



# The Charger

## CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

P.O. BOX 5028 • CLEVELAND, OHIO 44101

MARCH, 1979

187th Meeting

VOLUME 23 No. 4

DATE: Tuesday, March 13th

SPEAKER: Rev. Dwight Brown

SUBJECT: "Theodore Parker Returns"

PLACE: The Hermit Club, Dodge Court, Cleveland, Ohio

Preliminaries: 6:00 P.M.

Dinner: 7:00 P.M.

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Our speaker this month is the minister of the First Unitarian Church of Cleveland, Shaker Heights. He is a native Ohioan, from Zanesville. The subject of his talk, Theodore Parker, of Boston, was known as "The Great American Preacher," one of the leading intellectuals, moral philosophers and orators of his day. He openly defied the Fugitive Slave Act, and his vigilante committee smuggled run-away slaves into Canada, often harboring them in their own homes. Later, Parker became a staunch supporter of John Brown, and was one of the "Secret Six" cultural aristocrats of New England whose limited aid enabled Brown to strike his blow at Harper's Ferry. Because he was in Europe at the time of John Brown's attempted slave insurrection, there is some doubt as to Theodore Parker's full knowledge of Brown's violent plans and intentions.

The Impending Crisis by David Potter

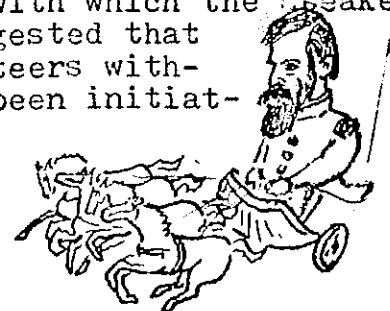
## Bates on Wallace

President Bill Bates presented a very interesting talk on General Lew Wallace at the February meeting. He drew a sympathetic picture of Wallace, not only as an individual, but as one of a class - the political volunteer soldier. He emphasized the Hoosier's good qualities: his natural leadership, his aggressiveness, his total devotion to his state of Indiana and to the Union.

Bill pointed out that Lew Wallace's military career suffered for many reasons: his experience in the Mexican War was limited; his promotions came too rapidly (Regimental to Division Command in six months); he was not a West Point graduate, plus his Democratic politics. He could not have made more powerful enemies than Grant, Stanton and Halleck!

Wallace's determination to be a part of the war effort led him to a grim struggle for two years to regain command after he had been relieved because of his less-than-poor performance at Shiloh, a phase with which the speaker did not deal, neither to justify nor condemn. Bill suggested that Wallace was one of that extraordinary number of volunteers without which the war to defend the Union could not have been initiated or sustained.

To quote the speaker: History may have judged this group too harshly.



# The Cleveland Civil War Round Table

*Founded Nov. 19, 1957*

President: Bill Bates  
Vice Pres.: Chuck Spiegle  
Secretary: Tom Geshke  
Treasurer: John Harkness

Executive Committee: 1979  
Paul Schilte  
Robert Fricke  
1980  
Milton Holmes  
Stuart Cramer

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## Editor's Note:

You will notice in this issue, much to my delight, several contributions from our members. Why not pick a subject, do a bit of researching and write an article yourself? Here are a few suggestions: General Turchin... born in Russia, Jan. 30, 1822, in the province of Don; Ivan Vasilovitch Turchinoff was graduated from the Imperial Military School at St. Petersburg in 1841. He became a Colonel, served on the Russian General Staff and fought with distinction in the Crimean War. He had a colorful career as a general in the Union army.... Lafayette C. Baker, head of the Union Secret Service - hero or scoundrel? Ambrose Burnside's victories before his fateful failure at Fredericksburg. The field is endless. GIVE you experts!

Erratum: Last month's issue was designated Vol. 24, No. 3. Should have been Vol. 23, No. 3.

## How I Became Interested

By Robert D. Thum

This is a condensed version of member Bob Thum's column (a regular feature in the Bennington, Vt. Banner which is entitled "Thumprints"). It appeared on November 29th, 1978, and was inspired by a request for a contribution to this column in your Charger:

What makes a history buff? Is it inheritance, an inspirational teacher, or some quirk of chance? I do not know how my father got inspired, but as a young lad he won a valuable edition of the famous Battles and Leaders of the Civil War. He earned it in 1894 as a premium for selling subscriptions to the Rocky Mountain News of Denver, Co.

He became a serious student of the War Between the States, and when our family acquired its first automobile in the early 20's my father and I were off to the battlefields. We arrived at Gettysburg in the summer of 1923, my father prepared with a complete advance study of the three-day battle and a map that had been used there. I was a youngster of six and was armed with a popgun with cork and string attached. As we approached the center of town, guides leaped onto the running boards hawking their tours and claiming to be veterans of the great battle of 1863. My father scorned their advances and bade them begone.

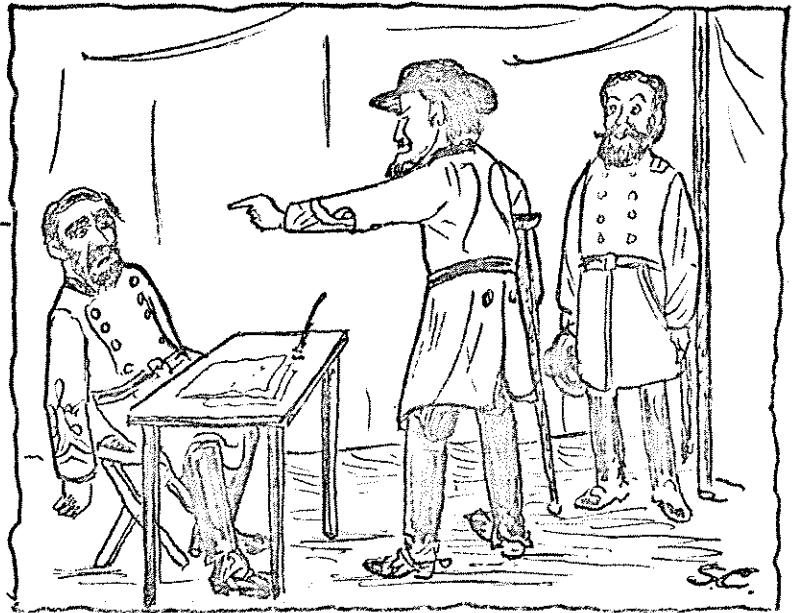
Up Culp's Hill, across the Wheatfield and Plum Run, up Little Round Top, sniping from the Devil's Den and finally the grand charge of Pickett culminating at the little clump of trees - the high water mark of the Confederacy.

It was a magnificent experience for a small boy, and we followed it with trips to Antietam, Bull Run and the Valley campaigns of the incomparable Stonewall Jackson.

On later trips we visited the battlefields of the Wilderness, Spottsylvania Court House, Cold Harbor, Fredericksburg, Chattanooga, Chickamauga, Lookout Mountain, Atlanta. By the time I was of college age I had visited them all save Shiloh.

(Continued on the next page)

On many occasions General Bragg antagonized Forrest and ignored his suggestions, irking him no end; but when the order came telling Forrest to turn over his command to General Wheeler (whom Old Bedford detested) without any explanation, it was taken as a personal affront.



Nathan Forrest, in the company of his surgeon, Dr. J. B. Cowan, strode into the Commanding General's tent on Missionary Ridge and gave his superior a tongue-lashing. Dr. Cowan wrote out Forrest's tirade after the war and sent it to both Wyeth and Mathes, whose biographies of the great cavalryman were published at the turn of the century. Dr. Cowan used rather formal language in his portrayal of what was said. I believe it was more like this - just substituting words that were more typical of Forrest's form of speaking. Pointing a bony left forefinger at Braxton Bragg, who retreated behind a small field desk, he said:

"You robbed me of my command in Kintucky...men I equipped from our enemies..you druv me inta West Tennessee, winter of 1862, with a second brigade I'd raised, without proper arms 'er ammunition, and agin I equipped by captures...and now this brigade, well-equipped with no thanks to you 'er the gov'mint you take from me agin. I've stood yer meanness as long's I intend ta. Yer a goddam scoundrel, and if you were any part of a man I'd slap yer jaws. Don't ever issue me no more orders, 'cause I won't obey 'em. And if you ever cross me agin, 'er interfere with me, you'll do so at the peril of yo mis'able life."

#### How I Became Interested - continued

I remember a good friend of mine who took a Boy Scout troop to Gettysburg and camped at the base of Culp's Hill near Spangler's Spring. The summer night was balmy, and when the boys were finally asleep in their tents, he stood alone in the night and had the feeling that he was in the midst of thousands. He could almost hear the roar of musketry with the acrid smell of black powder smoke, the hoarse cries of the fighters, the moans of the wounded.

There he was standing beneath the stars on hallowed ground. He related this experience to me in hushed and awed tones. He was literally amazed at the emotional impact of that historic site.

A year ago one of my sons and I journeyed to Hubbardton to witness the re-enactment of the Revolutionary War battle there--the only battle to occur on Vermont soil. It was a gorgeous summer night, and we slept out under the stars. I recall a Scots bagpiper in tartan plaid and kilt silhouetted against the setting sun on the Hubbardton battlefield hill with his wailing pipes. The battle was fought at dawn, and the warning shots and bugles wakened the sleeping camps as the first morning light appeared. The smell of wood fires and colonial cooking was in the air as soldiers of both sides formed ranks to take up their battle positions. It was an experience that only a real history buff can savour.

This is the way history should be taught. History is not names and dates. It is a village green in Lexington, a church in Boston, a meandering brook in Virginia, a country road in Pennsylvania.

# 1979 Field Trip?

In a letter from Vice-President Charlie Spiegle, he has this to say about our next field trip, as yet up in the air:

The advantages of going to Shiloh are: 1. Ed Bearrs could possibly be obtained as the guide, 2. Its close proximity to Memphis makes it easy for those who wish to fly and, 3. It is a place where the club hasn't been before. But it is a long drive.

Your idea of going to Ft. Monroe, Hampton Roads and Annapolis is very good. Personally I have never been there and would find it very interesting. The big advantage is proximity. A disadvantage might be guidance.

There are four basic problems in arranging any field trip. The first and most important is guidance. The second problem is lodging. In any large metropolitan area this can be easy. On the Ticonderoga field trip this became a little tougher because the only place available wasn't the greatest in the world. Third problem is food. This can be very difficult because we are often on the move and unless the area is scouted you can sometimes end up with poor food and/or service. The leader must simply do the best he can. The fourth problem is getting the members to confirm their reservations early. We must be a little more considerate in making our reservations. This makes life a lot easier for the organizers.

Although we haven't employed the following technique often, it is a good one when done properly. A committee should be set up with one person in charge of securing guidance, another in charge of food, and a third to take care of lodging. The chairman would supervise the operation and coordinate the overall effort. I have found that a personal trip to the area is best, but this cannot always be done.

The most important thing is to do your best. My big failing is that I have tried to please everybody and this is impossible. Little things quite often go wrong but they must not upset you.

To me, the high point of the year for the club is the field trip. I encourage more members to participate as committee members and would like to see continued good attendance on the trips.

(Ed. Note: Bravo. Now is the time to step forward and volunteer as leader or committeeman - or suggest some other destination. Those of us who always try to make the trip know how rewarding and much fun they are.)

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Footnote to the John Wilkes Booth story in last month's Charger.



"Still on display at carnivals (1940) is the mummified body of a man who committed suicide in 1903 at Enid, Territory of Oklahoma, known as David E. George; he was one of forty persons who "confessed" shortly before death that they were Booth. The sensation of the remarkably embalmed body results from the assiduousness of a Memphis lawyer, Bates, who obtained it after it had remained unclaimed for several years and identified it as that of John St. Helen who, years before, believing he was about to die, confessed his "identity" to Bates.

According to Franklin J. Foster of the University of Alabama, there are in existence about 200 pistols of which each owner believes he has the one that killed Abraham Lincoln.

Curtis D. MacDougall  
Hoaxes

# A Confederate From Cleveland

By Member Fred Gill

While our famed Soldiers and Sailors Monument on Public Square carries in its gloomy and woeful crypt the names of Clevelanders who fought in our War, one notable name is missing. Missing because the man was a member of the 9th Louisiana, C.S.A.

This Confederate, though born, died and buried in Cleveland and of prominence here after the war, this member of the well-remembered Louisiana "Tigers" was Henry Ebenezer Handerson. Doctors will recognize the name now commemorated in the Handerson Medical History Society and the Handerson Book Stacks in the Allen Memorial Medical Library, but many will be astonished to discover Handerson rose from private to captain in the Confederate army at the war's end. He was in the Valley Campaign, at Malvern Hill and Fredericksburg, wounded at Chancellorsville and Gettysburg and captured in the Wilderness. He spent the rest of the war in several prisons and took his oath of allegiance to the Union at Ft. Delaware, unlike many of his fellow Rebs, only after he learned Jefferson Davis had been captured and the cause was truly lost.

Returning north he got a medical education and practised in New York before returning to Cleveland and becoming a world authority on medical history.

The whole story of our very own Confederate is told in Yankee in Gray published in 1962 by Western Reserve University Press. This book, a real gem, was brought to light by the sharp and discerning eye of Miss Laura Goretta, CWRU archivist. There is one copy remaining in the University library and if you can lay your hands on it, read it.



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## LEE and ESP?

Written records of dialogues and quotations between famous historic characters are always, in my mind, somewhat suspect. They were either written long after the fact, where memories might be faulty, or downright imaginative. Much depends upon their author. General John B. Gordon, because of his character and record, I consider of unimpeachable integrity. He wrote of a conversation with General Lee as they rode their horses over a field covered with the dead on the second day in the Wilderness (May 6, 1864).

"He ordered me to move that night to Spottsylvania Courthouse. I asked if scouts had not reported that General Grant had suffered heavy losses and was preparing to retreat. Lee's laconic answer revealed his appreciation of the character and ability of his antagonist. "Yes," he replied, "my scouts have brought me such reports; but General Grant will not retreat, sir; he will move to Spottsylvania Courthouse." I asked if he had information to that effect. "No," he replied, "but General Grant ought to move to Spottsylvania. That is his best maneuver and he will do what is best." General Lee then added, "I am so sure of it that I have had a short road cut to that point, and you will move by that route."

"This was Lee's prophecy. Its notable fulfillment was the arrival of Grant's troops at Spottsylvania almost simultaneously with the head of the Confederate column and the beginning of that great battle."

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Reminiscences of The Civil  
War - John B. Gordon



Several years ago this writer was riding in a Philadelphia taxicab and noticed on the driver's license that his name was Spangler. Just for the fun of it I asked him if he was originally from Gettysburg. He looked around at me in surprise and said, "Hell yes, I was raised on the Spangler farm. Are you one of them Civil War buffers?" I allowed as much and asked him about the spring. He informed me that as a kid he had roamed the area, finding many relics, and recounted the story that the Spangler Spring had been used many times by both sides during the battle. He told me about the troops of Steuart's Brigade capturing a Union patrol approaching the spring after dark and permitting the prisoners to fill their canteens.

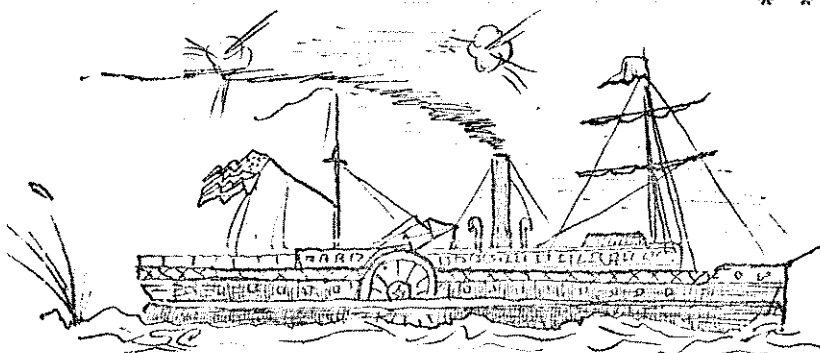
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Our Civil War is so filled with strange coincidences. Wesley Culp, for instance, was the grandson of the man for whom Culp's Hill at Gettysburg was named. On the night of July 1st, 1863, young Culp, a member of Co. B, 2nd Virginia Infantry, heard that his mother was seriously ill and was anxious to see him. He slipped away in the night and made his way home to a tender reunion. The next morning he was killed on the slope of Culp's Hill.

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On January 9th, 1861, "The Star of the West," a Vanderbilt-owned sidewheeler, schooner-rigged merchant ship with a cargo of hidden Union soldiers was fired upon by Confederate batteries as she attempted to relieve Fort Sumter. This was the first overt act of war, and the ship hastily retreated into ignominy. Chartered by the U.S. for use as a troop transport at \$1,000 per day, she was captured at Indianola, Texas, by Colonel Earl Van Dorn, was used by the Confederacy and eventually scuttled by them in the Tallahatchie River as a blockade during the Vicksburg campaign.

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STAR OF THE WEST HIGHBALLING OUT OF CHARLESTON HARBOR

It could pay to attend our cocktail hours...General Winfield Scott Hancock, "Hancock the Superb," had a twin brother. After a notable career the General died at the age of 61. The identical twin, Hilary Baker Hancock, died a drunkard - at the age of 84.

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The following roster of young officers who participated in the assault on Chapultepec in the Mexican War 18 years before the Civil War, included:

Joseph Hooker (Capt.), Joseph E. Johnson (Capt.), Andrew Porter (Capt.); and Lieutenants U.S. Grant, John Sedgewick, George McClellan, Thomas J. Jackson, and Barnard E. Bee. Wounded were: Capt. Robert E. Lee, and John Magruder; Lieutenants Beauregard, Longstreet, Jesse Reno, and Lewis Armistead. Lt. George Pickett raised the stars and stripes over the Mexican citadel.

\* \* \* \* \*

General Couch when asked whether Hooker was drunk at the Battle of Chancellorsville answered no, that the General had abstained, but that it would have been better had he continued his regular habit.

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It isn't Washington's picture on the U.S. \$1 bills that causes our current fiscal troubles....it's Washington's hands on it.