

The Charger

CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

P.O. BOX 5028 • CLEVELAND, OHIO 44101

MAY, 1980

VOLUME 24 NUMBER 3

198th Meeting

DATE: MAY 13th
SPEAKER: DR. LOUIS A. BARONE
SUBJECT: "KEEPING THE HOME FIRES BURNING"
PLACE: THE HERMIT CLUB, Dodge Court
BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION:...6:00 P.M. CALORIE INTAKE:...7 P.M.

Our speaker this month is a professor and Chairman of the Department of History at Baldwin-Wallace College. He has been at the college for fourteen years and is currently a member of the College Executive Committee and Faculty representative to the Ohio Athletic Conference and the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

Dr. Barone received his Ph.D. in 1969 from the State University of New York College at Buffalo with a major emphasis in U.S. Diplomacy and Recent History. He has a minor field in the Civil War area and has taught courses in Civil War for seven years.

He lives in Berea with his wife Susan and two children, Eric 12, and Joanne 9.

The subject of taking a look at the North and South behind the lines during the war years should be a fascinating one - and different - to which we may look forward with great interest.

Southern Fare

During the early part of the war the most notable dietary change in the South was the disappearance from their tables of coffee, tea and other imported products. "Confederate coffee," made from parched bits of sweet potatoes, peanuts, corn, or rye, was described by some patriots as delicious, but others were a bit more honest in their testimonials. Sugar soon became scarce in most parts of the South, but consumers found reasonably acceptable substitutes in honey and molasses.

Far more critical than the shortage of coffee and sugar was the dearth of salt, which was essential not only for seasoning but also for the preservation of meat. Many expedients, including the evaporation of sea water were employed, but the results were meager. As a result pork and beef appeared far less frequently on Southern tables during the war than before. Corn was the South's great staple. Field peas (peanuts,) some wheat, sweet potatoes and turnips were the mainstays of Southern diet.

CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

Founded Nov. 19, 1957

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April Meeting

The Annual Ladies' Night on April 8th was attended by 70 people. It was raining hard outside, but inside, the Hermit Club was warm with food, drinks and the renewing of acquaintances.

William C. (Jack) Davis, editor of sundry publications, including the excellent Civil War Times Illustrated, gave an enlightening talk on the Lincoln assassination as portrayed by the book and movie called "The Lincoln Conspiracy," which he branded a fraud on the public. The book was based upon a purported 18 pages of a diary kept by John Wilkes Booth, supposedly hidden by Secretary of War Stanton and implicating him. Mr. Davis contended that Booth did not keep a diary, but rather a type of date-book on which he kept some notes.

In a pleasant little ceremony, as

only he can do it, Jim Chapman presented a gavel to outgoing Pres. Chuck Spiegle, with words showing the Club's appreciation for a job well done. Jim is one of our past presidents.

Geshke New Prez

At the last meeting of The Board, the following officers were elected to serve the 1981-1982 terms:

Thomas H. Geschke, President

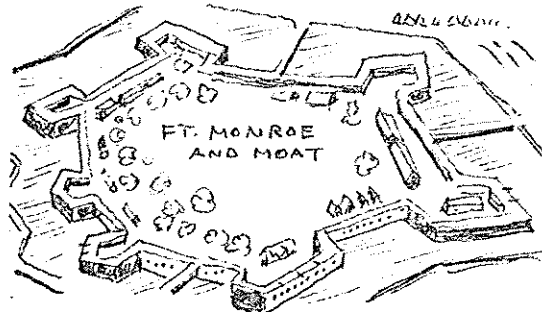
John Harkness, Vice President

James Englehart, Secretary

Tim Moran, Treasurer

Thomas F. Koehl and James E. Chapman,
Executive Committeemen

Tom Geschke and John Harkness have served two terms each as secretary and treasurer respectively. With all these veteran members in charge we can look forward to another great year.



FORT MONROE

This, our May meeting, brings us to the close of another Civil War Round Table year. It has been a good one. Following the same procedure as last year, an extra issue of The Charger will be sent out in July - just to keep in touch before we take up the regular schedule of meetings in September.

It looks as though the field trip this year is to be a visit to old Fort Monroe, Va. and environs.

Neville Bayless and Stu Cramer are planning a scouting trip this summer. Details will be forthcoming in the mid-summer issue.

FRED GILL'S BOOK REVIEW

THIS SOUTH WILL NOT RISE AGAIN

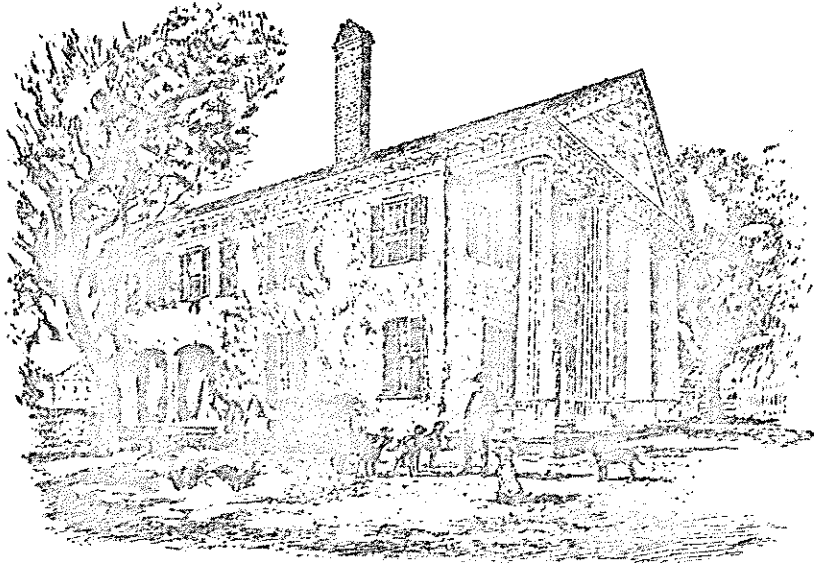
Swords and Roses by Joseph Hergesheimer. Blue Ribbon Books: N.Y., 1929

This is a book about the Civil War and the deep South. For the subject the title is perfect. Swords and roses! How better to evoke past dreams of gallantry and heroic deeds, of beautiful pale women in crinoline, of great houses and redolent gardens, of soft and indolent days, of horsemen of loyalty and love, of pride and honor, yes, honor above all, and of fire, then, and death.

Hergesheimer was a novelist of great imagination and a literary star of his time a half century ago. This work is a collection of essays about the deep South and certain people he felt to be examples of the swords and roses mystique. The collection begins with an acute description of deep South life and politics and ends with a warm account of the incredible Confederate foot soldier. Between these essays are pieces on individual deep Southerners. Without reading the book, see if you can name the individuals he writes about under these titles: *

- 1- The Pillar of Words
- 2- The Rose of Mississippi
- 3- Military Figure in Bronze
- 4- The Lonely Star
- 5- Shadows on the Sea
- 6- The Good Fighter
- 7- Female Spy
- 8- Gold Spurs

*a South Carolina
Mansion →*



* If you get more than four right, I'll stand you a drink at the next Round Table meeting.

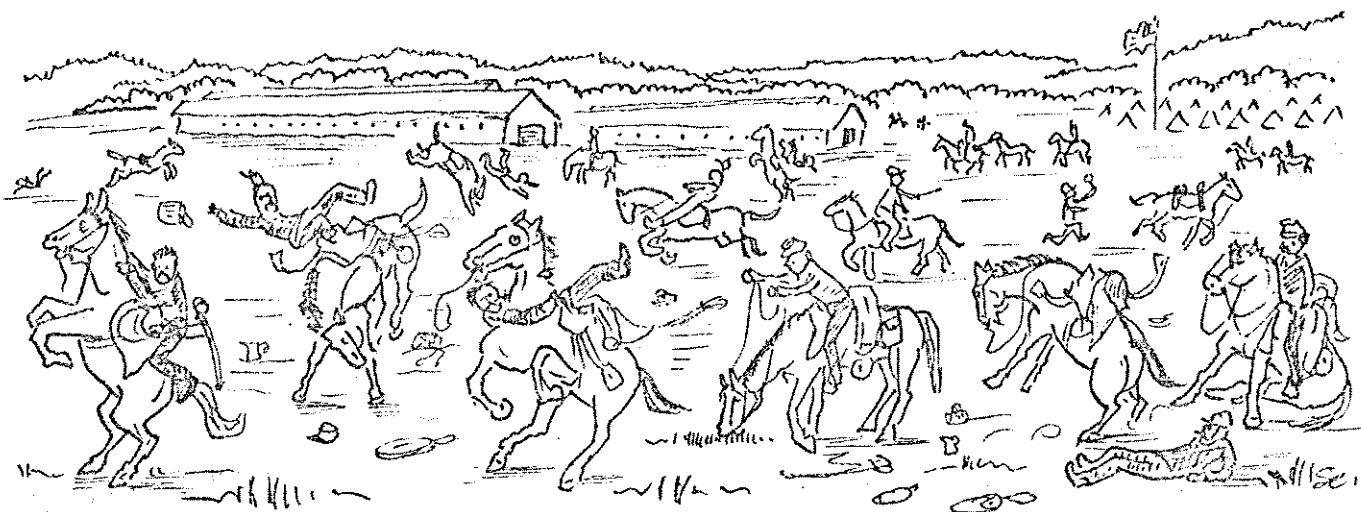
I will not vouch for the historical accuracy of some of the things the author says, but he is provocative. In the initial essay he points out that

in the years before 1860 the planters "...after long and practically unbroken control of the government regarded themselves, their interests and lands as preponderant, the major part of the United States. They would not have believed that the nation could continue without them." They just could not see the snake in the canebrake.

Again the author writes in the last essay "There will never be another war so purely valorous because valor itself, it is beginning to be seen, is not a practical virtue." Interesting in the light of the recent happening in the Persian desert.

And, at last in this fifty-year-old book, I find answered a long standing question: Why in two great armies composed mainly of country boys do you never read about them shooting deer which must have abounded? Well, on page 311 is this: "...John, with a companion, went out with their muskets and killed a deer."

Scenes I'd Like to Have Seen



Uninitiated recruits, plus inexperienced commanders and inept officers of ordnance, led to chaos in the cavalry training camps of the Union army. Maverick horses had to be broken by green recruits who had never handled a horse except from behind a plow.

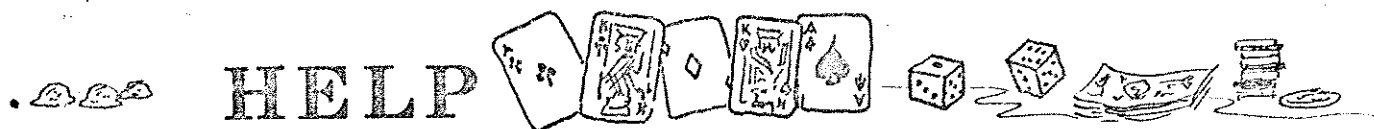
A captain of the 10th New York Cavalry described his company's initial ride from camp to escort duty:

Many men had extra blankets and quilts,...sabers and belts, carbines and slings, nose bags and extra bags for carrying oats, haversacks, canteens, and spurs -- curry-combs, brushes, ponchos, overcoats, frying pans, cups, coffee pots, etc.

Such a rattling, jingling, jerking, scrabbling, cursing...I never heard before. Green horses -- some of them had never been ridden -- turned round and round, backed against each other, jumped up or stood up like trained circus-horses.

Blankets slipped from under saddles and hung from one corner; saddles slipped back on the rumps of horses; others turned upside-down; horses running and kicking; tin pans, mess-kits -- flying through the air; all I could do was shout "Close up."

Herr and Wallace Story of the U.S. Cavalry



I am researching the subject of gambling cheats in the Union and Rebel armies. We know it was the heyday of the "Mississippi Gambler" types, and they must have infiltrated the armies, as the slickers did in our modern wars, but information is as scarce as an honest deck in Reno.

What games did the boys play besides poker? Did they shoot craps - even the Roman soldiery rolled the bones. We read of battlefields and campsites being littered with playing cards, but was there a lot of gambling for money? (And of course that commodity too was scarce, especially in the Confederate ranks; did that eliminate the gambling cheaters?) Please give me any information you happen to have or are able to uncover; references, mentions in books, letters, or stories and incidents. I know the methods used, but need the information to place them. STU CRAMER, P.O. BOX 444, VERMILION, O 44089

First Horse Artillery



During the fall following the Battle of Bull Run, a new arm was introduced to the cavalry. Colonel Turner Ashby, commander of the 7th Virginia Cavalry, a part of Stonewall Jackson's Army, added the first "flying artillery" unit of the war.

This was Chew's Horse Artillery led by eighteen-year-old Captain R. Preston Chew, formerly of the Virginia Military Institute and two lieutenants, seventeen and eighteen, also ex-cadets of V.M.I.

Unlike heavier field artillery, this was a battery designed to go wherever cavalry could go, over streams and through thicket and morass, drawn by swift horses that could keep up with a charge. It featured a little English Blakely Gun that had a distinctive sound, like a loud rifle - sharp report.

The Blakely was a rifled breech-loader that "kicked like a mule." It fired several types of ammunition, including flanged and studded projectiles. Both Pelham of Stuart's command and Wade Hampton (who imported a whole battery at his own expense) adopted this gun after seeing how effectively it was used by Ashby.

AND SPEAKING OF STRANGE WEAPONS



Howard Thurston, the great American magician, featured an act in which he scaled cards all over the theatre, even up into the top reaches of the balcony. It was accomplished by a skillful, powerful snap of the wrist, and holding the card in a certain manner.

Have you ever heard of a weapon called the YINZA? Chinese experts at Tai Chi (The Way of the Peaceful Warrior) had deadly proficiency with this small steel disc the size of a silver dollar, with 12 barbs around its perimeter. When scaled in the same manner that Thurston sailed his cards, the yinza would pierce the skull and drive into the brain.

As an old card scaler, here I've unknowingly been carrying around a lethal weapon as a good luck piece!

OLLAPODRIDA

On the edge of Lexington, Virginia, home of the Virginia Military Institute, is the grave of its most famous teacher, Stonewall Jackson. In that same city is Washington and Lee University, of which Robert E. Lee was President after the war.

Curiously, during the five years of his tenure, Lee is not known to have visited the grave of his mightiest comrade in arms.

In Lee AFTER The War (Dodd, Mead) author Marshall W. Fishwick suggests the possible reason was that General Lee could not bring himself to the effort. He was sick to the soul of war and all the reminders of the four years he waged it. He was trying to build a new life out of the one that had been shattered, broken, and seeded with despair and ill-health.

* * * * *

It is recorded that during the war there were 194,000 Federal soldiers captured and for some time confined. Rations were totally insufficient for the sustenance of the prisoners. Thousands died of malnutrition, disease and "course brutality." The ratio of mortality at Florence exceeded that at Andersonville. Deprivation of food, clothing and shelter and various punishments for misconduct were insufferable and inexcusable.

Much can be condemned about Union prisons, but all in all, when you read the records, the Confederates were the worst offenders. It does not mitigate their cruelty to say that their own armies fared the same fate of inadequacies.

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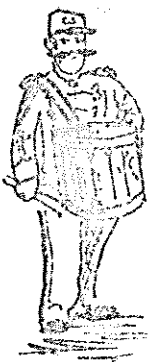
On October 25th, 1861, eleven-year-old Robert Henry Hendershot marched to the front with the 9th Michigan Infantry and spent the rest of the war with that outfit. He must have been an extraordinary drummer, having earned the nick-name of "The Drummerboy of the Rappahannock" because he was presented with a new drum after the battle of Fredericksburg by Horace Greeley. After the war, a major then, he went around the country appearing at G.A.R. functions, Sunday Schools, High Schools, W.C.T.U. Lecture courses, at County Fairs, Regimental and State Soldiers' Reunions, Expositions and Excursions. A little advertising card sent out from his home in Chicago states that "I carry letters from General A. E. Burnside, Grant and Logan, Abraham Lincoln, General Spinner, Horace Greeley and others."

* * * * *

Early in the war the ovens at Fort Monroe were producing 30,000 loaves of bread per day! That is 5,400,000 a month. These were shipped up Chesapeake Bay and the Potomac to camps all the way into Washington.

* * * * *

When Raphael Semmes in the "C.S.S. Alabama" captured the bark "Sea Bride" loaded with cargo off the Cape of Good Hope, a local reporter who witnessed the incident wrote that a crowd on the shore cheered. He explained that these New Englanders were not cheering for either side, but in admiration "of the skill, pluck and daring of the "Alabama," her captain and her crew."



Spirits in the White House

Before me is an article clipped long ago from The National Spiritualist which states that Abraham Lincoln was a believer in spiritualism. Further, it says that he issued the Emancipation Proclamation upon the direct advice of voices heard from the spirit world through the mediumship of twenty-one-year old Nettie Coleman. A. Conan Doyle, an ardent investigator and believer, wrote that this was "one of the most important events in the history of spiritualism."

Spiritualism, the belief that the dead can communicate with the living through the special talents of a medium, started in this country in 1848, in Hydesville, New York. Two sisters, aged about 8 and 9, began to produce mysterious rappings which baffled and rather frightened their ignorant parents. Soon neighbors were invited in to witness the strange happenings, and with increased interest, there came an increase in the rappings, which began to answer questions, with one rap for "yes" and three for "no."

The Fox sisters, Margaret and Kate, positively denied any knowledge of how they produced the raps, that were generally attributed to a "disembodied spirit." After a few months, a married sister, twenty-three years older than young Margaret, arrived and instantly grasped the possibilities in the "occult powers" of her sisters and took complete command of the Fox family's affairs. She organized a "Society of Spiritualists" and encouraged crowds to come to the little farmhouse. Hydesville became famous, but was soon too small for the operations of sister Mrs. Underhill.

So the sisters were taken to Rochester, New York, where they exhibited their phenomenon to large crowds of paid customers. The newspapers grabbed the story and soon reports of the rappings spread through the country and to Europe. They moved to New York City and attracted even bigger crowds. Then under the sponsorship of Horace Greeley, the company made a tour of the principal cities in the North and South. The years rolled on.



As the popularity of these "phenomena" grew to the proportions of a world-wide fad, many other men and women began to discover that they had similar talents, and the simple rappings expanded to demonstrations of table-tipping, eerie voices in the dark, slate-writing, billet-reading, flickering lights, fleeting veiled figures and other physical "manifestations." People of every economic and social level, including many highly respectable and prominent persons, flocked to séances. Among those prominent people who believed was the wife of President Abraham Lincoln.

In February, 1862, Willie, the eleven-year-old son of the Lincolns died. Always of an unstable nature, Mary Todd Lincoln fell under the spell of several mediums, and séances became frequent in the Red Room of The White House. One "Lord Colchester" convinced The First Lady that he was getting through to Willy, and messages were exchanged between the bereaved mother and her "little boy beyond the grave."

Lincoln, always sympathetic, was prone to cover up his wife's frequent erratic behavior, did not judge her actions; and went along with this new preoccupation, anxious for her to have any help she could derive from any source. On four known occasions during his term in office, he attended the séances, and seemed especially intrigued with the manifestations produced by a young medium named Nettie Coleman. At no time did Abraham Lincoln

Continued on Page 6

Spirits?

ever profess any belief in what he saw or heard as genuine proof of communication between the living and the dead, and the records of his writing, speeches and conversations are about as voluminous as are those of any man who ever lived.

After one séance he commented, "Well, for those who like that sort of thing I should think that is just about the sort of thing they would like." At another time, suspecting trickery, he asked his friend Dr. Joseph Henry, a scientist and superintendent of Smithsonian Institution, to do a little investigating and give his opinion of the origins of Lord Colchester's "raps." Dr. Henry reported that the bogus Lord was using a mechanical rapper strapped to his arm. When the muscle of the arm was expanded, a sharp click was made. Dr. Henry got the tip-off from a young manufacturer of telegraphic equipment, who also made up the rappers for spirit mediums. Colchester was threatened with a stay in Old Capital Prison unless he left Washington. (The writer has a similar device that goes around the waist and produces the raps by an extension of the belly.)

Noah Brooks, the journalist and intimate friend of Lincoln, caught a medium in the act of producing sounds from a bell and drumsticks, grabbing and holding him until the gas lights were turned up.

In 1891 Nettie Coleman Maynard, her married name then, wrote a book entitled Was Abraham Lincoln a Spiritualist? in which she originated the Emancipation story. Since then it has been used hundreds of times to link Lincoln's name with spiritualism, thus giving it credence.

Through the years spirit mediums by the hundreds have been exposed as tricksters and frauds, and yet after every war there has been a surge of belief; and since it is now an established religion, who shall say? We do know that in 1875 in a legal hearing in which Mrs. Lincoln was judged insane and committed to a sanitarium, her deep belief in spiritualism was considered both a cause and a manifestation of her mental instability.

FOOTNOTE

On October 21, 1888, Margaret Fox (Mrs. Kane,) before an audience of 2,000 at the Academy of Music in New York, removed her shoe and placed her right foot upon a little 4-legged stool, having the properties of a sounding board, and proceeded to produce a number of short, sharp raps...those mysterious sounds which for 40 years frightened and bewildered hundreds of thousands of people. A committee of physicians, having made an examination of the foot during the rappings, unhesitatingly agreed that the sounds were made by the action of the first joint of her big toe. This was a part of a complete confession published in the Sunday edition of the New York World. It may be of further interest to the reader, that in the production of "spirit raps" the mediums use the same principle used by ventriloquists, in that they call attention to the place from whence the raps are supposed to emanate, and the human ear, being easily deceived as to the exact location of sound, goes along with the misdirection.

Spirit Phraudography

Spirit photography became very popular (a "spirit" appearing on a background of a portrait) and in 1867 Mrs. Lincoln had her picture with one William Mumler, in Boston. A dim Lincoln showed up standing and the picture received great publicity. Since then hundreds of spirit pictures have appeared. Even with marked negatives can be accomplished so easily with double exposures that the number of people who have fallen for this gaff.



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