



THE CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

P. O. BOX 5028, CLEVELAND, OHIO 44101

MARCH, 1977

Vol. 20 No. 7

----- 170th Meeting -----

Date: Tuesday, March 8th
Speaker: Edward P. Troxell
Subject: Roger Brooke Taney & the Dred Scott Decision
Place: The Hermit Club, Dodge Court
Reliminaries: 6:00 P.M. Dinner: 7:00 P.M.

Did our honkey Founding Fathers agree, as Taney said in his decision, that blacks were "beings of an inferior order... unfit to associate with the white race either in social or political relations...(with) no rights the white man was bound to respect, and...might justly and lawfully be reduced to slavery"? Or was the majority opinion, as many damyankees said, "entitled to as much moral weight as would be the judgment of a majority of those congregated in any Washington bar-room"?

The Dred Scott decision was a firestorm like the "Saturday night massacre", and helped precipitate the War. This fascinating subject will be discussed by fellow member Edward Troxwell. Born in Utah, he received his A.B. at the College of Idaho, and is a graduate of the University of Michigan Law School. From 1946 to 1953, Troxell was Principal Assistant United States Attorney for the District of Columbia.

Troxell joined the Cleveland law firm of Jones, Day, Cockley and Reavis as a trial lawyer in 1961. He retired from that partnership in 1976.

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REMEMBER - if you cannot be present for dinner, you and your guests are always welcome for the speech itself. The program begins promptly at 8 P.M.

***** INCIDENTAL INTELLIGENCE *****

APRIL MEETING - The Round Table's April meeting will be held at our favorite pasta palace, Roman Gardens. Please bring your own alka-seltzer. Full details will be in the next Newsletter. In May we will return to The Hermit Club.

NEW MEMBER - We welcome to the Round Table Mr. Jeffery D. Gary. Jeff is interested in all phases of the Civil War. No specialist he! Jeff will be an extra valuable addition to our membership as he is a Counselor at the Cleveland Center on Alcoholism.

SELL OR SWAP - Member Bill Bates has "about a dozen sets of W. Britan lead soldiers (30 years old) that I would part with to the right buyer or trader." If interested, call Bill at 237-4889 or 579-6833.

DRINK TICKETS - Drink tickets for use after the meetings may be purchased before dinner. These can then be used at the Hermit Club's main bar later in the evening. Incidentally, one drink ticket buys two beers. Tickets must be used during the evening for which they were purchased; if you have any left you may get a refund that evening only by turning them in at the Club's office. Also, the Hermit Club has reciprocity billing with other Cleveland social clubs.

FIELD TRIP COMMITTEE NAMED - Bill Bates has agreed to be chairman of the committee for our next field trip. He will be assisted by John Harkness and Neville Bayless. Tentative plans are that the trip in the fall will be to the Shenandoah Valley.

"SHERLOCK HOLMES" RATES THE GENERALS

The late Dr. Otto Eisenschiml gained the sobriquet "the Sherlock Holmes" of the Civil War because of some of his outre theories regarding that conflict. He is best remembered for his books, The Strange Case of FitzJohn Porter and Why Was Lincoln Murdered? An example of his unusual views is his rating of the top brass.

Using results which the generals achieved in relation to the forces at their command and considering the opposition with which they were confronted, Dr. Eisenschiml gave this as his own lineup:

Four stars:	Union, none; Confederate, Nathan B. Forrest.
Three stars:	Union, none; Confederate, Stonewall Jackson.
Two stars:	Union, George H. Thomas and FitzJohn Porter; Confederate, James Longstreet and Joseph E. Johnston.
One star:	Union, George B. McClellan and Ulysses S. Grant; Confederate, Robert E. Lee and Pierre Beauregard.
Minus one star:	Union, Ambrose Burnside and Henry W. Halleck; Confederate, Braxton Bragg.

THE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE OF CLEVELAND, OHIO

FOUNDED FEBRUARY 19, 1957

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NEWSLETTER

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE: Neville Bayless, Ray Swanson
P. O. Box 5028, Cleveland, OH
44101

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Forrest, his mind unsullied by education, with a superior native intelligence, did more with the forces at his command than any other general, Confederate or Union, Dr. Eisenschiml said. Grant may have been a great general, but we have no way of knowing, he said, because except at Belmont and on the first day at Shiloh he never had to face the enemy on even terms. Lee's great fault he cited as the fact that he never knew when to stop fighting.

DID YOU KNOW?

That a Cuyahoga County "Yankee" served as the Adjutant of the Second Louisiana Brigade, C.S.A. (Hays' Brigade). He was Captain Henry E. Handerson, born and reared in Orange Township. In later years he became a prominent Cleveland physician; was President of the Cleveland Academy of Medicine. Handerson was wounded at Chancellorsville, was captured at the Wilderness, and was a prisoner at Fort Delaware, Morris Island, and Fort Pulaski. He was one of the "Immortal Six Hundred." Handerson is buried in Cleveland's Woodland Cemetery.

That there was a Union fort on Cedar Point, erected to control the harbor approach to Johnson's Island.

The Major-General James Birdseye McPherson, Commander of the Army of the Tennessee, is buried at Clyde, Ohio, his hometown. The monument can be seen from Route 20, east of the city.

That the site of the capture of John Hunt Morgan is marked by a large boulder just off Route 30 between Lisbon and East Liverpool. The inscription on the boulder reminds us that it marks the most northerly point reached by any organized Confederate troops.

That William Quantrill was born in Ohio. He was a less honorable contribution by the Buckeye State to the Southern cause than five General Officers of the Confederacy who were born in Ohio.

THE FIRST REVISITED - FT. SUMTER

By fellow member Stuart Cramer

Last March I spent a delightful week in Charleston, South Carolina, taking in the sights of this most historic of all American cities. They sing of Paris in the Springtime - but give me Charleston - the last week of March when its flowers and finery are at their best. It certainly lives up to its billing as "The City of Charm". Truly a city of firsts! Firsts? Behold:

The first decisive victory in the American Revolution was gained at Charleston's Fort Moultrie on June 22, 1776, when a strong British naval and land force was repulsed by 450 American patriots under Colonel William Moultrie. And before that, the first popular election in America, in 1770...the first proscenium arch in the western hemisphere (big deal) but, the first performance of a stage play before that in 1703. Still a big deal, eh? Well, how about the first railway mail service (better than today's), or the first apartment house in 1800, and the first department store; first golf course; first Chamber of Commerce; first customs house; first Masonic lodge; first flying of an independent flag, and even the first Christmas tree, raised by Hessian officers in 1781, and so on and on, a fabulous array.

But paramount for we Round Tablers, it was that first shot of the War Between the States in 1861, when the Union steamer, "Star of the West" was fired upon when trying to supply the besieged garrison at Fort Sumter. Before we get into that, let's complete the record; Charleston's Harbour was where the first submarine of all time sank a man-of-war, in 1864. The Confederate sub "Hunley" sank the U.S.S. "Housatanic" by exploding a torpedo under her. Today, along the same sea lanes, the two-story nuclear Polaris submarines move out into the Atlantic from the great Charleston Naval Complex, where clusters of these awesome, black whalelike monsters make their home - another first.

From wherever you look out into the bay, there she sits, a squat little dot of an island, right smack in the center of the Harbour...Fort Sumter. If you stand at White Point, where the Ashley and Cooper rivers (named for Ashley Cooper) merge to form the harbour (and as the natives say, "form the Atlantic Ocean"), you can see how the old fort sat like a fish in a barrel, surrounded by Confederate guns at Ft. Moultrie, Ft. Johnson, Cummings Point, Mount Pleasant, Castle Pinkney and a Confederate floating battery off Sullivan's Island.

You remember the story. For weeks the new President, Lincoln, had been trying to jockey, test out loyalties and sift through misinformation trying to stave off hostilities, while Secretary of State Seward worked at cross-purposes, and other politicians tried to get into the act. Meantime, Jefferson Davis, who wanted to get matters under way, outmaneuvered them, until on April 12, after things had come to a stalemate, the first shot boomed out from Ft. Johnson and the War was on. That shot, exploding neatly 100 feet over the fort was the signal.

All hell broke loose from all sides, and finally the fort started to respond, though thoroughly undermanned and ill equipped. For a couple of days Major Anderson and his U. S. garrison took a terrific pasting, and the pyrotechnics proved a great spectacle for the townsfolk, who crowded the upper stories and rooftops of the same mansions that line the waterfront today. One woman even sat on a hot chimney that burned her, but, not bad enough to be considered a casualty.

As a matter of fact, no one, even in the garrison, was badly injured, and even the fort, in spite of all the shot and shell expended, was not damaged enough to impair its defensive capacity. And the closest the Confederates came to suffering any casualties was when Captain Doubleday (later Major General and inventor of baseball) aimed a shot that struck the Moultrie House, a summer resort near Ft. Moultrie, because, as he said to an aide, "he had received poor service there." Well, anyway, on the 14th of April, Anderson surrendered since he had run out of food and ammunition, many of the rooms were on fire, and they'd used up all his spare socks for powder bags. But the first man of the war was killed when one of the big guns blew up while firing what had been intended as a 100 gun salute before lowering the flag.

Today, when you take the little steamer "Gen'l Beauregard" out to visit the fort, you can get a pretty good idea of what happened to it during the rest of the war. Its three stories were reduced to a mass of rubble. In three major attempts to take the island in 1863 and 1864, the Union forces failed to dislodge the grey defenders, even though the fort's guns had been silenced. It was not until February 1865, with the approach of Sherman's army that the Confederates had to evacuate the ruins of the city and give up Ft. Sumter.

The National Park Service has restored a portion of the fort, and one can wander in and out of the embrasures and gun ports, examining the big cannon, the columbiads and mortars. Space does not permit me to tell you of the many other places and sites to visit in this fascinating city. One must mention "The Citadel", the state military school, of the caliber of Virginia Military Institute (cadets from the Citadel were the ones who fired at the "Star of the West"); of the restored Ft. Moultrie; the new Naval History museum, featuring the U. S. Carrier "Yorktown"; the old Market, and the many fine eating places; the beautiful public gardens and the Charleston Museum, which natch, was the first one in America.

When we were finally home, and sprawled out in our livingroom, my wife said, "Is it possible that this very morning we were wandering around under those magnificent moss-covered live oaks at 'Tara'?" I allowed as yes, we did, though the locale of "Gone With the Wind" was now known as Boone's plantation. But the whole adventure had a dreamlike quality that added up to another "first" for us.

WASHINGTON ON THE EVE OF THE CIVIL WAR

By member Ray Swanson

In 1860 the nation's capital was still a leisurely place with a small town atmosphere. There were 3200 slaves in the city which had long been a slave trading center where Negroes were sold to be shipped farther south. More than a third of the 66 Senators and 237 members of the House of Representatives were pro-slavery men.

By December 1860 South Carolina had passed an ordinance of secession. The only regular troops near the capital were three or four hundred marines and a hundred enlisted ordnance men at the Washington Arsenal. Several small armed volunteer organizations had sprung up but the loyalty of many of the members was suspect so that they could not be counted on in a crisis. The regular armed forces had been purposely scattered by the pro-Southern Secretary of War Floyd to far distant posts in the West and Southwest.

President Buchanan was alarmed by the continued concessions made to the South and consulted with Lieutenant General Winfield Scott on the situation. It was decided to appoint Colonel Charles P. Stone, a West Point graduate as Inspector-General of the District of Columbia and he reported

directly to the War Department. This was done on January 2, 1861. Investigation started immediately of several volunteer organizations as to the loyalty of the members and their state of preparedness.

A check on the National Rifle Company led by a Captain Schaffer showed it to be fully manned. The Company was completely equipped with rifles, each man having two hundred rounds of ball cartridges, also it had two howitzers and a supply of revolvers and sabers all of which had been drawn from the United States Arsenal. Captain Schaffer had further been nominated by Secretary Floyd to the President for the commission of major in the District of Columbia militia.

Colonel Stone immediately procured from the new Secretary of War Holt two orders: one, an order to the Chief of Ordnance to issue no arms to any militia or volunteers in the District unless the requisition should be countersigned by the Inspector-General; the other, an order that all commissions issued to officers in the District of Columbia should be sent to the Inspector-General for delivery.

The National Rifle Company was carefully watched; it was found that it received constant accessions of avowed secessionists and the recruits were drilled every night. A detective was placed in the Company and he reported that the men had been ordered to take home their rifles and ammunition so that they could be assembled for action on short notice.

Another volunteer force called the National Volunteers was organized by a Dr. B---, of pro-Southern sympathies, and again a detective was placed in their midst. Plans had been made by this group to seize the National Capital at the proper moment. Their members had voted for Kentucky gray jeans for their uniforms with Maryland insignia buttons.

A cautious member suggested that in order to get arms, the requisition had to be signed by Colonel Stone; it was feared that he might refuse the order if he saw the Maryland button insignia instead of the United States button. However, the doctor stated that if necessary, the State of Virginia would furnish the necessary arms. All this was reported the next morning to Colonel Stone. Consequently, when the good Dr. B--- presented the muster roll as verification for the need for arms to Colonel Stone, he was coolly informed that the plot was known. Dr. B--- immediately fled to the South leaving behind his home and considerable property. As a result, the National Volunteer Organization was broken up without further trouble.

Soon afterward, Captain Schaffer came to Colonel Stone and tried to obtain arms and to get his commission as a major. He was refused on both counts as he had refused to take the oath of loyalty to the Government. Captain Schaffer and the secessionist members left the National Rifle Company. It was gradually turned into a thoroughly loyal and effective company in the service of the Government. Also, a battery arrived from West Point and thirty companies of infantry and riflemen were formed from loyal men in the District of Columbia. All this changed the face of things in the National Capital by March 4, 1861.

From various cities, warnings had come of plots to prevent the inauguration of Lincoln. On the morning of the inauguration, President Buchanan and Lincoln rode in the same carriage to the Capitol. A company of West Point sappers and miners marched in front. On either side of the carriage rode a double file of District of Columbia cavalry while a company of infantry followed it. Riflemen in squads had been placed on the roofs of certain commanding houses along Pennsylvania Avenue. On arrival at the Capitol, the troops were disposed so as to closely guard all side streets and entrances. A thorough search was made under the reviewing stand as a rumor had been received that it would be blown up. Riflemen were placed in each window of the wings of the Capitol Building. After the inaugural ceremony, the President and ex-President were escorted in the same order to the White House.