

The Charger

CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

P.O. BOX 5028 • CLEVELAND, OHIO 44101

MAY, 1979

189th Meeting

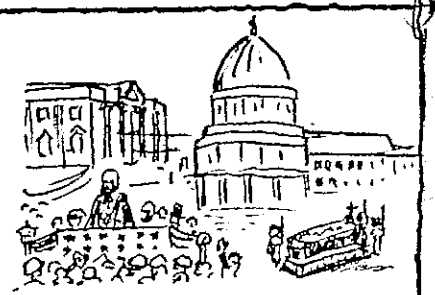
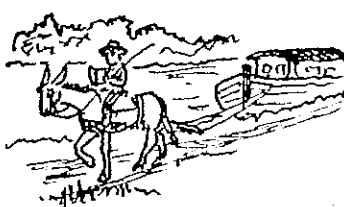
VOLUME 23 NO. 6

DATE: TUESDAY, MAY 8th
 SPEAKER: DR. JOHN STRASSBURGER
 SUBJECT: "The Impact of the Civil War on the Public and Private
 Life of James A. Garfield"
 PLACE: THE HERMIT CLUB
 CONVIVIALITIES: 6:00 P.M. VICTUALS: 7:00 P.M.

Our speaker this month is Associate Professor of History at Hiram College. When asked about his personal background, he wrote, "I am married, have two little girls, live over in Hudson and have been teaching at Hiram in the history department since 1970. As for the academic stuff, I was an undergraduate at Bates College, then received a second degree from Cambridge University and finished up my doctorate at Princeton. My real research specialty is colonial politics, but I am also keenly interested in Western Reserve history, and this year I am directing a National Endowment for the Humanities pilot project at Hiram which links Western Reserve architecture and history in our curriculum."

* * * * *

James A. Garfield FROM CANAL BOY TO PRESIDENT



THE WILD RIDE AT
 CHICKAMAUGA THAT ENDED
 IN CONGRESS and the WHITE HOUSE

The April Meeting

Ladies' Night last month was well-attended and from all reports everyone enjoyed the social hour, the steak dinner and the entertainment.

Bernie Drews made a fine M.C., and the Civil War songs sung by Martha Schrock and Ethel Taylor, beautifully accompanied by Margaret Denton were plaintive, nostalgic and much appreciated.

The Magician was fortunate in obtaining the volunteer services of Bob Bayless, Ken Callahan, John Drinko and Jim Chapman, each of whom provided an act in himself, much to the amusement of the members and the assistants' ladies. "Laughter born of bewilderment" seemed to be the reaction. Great Fu

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

Stuart Cramer
Milton Holmes

The Charger, Editor and
illustrator, Stu Cramer
Assistant Ed: Hazel Cramer
P.O. Box 444, Vermilion
Ohio 44089

C.C.W.R.T. Box 5028
Cleveland, Ohio 44101

At the time this writer was an undergraduate at Hiram College a movement was afoot to change its name to Garfield College, honoring the 20th President and one-time teacher and President of Hiram Eclectic Institute. Delving into Garfield's military career this sophomore came to the conclusion that The Great Man had been a poor general and had used a blown up incident to gain the White House. So said sophomore helped circulate a student petition to block the name change. Certainly other forces at work accomplished the objective, but subsequent readings in the next 47 years haven't changed my opinion.

Latest books on James A. Garfield are:

Garfield by Allan Peskin, Kent State U. Press, 1978, and The Garfield Orbit, by Margaret Leech and Harry J. Brown, Harper and Row, Publishers, also 1978.

NEW OFFICERS

1980-81. Officers

President - Charles Spiegle
Vice-Pres. - Harrison Frost
Secretary - Tom Geshke (2nd term)
Treasurer - John Harkness " "
Executive Committee: Robert Bayless and John Tormey

Famous Stage Magicians During the Civil War

Amusing incidents in the careers of contemporary magicians add to the human interest stories that make up the massive history of the Civil War.

While more could be named, five outstanding magicians appeared on the American stage just prior to and during The Rebellion. Four of these were foreigners and one, John Wyman, Jr., a native American.

Wyman, whose successful career started in the second quarter of the 19th Century and extended into the second half, was the first American-born magish to present a full evening's stage performance.

Known as "Wyman the Wizard," his popularity took him to the White House for performances on many occasions. He appeared for Presidents Van Buren and Filmore and four times for Lincoln. In addition to his stage magic he included ventriloquism, puppetry and a trained dog in his show. He was the first magician to present mediumistic tricks such as slate writing and floating tables.

Wyman was a very pleasant man, generous in his charities and noted for his integrity, yet little is known about him, for he never indulged in wide publicity or advertising.

Quite the contrary was the Scotsman, John Henry Anderson, who was probably the most flamboyant publicist in the history of the Mysterious Art. Even the late Houdini acknowledged it.

Anderson arrived in San Francisco in 1859 to start a second triumphant tour of this country's major cities. He was a world celebrity by then, having performed for King Christian VIII of Denmark, King Oscar I of Sweden, King Frederick of Prussia, Queen Victoria at Balmoral Castle and the Czar of Russia at the Winter Palace. For years he had drawn crowds in the principal cities of Europe, Asia, and Australia.

He would herald his appearances in a city by plastering it with huge billboards, signs, posters and handbills. At one time his "paper" appeared on the cliffsides of Niagara Falls, and on another occasion, it is said, on the sides of the Pyramids.

-continued on page 7

Mini 2-Day Field Trip Looks Great

Earl Hoover and John Tormey have planned, scouted and arranged an exciting two-day field trip for members and their wives on Saturday and Sunday, June 16 and 17. It is a tour of Ohio's historic C.W. places.

Leaving by charter bus (time and place to be announced at May 8th meeting), the first stop will be Millersburg, where, at Ft. Fiasco armed Copperheads were dispersed by Union forces. Then to Gambier, Kenyon College, associated with Edwin Stanton, R.B. Hayes, Samuel Mathews and the DKE Fraternity. This latter enters the picture because member George Hoagland has a 1910 DKE roster showing that at the outbreak of the C.W. the son of General John Hunt Morgan, Thomas, was a member at Kenyon then. A few miles west is lovely old Mt. Vernon, where Clement Vallandigham gave his seditious speech on its square, and was arrested for same. The group will visit the antique-filled beautiful Curtis mansion here. Also home of Dan "Dixie" Emmett

On one of the days the group will have the opportunity of enjoying a gourmet smorgasborg at Bellville, said to be one of the finest in the country. They will probably stay overnight at Granville Inn, in Granville, Ohio, home of Denison University. Other places on the itinerary include Westerville and the home of Benjamin Handy, composer of "Darling Nelly Gray." Somerset, birthplace of General Phil Sheridan, and Lancaster, home of General William Sherman.

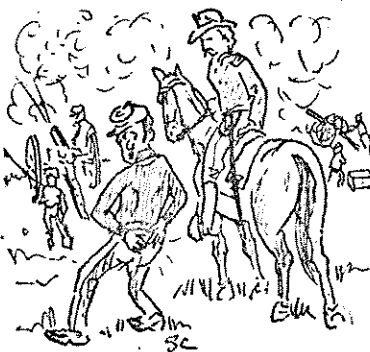
Cost of trip will be somewhere between \$75 and \$100 per couple. The above is just the bare bones...there is much more, about which you will be notified

* * * * *



Rear Actions at Shiloh

During the confused and bloody charges on the Union line at the Peach Orchard during Shiloh's first day of battle, a young Illinois cannoneer of Williard's battery was suddenly stunned by a sharp blow in the seat of his pants. Angrily whirling about, he demanded from a nearby lieutenant, "What did you let your horse kick me for?" When informed that no horse had kicked him, the man grabbed his pants, and feeling the warm blood, screamed hysterically that he was wounded where he hadn't been kicked.



On Williard's left several of Breckenridge's regiments were closing rapidly, firing into the battery from the flank. In the midst of the smoke and deafening noise, Private Enoch Colby Jr., looked up to see the enemy "within a hundred yards in plain sight, four of their accursed flags flying, and four lines of battle deep..."

The battery hurried to get away. With difficulty, the four 6-pounder guns and two 12-pounder howitzers were brought off the field, all except the left gun. Every horse hitched to the gun had been shot except one, and that horse in its fright balked at moving in any direction. Seven cannoneers desperately grasped the trail and began slowly pulling the cannon to the rear. "Minie balls were falling like hail" about them. Soon five of the men had been hit and it looked as if the gun might be captured.

"Just then a Minie ball struck the horse at the root of the tail, and he began pulling like six horses and the gun came off flying," Colby later wrote.

* * * * *

Wiley Sword
Shiloh-Bloody April (BK)

Letters From a Union Soldier

Member Don Hamill sent in these extracts from the unpublished letters of Thomas Bryden, great-great grandfather of a friend. Bugler Bryden was in the 101st New York Volunteers. The letters were all written in 1862. The spelling, punctuation and grammar are his own.

Letter to his father dated March 26 from Washington:

... I don't have to shoulder the Rifle any more. all I have to Cary is my Knapsac Canteen and my Bugle. I did not Have to go last night But go with the band. It is very easy to be musitions and is better than Sargent. they have to Cary Knapsac Canteen Haversac Gun and a long Sord. more than all the Rest. it is a hard position. I don't know where the Regiment is going to But it is not going to Cross the River. . . . the Reason I did not write with pen and ink is Because it is not very Handy. It is always tipping over But as it is I will write with it. most all the men use the led pencil. this is very fine country Down Here. it is like June in Oneida Co. There I never saw so Many men as there is around Here. We are completely Surrounded by Soldiers. The men think the war will not last long.

Direct 101 Regt NYV
in Washington DC in
Care of Capt. Beckwith

Letter dated May 6th from Camp Meidian Hill

The 26 are now down to Yorktown as one of our boys was down in alexandria and said the 26 had gone to yorktown as the Rebels Have Evacuated it.

This is a very healthy Place Here and seems more like Soldering. it is nothing but fun for me to be a soldier in this Country. I am just as contented here as you Please. Recon I can say one thing. I have not ben in the guard House nor Punished since I enlisted and I have dun my Duty as well as any man in the Regiment and that is not what every man can say. For most every other has Ben in The Guard House and ironed and The Guard placed over them with Loded gunes for Weeks at a time. But I Recon I Best too much.

Letter dated June 27th from before Richmond

I was out on Picket to days and our Pickets were driven in and then we Had three hours of hard fighting. our men drove them back one mile and a 1/2 and then were Flanked and fought like heros. this was in the after noon. then our regiment was fired into again at ten o'clock at night. the enemy got right upon us and Surrounded us on three sides but our men cut right through them and got out all right. we lost from our Regiment 30 killed and wounded but we Gave them some tall Fighting. Some of our regiments lost a good many Men. I wish you could have hurd The cheering last night. it would have done you good. we had Some of the heaviest Firing I caver hurd. the different Regimental Bands were playing Till 12 o'clock at night and it is the first music that I have hurd since we left alexandria. They won't allow Any unless they gain a great victory and The report is that McClellan has taken capital Hill and fifteen Thousand Prisoners. the firing has Begune again this morning.

I forgot to say that we took 20 guns from the Reabs. Wicks fought like a little tiger. I came out all Sound. I felt Bully. I saw one men fall down and a reab came upon him before he could get up and grabed Hold of his gun and told him He was his Prisoner but he said guess not. So he drew his nife and Riped him open and got out of it all safe.

Don't fret about the money for the man that carried our mail is the man. nothing more at present. Lewis white is well and sends His love to you all.

Give my love to mother and all the rest and believe me to be your affectionate Son.

Thomas Bryden
Direct as before

And write soon

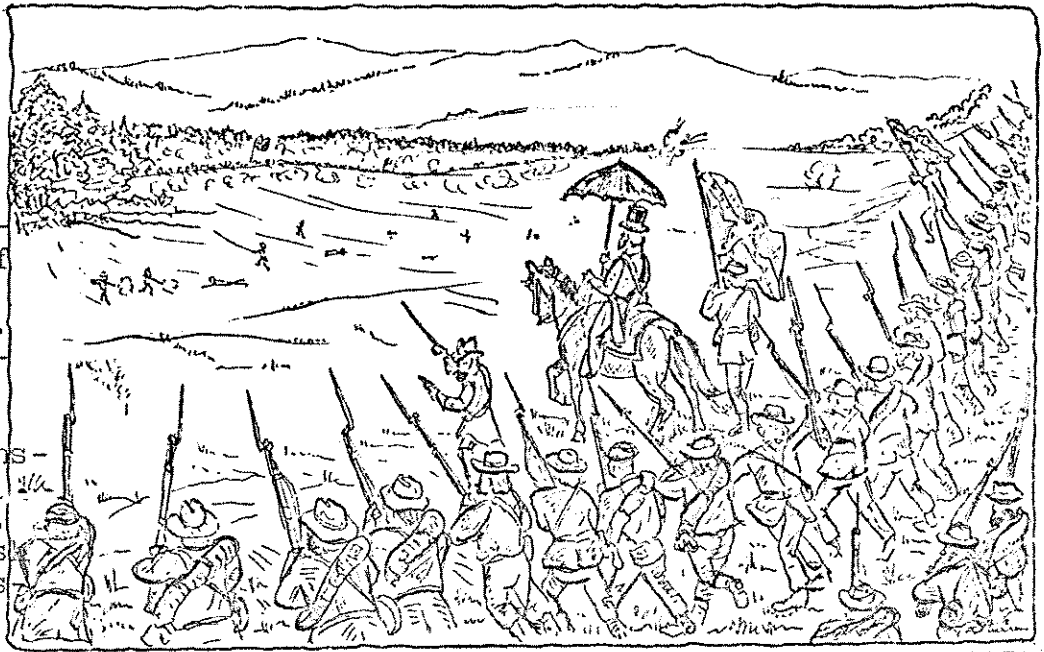
up hold that flagg
the war will soon be over

There are more of these for later...

Scenes I'd Like to Have Seen

"Extra Billy Smith"
leading his 49th Va.
against Apple-Pie
Ridge.

William Smith, of Warrenton, Va. was one of the real "characters" in the Army of No. Va.. He acquired the sobriquet "Extra Billy" as a young man, when he ventured into the transportation field with a contract with the U.S. Government to establish a line of mail and passenger post coaches from Washington thru



the Carolinas to Milledgeville, Ga.. The nickname came from his frequent extra charges made for circuitous routes over which he carried the mails, his pay being based upon mileage.

As a former Congressman and Governor of Virginia, he was elected Colonel of the 49th Virginia Volunteers in 1861 at the age of 64. High praise from Generals Beauregard, Gordon and Early for his personal valor gave him an exalted opinion of his own military abilities. His tactical performances as a brigadier, especially at Gettysburg, proved otherwise. At the Battle of Antietam he was seriously wounded by a single volley, in three parts of his body, one resulting in a withered arm, but refused to "leave his boys." Always an eccentric, he hated the "West P'inters" and wore a plug hat and carried a large blue umbrella.

In 1864 he was reelected Governor, given a major general's commission and gently retired to "reanimate and inspire the people with renewed hope and zeal."

* * * * *

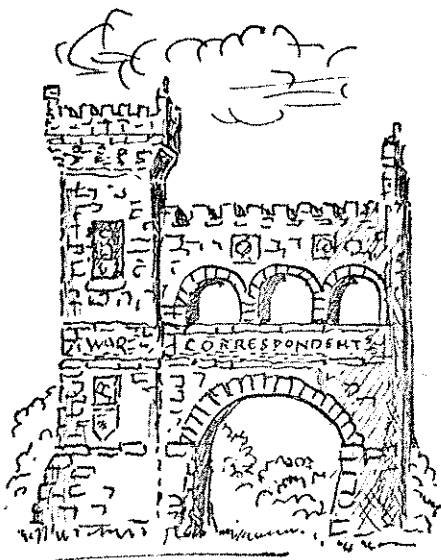
Townsend on Embalmers

Member Tom Koehl loaned the writer a fascinating (and hard-to-get) book, Rustics in Rebellion by George Alfred Townsend, Chapel Hill, 1950 - first published as Campaigns of a Non-Combatant in 1866.

Townsend was the youngest Union correspondent, first sent out in 1861 by the New York Herald to cover the Seven Days. His accounts were personal, descriptive and witty, and he soon became well-known and was given a rare "by-line" in 1865. Following the war he became a familiar figure in Washington, with columns in newspapers and magazines, and wrote 20 books, some of his novels achieving the equivalent of "best sellers."

After becoming wealthy and acquiring considerable property on South Mountain, he built "Gapland," an estate at Crampton's Gap, and later was responsible for the building of the odd Correspondent's Memorial Arch there. (On one of our field trips, members Bob and Neville Bayless, Fred Gill and I, a day ahead of the rest of the gang, came across this monstrosity and spent an hour or so examining its unique architecture, a mixture of Moorish gateway, Roman Aqueduct, Norman watchtower and Victorian nightmare.) He died in 1914 at the age of 74.

(over)



One of the many intriguing passages to be found in this astute account of the people Townsend encountered and the scenes he witnessed, was his conversation with one of the "melancholy" embalmers that followed the Army of the Potomac.

The adventuresome reporter came across "the grim embalmer standing in an outbuilding amidst a family of nude corpses. He dealt with the bodies of high officers only; for, said he- 'I used to be glad to prepare private soldiers. They were worth five dollars apiece. But, Lord Bless you, a colonel pays a hundred, and a brigadier general \$200. There's lots now, and I cut the acquaintance of everybody below a major. I might, 'he added,' as a great favor do a captain, but he must pay a major's price, I insist upon that! Such windfalls don't come every day.'"

Townsend wrote that at White House headquarters a "steam manufactory" was erected where 20 men worked night and day to turn out hundreds of pine boxes to be shipped north. He spoke of the sallow, shabbily-attired embalmers "with their ghostly implements who looked upon all others as so many subjects for development of their art."

Thanks, Tom; I promise to return your book.

* * * * *

New CWRT in News

Member Rex Corfield sent in an interesting clipping from the Miami Herald about the opening of a new Civil War Roundtable in Naples, Fla.. The co-founder of this new chapter is a James Madison McGarity, West Point '46 and a retired 30-year army veteran.

McGarity's hometown is Columbia, South Carolina, and both his great-great-grandpappies were Confeds. His specialty is the burning of said city, and one time while stationed in London, he had occasion to address the C.W.R.T. of the United Kingdom on the subject. He was amazed to learn that his English audience knew more than he did about the incendiary incident. He was made a life member.

* * * * *

Great Lakes C.W. 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.

* * * * *

SUMMER ISSUE

Ordinarily this May issue of a newsletter would be the last until we take up again in fall, and you would receive one around the first of Sept. announcing the September 11th get-together with the Western Reserve Round Table. However, I plan a mid-summer issue of the Charger so you won't be out of touch for such a long period. Contributions, especially any trips or events touching members and their interest in the Civil War, will be most welcome.

Anderson's magic show was as elaborate as his billing, the stage settings and apparatus lavish and expensive. He was much imitated, but his style, personality and appearance were far superior to his competitors'. His program included such sensational tricks as "Catching a Bullet," "Suspension of a Girl in Air" and his popular "Scrapbook," from which he produced an incredible number of miscellaneous articles, animals and a child. He is supposed to be the first magician to do the rabbit from the hat trick.

As the "Napoleon of Necromancy" moved east from San Francisco, in each city his crowds began to diminish as the war fever heated up. His run in New York City, shortly after Bull Run, fell far short of the 100 days he had experienced on his former American tour. Everyone said it would be a short war; so the 50-year-old showman decided to wait it out, and established his family in a house in the Big City, where he became a good friend of P.T. Barnum, whom he had met on his previous tour.

Several short tours, one into Canada, failed to make money; but as excitement built up prior to McClellan's move to Ft. Monroe and up the Peninsula, Anderson launched an ambitious extravaganza called "The Wizard's Tempest," a burlesque of Shakespeare's "Tempest" with Anderson playing the role of Prospero. The show opened at the New York Winter Garden to a full house. The news that McClellan had reached the outskirts of Richmond turned out excited crowds night after night. But then things changed...the invincible Army of the Potomac had been defeated, and was retreating! The "Wizard's Tempest," with a tremendous overhead, played a few weeks to smaller and smaller audiences and then folded.

With his savings gradually fading away, the undaunted Scot, who had weathered two theatre fires and a bank failure during his illustrious career, gambled his last \$5,000 on a grand tour of the south, recalling no doubt his one month of full houses in New Orleans, in 1852. So he had new bills and posters printed and sent his agents to rent theaters in the major cities from Richmond to New Orleans, and sent his baggage to the Southern Capitol.



Richmond was duly plastered with his signs and posters...but the show never opened. Angry crowds tore down the signs and tramped on the handbills. The Wizard was threatened and was happy to get his equipment back across the Mason-Dixon line. The tour was cancelled; Anderson returned to New York, where he sold his wife's jewelry for passage back to England to try to recoup his fortune.

What had happened?

Throughout his entire career, when he had first taken London by storm after leaving his native Aberdeen, he had ALWAYS been known and heralded as "The Great Wizard of the North." How were the Richmonders to know that it meant north Scotland?

Magical historians* differ on many of the details given above, but this writer has set them down as he interpreted the time and events in relation to the Civil War. Article to be continued in the next Charger.

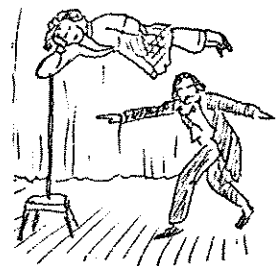
*Illustrated History of Magic, by Milbourne Christopher, The Magician on the American Stage 1752-1874, by Charles J. Pecor, The Master Magicians, by Walter Gibson.



Anderson's Scrapbook



While his daughters held trays of glasses, Anderson poured any drink called for from his inexhaustible bottle



The Suspension in Air



CLARODRIDA



"Dog tags" to identify its soldiers were first issued by this government in World War I. Civil War troops went into battle with no assurance that, in case of death or injury, they could be identified or their ultimate fate be known to their next-of-kin.

True, many had their names lettered on knapsacks and other items of equipment, and we recall stories of Union soldiers before the desperate assault at Cold Harbor pinning slips of paper to their blouses with names and addresses. As the War progressed sutlers started to sell tags to the pessimists, and a rather expensive gold or silver pin was advertised in Harper's Weekly. In July, 1864, the 14th New Hampshire Infantry, passing through Charlestown, West Virginia, on its way to the Shenandoah Valley, purchased hundreds of brass disks from a sutler who had set up his tent by the roadside. He stamped each disk with name, address, company and regiment. This had become a common practise. Today Civil War dog tags are avidly collected by buffs. No one seems to have ever discovered any Confederate tags.

* * * * *

As if you didn't know...the last Confederate victory and last land action of the War was the Battle of Palmetto Ranch, Texas, May 13, 1865...and the last Confederate shots fired were from the "Shenandoah" in the Bering Sea in late 1865. Both were insignificant actions and noteworthy only for the dubious honor of having been the final BANGS.

* * * * *

A proud C.W. buff, seeking information about his grandfather, from the University of Michigan's historical collection, bragged that "Gramp's famous Michigan cavalry unit participated in more than 100 fights and even captured Jeff Davis." He gave his grandfather's name and company and asked if there were more details that might be on file.

There were...he had deserted a week after he joined up.

From a 1961 Battle Creek C.W.R.T. Newsletter

* * * * *

General Nathan Bedford Forrest was a lefty, and wore his huge razor-sharp saber on his right side. Yet about 9 out of 10 pictures have this wrong. . even the beautiful 1½-size statue in Forrest Park, Memphis, has the sword on the conventional left side. So what...just thought I'd mention it.

* * * * *

Many have seen the admirable monument to Virginians at Gettysburg, atop of which is Lee, astride Traveler looking out across the ground between Seminary and Cemetery Ridges...and the dramatic statue of General Lloyd Tilghman, killed at Champion's Hill and located now in Vicksburg Cemetery... and the fine equestrian statue of Stonewall Jackson on Monument Avenue in Richmond. But how many know the name of the master sculptor who created these? His name was F. William Sievers, well-known to students of American art.

* * * * *

Talk about inflation...in Richmond, 1865, eggs sold for five dollars APIECE!

* * * * *

So our Navy has gone feminist..."Seaperson First Class"... "Person the lifeboats!" indeed. Next they'll want to change famous names. Will it come to William Tecumseh Sherperson, Samuel P. Heintzelperson, Thomas J. Jackoffspring, General Stoneperson and Winfield Scott Hanparts?