



# THE CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

P. O. BOX 5028, CLEVELAND, OHIO 44101

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OCTOBER 1976

Vol 20 No 2

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----- 165th Meeting -----

Date: Tuesday, October 12, 1976

Speaker: William D. Ellis

Subject: "The Biggest Little River and the  
Monstrous Decade"

Place: The Hermit Club, Dodge Court

Preliminaries: 6:00 P.M.                      Dinner: 7:00 P.M.

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WOW! WHAT A TITLE! But do not be frightened or perplexed, since our distinguished speaker will talk about the role of the Cuyahoga Valley during the Civil War. This promises to be a winner.

Bill Ellis is known far and wide as a co-author of the famed "The Ohio Story", the radio and TV series. His literary output is most distinguished, spearheaded by "The Bounty Lands", fourteen months in the best seller list. Other novels by Ellis include "Jonathan Blair, Bounty Lands Lawyer" and "The Brooks Legend". He wrote "The Cuyahoga" for the Rivers of America Series and "Land of the Inland Seas", the story of the Great Lakes.

A graduate of Connecticut Wesleyan, Ellis was a Captain in the 307th Infantry, 77th Division and was wounded at the Valencia Airstrip Battle. He now heads Editorial Services, Inc., a Cleveland company of script writers for documentary films, radio and TV programs.

## 1976 FIELD TRIP

Debouching by plane and auto from Ohio and Vermont, fourteen members and guests assembled at Manassas, Virginia on Thursday, September 23rd to begin our Roundtable's twentieth annual field trip. Those reporting for duty included: Milt and Mark Holmes, Nolan Heidlebaugh, Bill Chamberlin, Charles

Spiegle, Bob Thum, Bob and Neville Bayless, Ted Adams, Art Jordan, Jack AuWerter, Cliff Riel, Bernie Drews, and Bill Bates. That evening, overwhelmed by a free drink, those present reveled in the gourmet roast beef at George's Jackson Lake Inn. Friday morning the battlefield of Second Manassas was toured led by an ethnic, Dennis Kelly. He maintained that this battle, not Chancellorsville, was Lee's greatest. The tour included: The Stone House, Buck Hill, a mile hike along the Unfinished Railroad where the most severe fighting took place, the site of Stephen Lee's batteries and New York Avenue. That afternoon the intrepid band browsed around ever-interesting Harpers Ferry. Moving to Hagerstown, the evening speaker was the Rev. John Schildt who presented many slides of lesser known spots of the Antietam area. Back at the motel, Bill Chamberlin rendered an acappella version of "Sam, Sam, the Lavatory Man."

Starting at 8:00 A.M. Friday, Turner's, Fox's and Crampton Gaps were explored under the expert guidance of Ed Bearss. The highlight of this part of the trip was a back road exploration of Meade's route at the Battle of South Mountain. A bonus here was meeting the well-endowed Mrs. Wolfinger. After a box lunch in the West Woods of Antietam, this field was covered in detail. The climax was at the Pry House (McClellan's headquarters) where everyone put their pricker picking fingers to good use. That evening, after a relaxing dinner with soft music and candlelight at the Mountain Inn in Turner's Gap, Chamberlin showed his films of the 1964 Field Trip by our Round Table to the Antietam area. This had been our second visit there as the first field trip way back in 1957 began at the same location. Sunday morning everyone returned to their homes singing the praises of those who had arranged the trip: Jim Chapman, who was forced to drop out at the last minute, and his associate, Charlie Spiegle, who handled arrangements with his usual elan.

#### "OL' BLUELIGHT" KNEW WHEN TO SCRAM

The day of the Antietam Battle while Stonewall Jackson's command was in the Dunkard Church woods he asked General Hood to select a good climber to go up a tree and ascertain the strength of the Union Army by the North and East Woods. The man went up the tree, looked out and said there were oceans of them. General Jackson said "Never mind the oceans, count the battle flags." He began to count and when he got to 37, the General said, "That will do; come down and we will get out of here."

"Hard Tack", Indianapolis CWRT

#### SECRETARY'S NEW PHONE NUMBER

Our secretary, Charles Spiegle, continues with E. F. Hutton Company, but has moved to their Beachwood office where his number is 464-5335. Call him there regarding reservations, etc.

#### ADDENDUM AND ERRATUM

Bill Bates who talked to us last May about Buchanan asks us to insert the following:

1. I omitted the fact that Buchanan did serve as Ambassador to Russia in the Jackson administration.
2. I incorrectly stated that he did not graduate from Dickinson College when in fact he did.

THE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE OF CLEVELAND, OHIO

FOUNDED FEBRUARY 19, 1957

PRESIDENT	MILTON HOLMES
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NEWSLETTER

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

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WAS ABE LINCOLN A COCKSMAN?

Member Fred Gill sends us the following item clipped from the St. Petersburg Times:

"Honest Abe" Lincoln didn't earn his nickname by walking barefoot for miles to return a few cents, but because his Illinois neighbors thought he was a good referee for cock fights, a college sociologist believes.

Dr. Clifton B. Bryant considers a myth the story that Lincoln earned the "Honest Abe" nickname by his hike to return a few pennies to a careless merchant.

"He got the name as a referee of cock fighting matches," said Bryant, chairman of Virginia Tech's sociology department.

After several years of research, Bryant concludes other American heroes who were cock fighting fans include George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and, probably to no one's surprise, Andrew Jackson.

OTHER ITEMS FROM THE MEMBERS

Leigh Tanger points out that nothing has appeared on the Spanish American War. He sends a poem that first appeared in 1899 describing the woes of life on an Army Transport during that conflict. Since the poem runs to some twenty odd verses it cannot be reprinted in toto. Describing the food, a typical verse proclaims:

The coffee would knock you silly;  
The thinnest you ever seen;  
A quart of boiling water  
To every coffee bean.

Our co-founder and second president, Jack Cullen, sends a lengthy newspaper article about Andersonville which includes the following:

Some historians now reckon that this prison camp, together with the assassination of Lincoln, were the two chief factors which conditioned the harsh Reconstruction period in the South's post-bellum history.

An odd sidelight is that the assassination and the camp are actually linked.

Boston Corbett, the half-mad religious soldier who shot and killed John Wilkes Booth in a burning barn, was a former inmate of Andersonville.

#### ORIGINS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

(The following is the second of a three part series on this subject by member Ray Swanson.)

Transportation, newspapers and the establishment of a postal system played a very important part in the knitting together of the American colonies prior to the Revolution. In addition to the unending migrations of the Scotch-Irish and the Germans, there travelled along the north-south roads many journeymen looking for jobs in their craft, schoolteachers, or soldiers on their way home from the wars. Some people travelled for business, others for religious purposes; people changing residences; and also a considerable number visiting to see their friends or the country. There was even a new criminal element consisting mainly of counterfeiters and horse-thieves which now frequented the highways.

The newspapers (gazettes) followed their activities closely. The notorious Tom Bell, a Harvard man gone wrong - was probably the first bunco artist and "con" man. He graduated from "con" man to horse-thief, an inciter of the first anti-Semitic riot mob in 1738, and finally to piracy for which he was executed on April 25, 1771. According to the Virginia Gazette of July 4, 1771, he died a "very penitent man".

Many overland journeys for any distance depended partly on water transportation. Contrary winds or tides might delay the trip by several days. However, leisurely travellers usually preferred this to the rough roads and other inconveniences found along the coast.

The rapid settling of large areas of the backwoods led to a number of improvements in the means of communication which in turn ensured more interchange between town and the interior countryside. The widening of Indian paths and pack horse trails as well as the building of sturdier bridges and better ferries were undertaken to accommodate the growing cart and wagon traffic connecting the coast and the new inland settlements.

Better transport was so necessary to the traders and farmers of Pennsylvania that ingenious rural craftsmen modified and improved a canvas covered English army wagon for this traffic. Soon after 1717, James Logan purchased one of these wagons to haul furs from his post on Conestoga Creek. The Palatine

Germans bred the sturdy horses (Conestoga), six of which (with bells) were needed to draw a heavily loaded wagon. This was the origin of the famous Conestoga wagon which was widely used in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the settlement of the West.

Better highways, bridges and ferries permitted marked improvements in the colonial postal service first established in 1692 and gradually by this network, the principal seaboard communities were linked together. By 1698, a route between Portsmouth, New Hampshire and Dover, Delaware were traversed by post riders. Alexander Spotswood became the first postmaster general for North America in 1730 and he organized and extended the routes. By 1740, mail service went south as far as Williamsburg and the city of Charleston was clamoring for the service. The appointment of Benjamin Franklin as deputy-post master acted to bolster intercolonial unity.

The role of the postal service in drawing the colonies together was a powerful force. In 1704, the Boston postmaster established the first newspaper, the Boston News Letter. He offered to sell, at the post office, six different London newspapers. Andrew Bradford, the Philadelphia postmaster, in 1719, issued the American Weekly Mercury and announced that subscriptions could also be obtained at the Williamsburg and Newport post offices. Post riders carried newspapers as well as mail. Twelve newspapers and nine journals were published regularly in the colonies by 1739. The post office served as a center for all intelligence, both domestic and foreign. On receipt of a newspaper, some obliging person usually read it aloud for all present to hear. Thus the influence of the newspaper was greatly expanded.

As a further link, the post offices served as points of arrival and departure for messengers and carriers. Travellers could obtain information about transporting goods and passenger accommodations either by water or overland, within a given region; in some cases stage coaches set out or arrived at the post offices. So we see that it was an important center of colonial life.

Source: "The Spirit of '76" by Carl Bridenbaugh

#### HOW DO YOU LIKE THAT!

Henry Halleck scratched his elbows. David Farragut turned handsprings on his birthdays. Benjamin Butler loved German pancakes. Stonewall Jackson sucked on lemons. Winfield Scott loved terrapin soup. John Wool drank hot lemon juice every morning. Richard Ewell ate only frumenty (wheat cereal) at morning. George Pickett perfumed his hair and beard.

From "The Bushwacker," St. Louis CWRT

#### REBEL HUBRIS

John Francis McKee, a 19 year old member of Hood's Texas brigade included this in a letter to his family written 11/26/1861 from his camp in Northern Virginia:

"We Yankee hunters are spoiling for a fight. I don't believe there can be salt enough put on us to salve us if we don't get in a fight in a few days. I am afraid that the war will end when the Northern Congress meets again ...that is next month.... I want to get to kill me a Yankee after coming so far.... I want to get me a pair of Yankee spats for my father-in-law before coming home .... If I was turned footloose now I wouldn't come home until I got into one fight.... It is nothing to kill a Yankee and eat him raw with salt. I am as fat as a bear and as sassy as a panther."

(McKee was killed at Gettysburg.)

From The Lone Star Banner, Texas CWRT

### THREESIES

THREE Confederate generals later became generals in the United States army during the Spanish-American war. Fitzhugh Lee and Joe Wheeler are easy; the THIRD was Tom Rosser (see Boatner, pages 709-10.)

THREE wounds were suffered by Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., in the abdomen at Ball's Bluff, in the neck at Antietam, and in the heel at Chancellorsville. All THREE wounds were very serious, but Holmes lived to the age of 92, becoming one of America's most famous jurists.