during the day, got another gill at quitting time. Hauling barrels of whiskey to the post was a much sought-after duty, because there was always some "evaporation." The Yellow Legs, by William Wormster, 1966

A SAD MONUMENT TO EGO

RAID - The Untold Story of Patton's Secret Mission, By Richard Baron, Major Abe Baum and Richard Goldhurst. G. P. Putnam's Sons, N. Y. 1981

This is the story of a classic small unit action - a story of great valor and the shameless self-interest of that curious man, George S. Patton. Late in the war in Germany Patton, to the angry amazement of his staff, dispatched 294 men with fifteen tanks and three assault guns fifty miles beyond the American lines, through territory held by unknown German forces, to raid a prisoner of war camp and bring back the Americans held there.

A noble effort? Well, it was a noble effort by Captain Abe Baum and his handful of men but it was criminally inadequate by military standards. Col. Creighton Abrams, a competent enough soldier eventually to become Chief of Staff, in a rage tried futilely to persuade Patton to send a combat command, a unit ten times stronger, to have some chance of success.



Two Flamboyant Georges: Both Glory-Seekers - Both Outstanding Cavalrymen - Both proved Heroes of undoubted personal courage - Both good soldiers and sincere Patriots - Both died inglorious deaths - and Both, regardless of their personal faults will be remembered forever in the annals of the United States Army.

Captain Baum, a young dress cutter from New York's garment district but a natural soldier and by this time an authentic hero and small unit leader, was ordered to command the unit. Baum knew the raid was crazy but he was the kind of man who when Patton told him he would put him in for a Congressional Medal replied, "You don't have to bribe me, General."

Baum and his doomed band set out, fooling the Germans at first by the idiotic audacity of the action, and reached the camp to find not 200 prisoners but 1,500, not to mention a couple of thousand Serbians. Baum and his now reduced force piled prisoners on his remaining equipment and headed back. By now the Germans had routed out some big guns and a couple of divisions and simply blew Baum's force apart.

Some made their way back, some were captured and many were lost forever, sacrificed to one man's towering ego.

(continued on page 4)

SCENES I'D LIKE TO HAVE SEEN



Date: May 1, 1886

Place: Atlanta, Georgia

Occasion: Unveiling of a monument

Source: John B. Gordon: A Study in Gallantry, by Allan B. Tankersky

Written by Member Tom Koehl

Thousands of Confederate veterans marched in long columns to the site of the ceremony and were applauded by deafening shouts and rebel yells.

All eyes were intent to get a glimpse of Jefferson Davis as his carriage, drawn by four white horses, slowly passed through the almost solid human wall, while little girls scattered flowers before him.

When Davis had been seated on the canopied platform, surrounded by a group of distinguished southerners and huge throngs on the five streets that radiated from the monument, a scene of dramatic import caught the eyes and moved the hearts of thousands who wore their old gray uniforms.

Just as the principal speaker was to begin his oration, a solitary horseman rode out of Peachtree Street toward the stand. He was mounted on a fine horse and wore the uniform of a Lieutenant General of the Confederate Army.

It was James A. Longstreet who, because of his alliance with the Republicans during the Reconstruction had been estranged from Davis, but now the stately figure dismounted and walked straight toward his former chief. As Longstreet approached, the old President rose and went down to meet him, throwing his arms around the General and embraced him affectionately.

Longstreet's unheralded appearance was the signal for an enthusiastic burst of applause. A local paper reported that the scene moved the veterans profoundly and nothing from that moment could have separated them from their idols - these two gallant leaders in the War Between the States.

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REMINISCENCES OF BANNERMAN'S BY FRANK GILLEN

When I was a young lad someone, don't remember who, gave me an old tattered military goods catalogue. Through this well-worn publication I was able to see the very artifacts and relics of our country's past - actual guns, cartridge boxes, swords, cannon, etc., used in the dim far off time of the Revolution, beyond the living memory of any man alive! There was also page after page of Civil War relics - cheap as dirt - page after page of rusty muskets, battered swords, tattered flags, old pieces of harness and leather goods of an unbelievable variety. There on those dog-eared pages were relics of those days of turmoil, battle and great events - guns of every description, new and used, from rusty wall pieces to unfired new rifles and pistols. I got to know that catalogue almost by heart, until it was all in shreds..

Later, when I had a job, I sent \$1.50 for a new catalogue, so I could further my dreams of sending in a modest order or two. I can still recall the thrill of opening cartons of relics from Bannerman's. A brass gunners level dated 1861 with an oldtime eagle on it and noting the air bubble -original air trapped in it from the 1860's! There were old cavalry leather goods with, believe it or not, some original Civil War horse manure still stuck on it! (There is no accounting for taste.)

From time to time I would order things, or write inquiring of this and that, and sometimes I received a polite letter of reply, or was able to buy a prize item, but often not. I grew older, and more experienced, more demanding and, lo and behold, went to New York on a New York World's Fair railroad excursion from Cleveland. I sat up all the way to New York, and from the Union Station took the long walk, with great excitement, to Bannerman's store at 501 Broadway.

There it was, dark and somber with some dark dusty relics in the dirty window, which I peered into. A gloomy interior met my eyes as I pressed against the glass - there were flags hanging in tatters and tearing of their own weight, uniformed manikins around one side on high shelves, covered with gray dust on their shoulders, after standing there for years and years. On the floor were show cases, which I presumed were filled with all sorts of breathtaking treasures. I went to the door with my hopes high - here was the promised land of my dreams, the goal of my whole 15 years of life - here I was at the threshold! I almost fainted with the fatigue and the excitement of the moment.

I grabbed the well-worn brass door handle and froze in horror at the little sign...."Closed Saturday and Sunday during July and August." I dragged myself back to Union Station and literally begged the railroad officials to allow me to go back to Cleveland on the very next train.

(Continued next month. Frank visits Bannerman's Island Castle)



The Bannerman Company was established in 1865 by 14-year old Frank Bannerman while his father was in the Union Army. Buying government surplus arms at junk prices he parlayed the company into a world famous supplier of military goods at times outfitting entire armies. In 1904 he bought an island in the Hudson, 4 miles from West Point, to house his arsenal. There he built a Scottish style castle and kept on

adding to it until his death in 1918. The island was originally named "Pollepel," and its history goes back to Indian and Dutch days, as well as figuring in the American Revolution. Full story next month.

ROLLAPOPRIDA

It was said of a Tennessee backwoods rebel that his wife was a tyrant, a terrible cook and a worse mother, but that she made an excellent moonshine whiskey. With all her faults, he loved her still.

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The dying soldier (might have been a North or South man) was asked, "Have you made peace with the Lord and renounced the Devil?" His reply was, "I have made peace with the Lord but I'm in no position to antagonize anybody."

* * * *

A Michigan recruit was leaving for the front and a crowd was assembled at the railway station to see his regiment off. Bewildered, he asked a veteran who all these people were and why they were cheering. The vet replied, "They're the ones that ain't going."

* * * *

Then there was the officer drilling a batch of recruits who saw one out of step. He walked up to him and said sarcastically, "You know, they're all out of step but you." "Well," was the retort, "you're in charge, you tell 'em."

* * * *

Another recruit, from the deep woods of Alabama arrived at a Confederate camp for training and spent the first day wandering around looking at the sights when a general came along. The boy, being friendly, said "Howdy." The general stopped and proceeded to lecture the recruit at some length on how to address his superior officers. The boy heard him through in silence, then spat in the dust and said, "Effen I'd knowed you was goin' to take on thataway, I wouldn't 'a spoke to ya at all."

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If any of the above ring a bell to some of the older members, it's because they were gleaned from a very humorous speech given for the club years ago by member Howard Preston. It was recently reprinted in toto by Guy Di Carlo in his New York Civil War Round Table newsletter.

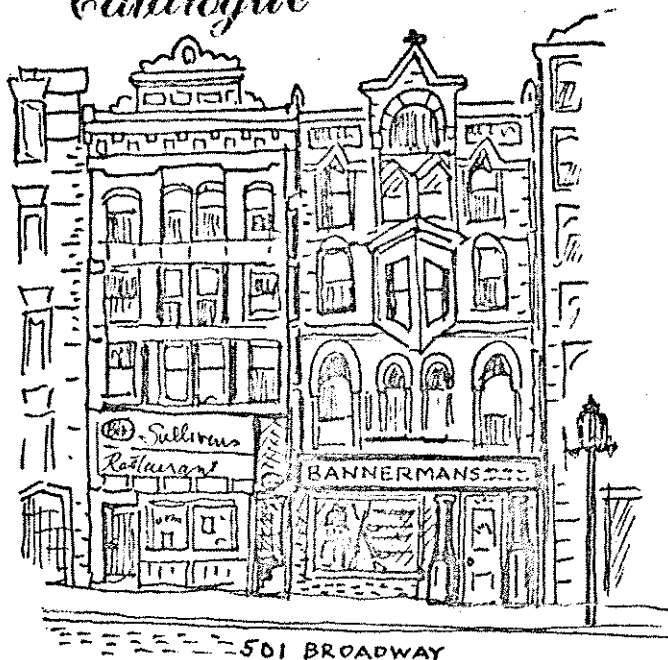
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Confederate private Henry Morton Stanley, of "Dr. Livingston I presume?" fame, survived a bloody charge at Shiloh only to be taken prisoner. Later he joined the Union ranks and finished the war in Yankee blue.

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The Prison Civil War Round Table is located in Richmond, and its members reside in the State Penitentiary. They appreciate any books, magazines or travel folders. Address Prison Civil War Round Table, Box 27264, Richmond, Va. 23261

Notes from the Bannerman Catalogue



Francis Bannerman and Sons, Inc., published yearly catalogues that were virtually encyclopedias of military goods of all ages. In fact, it was called Bannerman's Catalogue of Military Goods, but in addition to the vast variety of matériel, the 364 pages had many interesting facts and anecdotes.

The following notes are taken from the 1920 edition by Frank Gillen.

U.S. ORDNANCE OFFICERS SHARP

At government auction sales of ordnance all goods offered are held at a limit price known only to the officer in charge. When prices bid are not up to the limit, the goods are withdrawn and offered later at limit price.

At the opening of the Franco-Prussian War there was a large sale at the Springfield Arsenal, where over 500,000 rifles were offered, and then withdrawn because there were no bids that came up to the \$3.50 each set as the limit. Shortly after the sale an agent of the French government appeared in New York in quest of arms. He authorized a local dealer to buy the lot of 500,000 guns at the limit price. This dealer's offer to the Springfield ordnance officer was referred to the commanding officer

who in turn consulted the Chief of Ordnance in Washington. It was then referred to the U.S. Ordnance Sales office in New York, who advised that the limit be raised, in as much as the French government had sold guns to the U.S. at a great profit during the Civil War. So the limit was raised to \$12 per rifle and the guns were purchased, an increase of over \$4,000,000.00 !

ANOTHER "TAPS" ORIGIN

Sounding "Taps" over the grave at the burial of a soldier originated with a Captain Tidball. In the retirement from the Peninsula in August, 1862, Horse Battery A, Second Artillery, was serving with the rear guard, and on reaching Yorktown one of the cannoneers died and was buried there. Not wishing to stir up the pursuing enemy by firing three rounds from the Battery guns as was customary, Capt. Tidball substituted the sounding of "Lights Out" (or "Taps"), which impressive custom has been observed at military funerals ever since. - New York Sun

NO HELP HERE

A story is told of a government auction of a large consignment of army goods at Alexandria, Virginia, at the close of the Civil War.

Several buyers entered a combination deal to buy a large quantity at the lowest prices beyond the set limits. They selected one of the partners to represent the combine and do the bidding. He made a successful bid and got the goods, but then kept the stuff himself and refused to recognize his partners.

Seeking help, the others telegraphed Secretary of War Belknap, explaining their problem. He wired back, "Skin your own skunk."

* * * *

The sketch of Bannerman's store on Broadway was drawn from memory, so may not be too exact. Your editor had never heard of the place before he discovered it one day in 1948. The thing that attracted my attention was the display of the two cannon barrels on each side of the doorway. S.C.

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