

The Charger

CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

P.O. BOX 5028 • CLEVELAND, OHIO 44101

MID-SUMMER EXTRA

July, 1979

VOLUME 23 NUMBER 7

*In the
Good Old
Summertime >*

"General Doubleday, sir,
you're OUT !"

*Executive
Board
Meeting ✓*



At the Executive Board Meeting, held on June 27th, the dates for the Field Trip were debated and set; Thursday, September 20th to start out, first activities on the 21st, main event on the 22nd, and Sunday the 23rd to start home. It was also decided that the first fall meeting, on September 11th, would be held at the Hermit Club. This will not be combined with the Western Reserve CWRT as heretofore.

President Chuck Spigle has secured a top-notch speaker for this first meeting. He is an expert in his field, has spoken before numerous clubs and national CWRT affairs. We'll let you wait for the September Charger for the exciting details. Chuck has also lined up the following program speakers for the year:

October....Jim Chapman

November...A combination QUIZZ and a big sale of books, memorabilia and accouterments. Under direction of Bernie Drews and Don Heckaman

December...Ed Troxell

January....Stu Cramer (non-magical)

February...Don Heckaman

March.....Schlesinger and Schildt

April.....Memorial Day and Ladies' Night with special speaker

May.....Another non-member expert speaker

Subjects of above programs to be announced as they come up.

CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

Founded Nov. 19, 1957

President: Charles Spiegle
Vice Pres: Harrison Frost
Secretary: Tom Geshke
Treasurer: John Harkness

Executive Committee: 1979

Paul Schildt
Robert Fricke
1980

Stuart Cramer
Milton Holmes
1981

Robert Bayless
John Tormey

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Cleveland, Ohio 44101



New Roster Appeal

A complete new roster is being prepared by Secretary Tom Geshke for distribution at the September 11th meeting.

We urge all members to send or call in the following information:

1. Your correct address and phone no.
2. Profession or position. Bus.phone
3. Your wife's name
4. Year you joined the club

AUGUST FIRST is the deadline to get this in; otherwise data from the old roster will be used.

Send information to Tom Geshke at 7787 Hoertz Road, Parma, O. 44134 or call him at 216-845-1828.

Let's help Tom bring us up-to-date..
DO IT NOW!



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To Shiloh With Ed Bearss

On September 20-23 our field forces will gather at Shiloh National Military Park on the west bank of the Tennessee River, under the over-all command of John Harkness. Fortunately, indeed, we will have our old friend, the popular and knowledgeable historian, Ed Bearss, lead us over the scenes of the first great Civil War battle in the "west."

Far enough removed from the beaten path, the 3,700-acre Park is devoid of the usual tourist-trappings. Its serene surroundings, much as they were on April 6th, 1862, allow one's imagination to reconstruct this bloody encounter where the largest armies ever assembled on this continent up to that date met and fought.

A somber footnote to the Battle's history: the combined losses of the opposing blue and gray was greater than the total casualties of any one of America's previous wars; The Revolutionary, War of 1812 and the Mexican War. This Field Trip to Shiloh is a first for the Cleveland Civil War Round Table, and has been a goal that has challenged the Club for many year

Make your plans now. John would appreciate any early reservations.. you may call him at 486-4200, Extension 325, or at home; 228-3091.

Addenda: On page 106 of the July National Geographic is a beautifully written article by Sheldon Foote entitled "Echoes of Shiloh." THAT will move you to make plans to attend!

Scenes I'd Like to Have Seen



Confederate General Albert Pike, lawyer-poet, scholar-duelist, orator-soldier, led a motley army wing toward what turned out to be the Battle of Pea Ridge. It was composed of Missouri roughnecks and about 2,000 pro-Confederate Indians that he sold on siding with the South...Creeks, Seminoles, Cherokees, Chickasaws and Chocktaws, who wore feathers stuck into their hats and besides a mixture of firearms, carried their scalping knives.

General Pike, who tipped the scales at over 300, rode in a buggy, dressed in a combination of Confederate gold braid and Sioux chieftan regalia. What a sight that must have been!

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Fifth Annual Congress of Civil War Round Tables

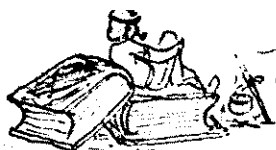
Battlefield tours of Pea Ridge and Prairie Grove will be one of the many features offered at the fifth annual Congress of Civil War Round Tables to be held October 4-6, at the Holiday Inn, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

Any member interested in attending the Congress should write to C W R T Associates, Box 7388, Little Rock, AR 72217. The cost is \$150 and enrollment is limited to 110 delegates.

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Great Lakes Civil War Show

On September 8 and 9, the Great Lakes Civil War Collectors and Historians are holding their GREAT LAKES CIVIL WAR SHOW at the Troy (Detroit) Hilton Inn, Troy, Michigan. Over 100 tables will feature C.W. and earlier military memorabilia from the collections of the Midwest's most notable collectors. No flea market or non-related items will be permitted. Open to public Sat., Sept. 8 from 9 to 4 and Sunday, 9 to 2. For reservations or table registration, etc. contact: Karl L. Rommel, 737 Cloverleaf Rd., Lansing, Michigan 48906. Items will be for display, sale or trade.



Book Review



This month we are delighted to welcome a new feature, contributed by Member FRED GILL, now our official book reviewer.

The First Frontier: The Indian Wars and America's Origins: 1607-1776
by David Horowitz. Simon and Schuster, New York, 1978

THE CONFEDERATES DIDN'T START IT

Read this book and you will be reminded that the history of America reaches nearly twice as far into the past as the bicentennial recently celebrated. That two-hundredth anniversary was of the federal aims of disunited colonies, but America really began with the first tread of English feet on the shores of Massachusetts, Virginia, the Carolinas and Georgia.

As these alien footsteps led into the untroubled forests and valleys and savannahs of the coast, two completely unlike cultures met in bewilderment and misunderstanding; and, inevitably, in fire and killing, genocide, and, indeed, slavery.

We think mostly of slavery as a practise of our Southern states in the decades before the Civil War, but the idea and institution of slavery began among the embattled colonists in, of all places, New England. In 1636 the Pequot Indians and the Massachusetts settlers had themselves a bitter and bloody little war, and as the author of this impelling book says, "of the few Pequots that survived, about two hundred were divided between the Mohegan and Narragansett tribes as vassals. Others were sent to the Bermudas to be sold at auction, while some were distributed as chattels among the victors, the first slaves of New England." Even Roger Williams, the famed religious freedom fighter (and one of my own putative forebears) requested one.

Later during Bacon's Rebellion the idea and practise of slavery had spread south. In June 1675 the Virginia Assembly granted militiamen the right to sell Indian captives, and after Bacon's defeat this extraordinary "right" was confirmed.

It was from the early Indian wars that slavery sprang in America. It was in the Northern colonies where the proud and powerful tribes, the Iroquois, Delaware, Shawnees, Ottawas, Pequots, decimated by strange European diseases, were crushed; and, out of this crushing, slavery was born. Born there and then and brought to its bloody traumatic climax nearly 200 years later.

You cannot read this heavily documented and well-written book and still think of slavery as a strictly Southern practise.

Mini-Field Trip a Good One

A group of twenty enjoyed a two-day bus excursion to interesting Civil War points throughout fifteen Ohio counties. Planned and arranged by Earl Hoover and John Tormey, the group was treated to tours through many famous homes and places too numerous to mention in detail (see last Charger).

Present were Mr. and Mrs. Tom Koehl, Bill Schlesinger, Neville Bayles, Bob and Bonnie Bayless, Mr. and Mrs. John Tormey, Earl Hoover, Bill Chamberlain, Mr. and Mrs. Rex Corfield, Don Rense, Judge and Mrs. Holmes, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Greenwood, and Alex and Alice, whose names this faulty-memored scribe can't recall. (Will add next issue.)

As with all successful field trips, the success was due to the work that went in ahead of time, and that was what made this June 16-17 trip such a good one. Thanks, Earl and John.

Stage Magicians During the Civil War

Continuing our story about the stage wizards during The War, we come to Antonio Blitz, born in Kent, England, in 1810. He took to the road at an early age and was probably the first magician to emphasize wit and humor in his presentation of tricks, which audiences found more entertaining than the usual heavy mysterious approach.

Like other British showmen (and true in this country today), he learned that he could get more work posing as a foreigner with a slight accent; thus the claim that he was from Moravia, "where he learned his skills from gypsies." (This puts one in mind of the late great Howard Thurston, who, while he did not affect an accent and was very dignified and genteel in his manner, did claim to have been instructed by Hindu priests in the Himalayas as a boy, when in fact he was born in Columbus, Ohio.)

Blitz traveled the world for many years, delighting standing-room-only audiences wherever he appeared. His reputation was so great that innumerable imitators sprang up, some even using his name. His feature trick,* catching a marked bullet fired at him was even copied by Anderson, as well as many others, a few of which didn't do it correctly and wound up dead.

"Signor Blitz," as he billed himself, toured the United States in 1854 to 1859, "packing them in" in both northern and southern states. Eventually he bought property and settled in Philadelphia. During the Civil War that city became a hospital center for Union troops, and Blitz performed over 125 shows for an estimated 65,000 men in various medical centers.

He made an impromptu appearance before President Lincoln July 3, 1863. The story goes that traveling to Washington on a train, Blitz struck up an acquaintance with a financier, a Mr. George Morgan, who was on his way to see The President on an important mission. In Washington, they learned that Lincoln was with his family at the Summer White House near the Soldier's Home in a suburb. When they arrived there, the President was giving a birthday party for some 20 little girls with young Tad Lincoln the only boy present. The outcome of the Battle of Gettysburg was still in doubt, and according to Mr. Morgan's correspondence later, Blitz entertained the children. As a finale, he produced a white dove from Lincoln's stovepipe hat, and fastened to the dove was a message, which he asked to be read. "What does it say?" cried Tad. It read, "Victory, Meade."

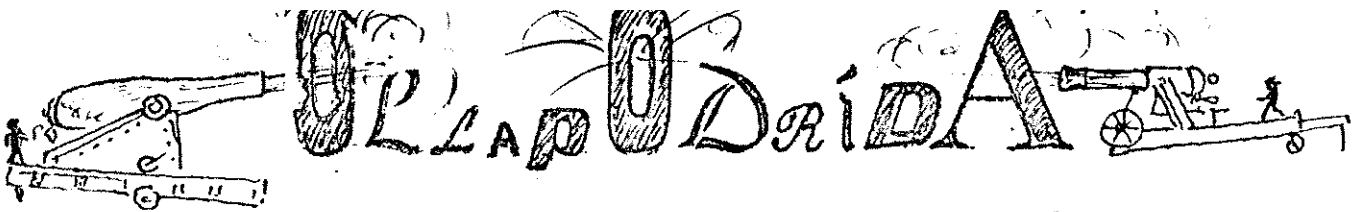


Then Lincoln looked at Blitz and said, "How many children have you made happy, Signor?" "Oh thousands, tens of thousands." "While I," remarked the President with a melancholy smile, "fear that I have made thousands and tens of thousands unhappy. But it is for each of us to do his duty in this world; and I am trying to do mine."

While the above conversation is fairly well-authenticated, magic historians are divided in their opinions as to whether this was the real Signor Blitz or one of his imitators. The latter view is based upon the fact that Blitz's popular biography, "Fifty Years in the Magic Circle," makes no mention of the incident.

(To be continued.)

* Other features of Blitz's show were his 500 trained canaries, and a hilarious (in those days) plate-spinning, where he kept a dozen plates spinning on a table, running back and forth to renew the spin on a wobbling plate about to fall down.



The rate of fire of Civil War artillery depended largely on the type of weapon and carriage. Field guns could be discharged, with careful aim, twice a minute and, when pressed, a good crew firing canister could double that rate. Siege cannon fired twelve rounds an hour - which allowed sufficient time for the tube to cool between shots - but were capable of twenty when necessary.

Warren Ripley, Artillery and Ammunition of the Civil War

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More different kinds of small arms were used during the Civil War than in any other conflict in history. The Union Army in 1863 recognized as official 79 different models of rifles and muskets, 23 different models of carbines and musketoons, and 19 models of pistols and revolvers. The Confederacy recognized almost as many varieties of guns, many of them the same as used by the North, but many different.

Harold Peterson, Notes on Ordnance of the American Civil War 1861-65

* * * * *

Braxton Bragg, of all people, wound up as Senior Supreme Commander of the Confederate Armed Forces. It happened this way: On May 2, 1865, Jefferson Davis, trying to reach the Trans-Mississippi after the abandonment of Richmond and Danville, called his last "Council of War." Present were most of his cabinet and the remaining high-ranking officers. The meeting took place at the home of Major Bruit, at Abbeville, South Carolina. General Bragg was the Senior Officer present, after the surrender of Lee, Johnson, Beauregard and Cooper. Hood and Kirby Smith were still at large, but they were 6th and 7th in rank under Bragg, and their armies were fast disappearing.

Info from Rowland Dunbar's Jefferson Davis, Constitutionalist

Ed. Note: At last Bragg had a command he was capable of handling.

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Critic: It strikes me as being an impressive statue, but isn't that a rather odd posture for the general to assume?"

Sculptor: "It isn't my fault. I had the job half done when the committee decided it couldn't afford a horse for the general."

* * From St. Louis CWRT Bushwacker

Further Footnotes on Army Balloons

One Richmond newspaper declared that Professor Lowe, according to the rules of war, deserved death because he was a spy in civilian clothes. It made no difference that he spied from the air.

During the second Seminole War (1837) for six years, general after general was sent to Florida to subdue these Indians but failed. The government wanted to ship them to Oklahoma to a reservation. At one stage a U.S. Colonel John H. Sherburne acquired a complete balloon ascension set for \$600 and proposed to use it at night to locate the Seminole campfires in the swampland. General W. K. Armistead, commanding in Florida, refused to have any part of taking to the air against his foes. Despite Sherburne's continued efforts, the Florida War closed - some four years after Osceola's death - with no army balloons having taken off.

Dr. Frank Cunningham, "The Union Air Force," in Civil War Ordnance I

Ed. Note: Several hundred starving Seminoles finally came in and surrendered and were shipped off to Oklahoma. Those remaining continued the war, which today consists of over-charging tourists for trinkets. The second generation in the west fought for Albert Pike and the Confederacy.



The Delilah of Spring Hill



His fellow officers called him "Buck," and he was a typical beau sabreur of the Confederate Army. Dark-skinned, with mustache and little Imperial, a dashing man of action, Confederate Earl Van Dorn had been appointed to West Point by his great uncle Andrew Jackson. He distinguished himself in the Mexican War and had a fairly good record in the higher echelons of command in this one. A Mississippian, he was only two inches taller than Napoleon, good looking, and attractive to the ladies. Ever since fancy uniforms were invented, the gold-encrusted military have used this lure, and "Buck" was no exception.

As Commander of Cavalry of Bragg's left wing, Van Dorn made his headquarters at the home of a Major Martin Cheairs, at Spring Hill, Tennessee, April and May, 1863. There he indulged in a bit of hanky panky with a local belle, the wife of a Dr. Peters, who didn't take kindly to the affair once he got wind of it. On May 7th, the doctor went to the Cheairs home and shot the general dead.

Some time later friends of the cuckold tried to prove that it had been a "political" murder, but the local authorities accepted the doc's explanation that "the sanctity of his home had been violated," and no arrest or arraignment was ever made.

Now we skip to November, 1864, but stay in the same house at Spring Hill, and find the very same lady, the charming Mrs. Peters, giving a party for another group of dashing Confederate officers. The Commander of the Army of Tennessee Hood had chased a Union corps that was trying to reach Franklin, to join the rest of the Northern forces under Gen. "Rock of Chickamauga" Thomas.

John Bell Hood was a genuine hero, and he was finally in a perfect position to annihilate his opponent U.S. General Schofield, who had to pass along Hood's parallel line to escape. Hood made his dispositions and then went to Mrs. Peter's party. During the night the Union army marched past the Confederate campfires unmolested, one of the greatest lost Confederate opportunities of the war, according to Stanley Horn, author of Army of Tennessee.

Many have been the excuses and accusations since then, but the local scuttlebutt at the time and down through the years was that the Confederate high command was more concerned that night with wine, women and song than carrying out their duties.

Two Confederate calamities: both in the same house and involving the same fair lady. The consequences of Hood's actions were, of course, more serious, because they resulted in the total defeat of his army at Franklin and Nashville. But it was just as total for "Buck."

Sad Affair at Churubusco



As a part of General Santa Anna's army during the Mexican War, "The Legion of Strangers" was composed of foreigners (non-Mexican), and a part of that Legion was a battalion made up of about 100 American deserters. This latter was called "The San Patricio Battalion," because about a third of them were Irishmen.

When General Winfield Scott pushed his way toward Mexico City, his army met unexpected and very stiff opposition at the battles of Conteras and Churubusco. During the latter battle, the San Patricio battalion retreated into a monastery and repulsed charge after charge; 1,056 Yankees fell dead or wounded from the tough resistance of the former

(continued at bottom of next page)

Another Holly Springs....



BOOK SALE SET FOR NOVEMBER

This year our annual book sale will be expanded to include all books, manuals and other printed material on military subjects of all wars instead of limiting them to the Civil War. In addition we are going to offer military artifacts, such as old uniforms, swords, knives, bayonets, leather and web accouterments, in fact anything of military interest. So dig into your attics and closets.

Our cochairmen, realizing that hauling books and artifacts can be a physical burden, has provided a pick-up-at-your home service. Simply call either:

Bernie Drews...	Office	491-6767
	Home	442-4611
Don Heckaman...	Office	522-1350
	Home	382-0915
	or	381-5996

Items should be in hands of committee by October 9th meeting, with PRICE. If desired, above will aid in pricing.

Bernie would like some volunteers to serve on the panels for his QUIZZ show at the same November 13th meeting. Call him.

Earl Van Dorn's greatest military feat (in this writer's humble opinion)- was his brilliant raid in December, 1862, when he swept around Grant's rear and dashed down on Holly Springs (Mississippi, that is - not to be confused with the Holly Springs, Tenn., in another story in this issue) (And how is THAT for a coincidence?)

Grant had established his base there with an immense store of supplies as he led an expedition towards Vicksburg. General Van Dorn captured the town, the garrison, its commander, Mrs. Grant and several millions of dollars worth of food, clothing and every other kind of military materiel.

For want of means to cart it all away, he burned the loot, courteously escorted the embarrassed future first lady of the land to the Union lines, and paroled the soldiers. The exploit stopped Grant cold, and he had to turn his army around and march back to avoid starving.

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American soldiers. Although faced by overwhelming numbers, the battalion three times prevented Mexicans with them from raising the white flag.

Finally they surrendered, and ninety of the deserters were captured and later court-martialed. All but 14 were hanged in their Mexican uniform and those whose death sentences were commuted received 50 lashes with a rawhide whip and branded on the cheek with a "D."

The causes for desertions, many brought out in the Court-Martial trials are interesting, if not shocking. There is little doubt that the moral in old "Fuss'n Feather's" Army was very bad. The barbarous treatment of enlisted men by ignorant officers and non-coms is unbelievable. Striking them on the slightest provocation; tying them up with wrists behind them as far as the arms would reach and with gags in their mouths was common punishment for trivial offenses. The number of officers killed at the monastery was ascribed to the deserters as a matter of revenge for past...
for past...
for past...

