



# THE CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

P. O. BOX 5028, CLEVELAND, OHIO 44101

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OCTOBER, 1977

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----- 174th Meeting -----

Date: Tuesday, October 11, 1977  
Speaker: Clifford Riel  
Subject: Anna Ella Carroll  
Place: The Hermit Club, Dodge Court  
Preliminaries: 6:00 p.m.                      Dinner: 7:00 p.m.

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WHO WAS THIS BROAD?

Why did Anna Ella Carroll as a slaveholder fight slavery?  
Why did she challenge the encroachment of the church on the state?  
As a politician did she counsel 5 presidents?  
As a constitutional lawyer did she first define the powers of the  
presidency in war time?  
As a military strategist did she devise the campaign that broke the  
back of the Rebellion?  
As a political pamphleteer did she drive Breckenridge from the  
Senate and curb that implacable abolitionist, Charles Sumner?  
In short, did MS. Anna Ella Carroll make a real contribution to the  
Union cause or was she a phony?

Our fellow member and genial field trip companion, Cliff Riel, will discuss this remarkable lady. Now retired, Cliff was for 28 years a member of the faculty of University School. When dually asked if (1) he realized that no speech should be longer than the weakest kidney in the audience, and (2) did he know that no souls are saved after the first 45 minutes, Cliff answered in ringing tones, "Affirmative! Affirmative!"

THE BATTLE OF SPANISH FORT - By Stuart Cramer

Ever hear of it? Well, just go "'way, 'way down in Mobile, Mobile," and you can visit the site and see the usual filled-in and rounded-off Confederate trenches and redoubts.

It was really quite a fight, involving three U.S. Army Corps, numerous cavalry actions, infantry charges, an amphibious landing, fierce hand-to-hand fighting, a seige, naval bombardment, and a successful nighttime withdrawal of over a division.

To those killed, wounded and maimed for life, the Battle of Spanish Fort was just as important as Vicksburg or Gettysburg, but as far as military importance goes, or any effect whatsoever on the outcome of the War, it might just as well have been a game of Slap Jack. Of course, this can be said of innumerable skirmishes and battles during our beloved fraternal affair, but the present subject was particularly poignant and useless, as we shall see.

Early on the morning of August 5th, 1864, Rear Admiral David Glasgow Farragut had damned the torpedos, blasted past Fort Morgan with his big wooden warships, gunboats and monitors, and had taken Mobile Bay, the last of the Confederacy's important ports. Salty old Rebel Admiral Franklin Buchanan had chugged out into the bay in his formidable ram, "Tennessee" and had taken on the whole damyankee fleet. He caused a lot of damage, but they were around him like wolves after a wounded stag. They bumped, rammed and battered and bounced 11-inch shells off his thick decks, and finally shot off his rudder and that ended the bloody melee. Meantime the Union army had taken Forts Morgan, Gaines and Powell at the mouth and west side of the bay. After that Mobile Bay was a Union lake.

While the Union forces had thus effectively sealed the last loophole in the blockade of the Confederacy, and garrisoned the forts, the rest of the territory around was still Sesesh. Things were fairly quiet for the next seven months, but General D. H. Maury, C. S. A. Commander of the Gulf District sat rather uneasily in his headquarters at Mobile while Union power was building up at Fort Morgan.

On the 23rd of March, 1865, General Edward Richard Sprigg Canby started north along the eastern shore with the 13th, 16th and 23rd Corps of U.S. Volunteers to clean out the Rebel army and take Mobile.

About ten miles southeast of Mobile on the Bay stood Spanish Fort, built by the Spaniards in 1780. The Confederates had fortified a semicircle stretching about 3,500 yards north and south and several hundred yards east of the fort, ending in a strong point called Fort McDermot on the southeast corner. Confederate General R. L. Gibson was given command of these fortifications. He had an army of 5,500 infantrymen, most of them remnants of General Hood's army, and 300 cavalry under Colonel P. B. Spence, who immediately rode south and started to harrass the advancing 13th Corps which was the van of Canby's army.

THE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE OF CLEVELAND, OHIO

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For the next three days there were many clashes, and while the gray horsemen, backed by contingents of infantry slowed the attacking columns, there was no stopping the blue tide. The 16th Corps marched three miles around Spanish Fort and assailed the lines from the north. On the 27th of March, the 81st Illinois and the 21st Alabama fought a lively three hour battle resulting in the Confederates falling back. Pressure was so great that the entire gray forces all had to retire behind the fortifications. Now they were besieged.

In the ten days following, charge after charge by the Federals was repulsed, but a continuous bombardment from land and sea (the navy had been banging away at the fort for three weeks) began to take effect. A number of Union guns were demolished, but Canby was so well supplied that they were easily replaced.

The maelstrom of fire and metal that rained on the defenders day and night, along with illness, fatigue and lack of food convinced Gibson of the hopelessness of holding out. He was outnumbered four to one, but decided to abandon rather than surrender.

Late one night, after spiking out their remaining guns, the Confederates took off their shoes and quietly walked along a board pier, across a marshland to the Blakely River, where an assortment of boats and barges were used to complete their escape, the entire remaining army thus getting away. Some went to Battery Huger, others to Blakely. Most eventually made their way to Mobile. That was the night of April 8, 1865.

The very next day, up yonder in ravaged ol' Virginia papers were signed at a place call Appomattox.

### CYCLORAMA LOOKS TO CLEVELAND FOR RESCUE

(Fellow member Pat Moran sent the following article which appeared last August in the Cleveland Press.)

Art experts of the Cleveland Museum of Art are being asked to help save one of the largest oil paintings in the world.

The 91-year-old painting is 50 feet high, 408 feet long, weighs 18,000 pounds and hangs from a pipe bent to form a circle. It is rotting, tearing, peeling, stretching and getting moldy from years of neglect.

And for decades it has been a major tourist attraction in Atlanta, because it depicts the Civil War battle of Atlanta fought on July 22, 1864.

Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson is spearheading a move to preserve this artistic Civil War shrine, which is owned by the City. He has appointed Gudmund Vigtel, director of Atlanta's prestigious High Museum, to head a committee to determine what has to be done to restore the painting.

The cyclorama which collects about \$200,000 a year in admissions, had been allowed to deteriorate. For about 20 years its income had been diverted into the city's general fund instead of being used for upkeep of the painting and building.

Vigtel said the problems of restoring the painting are gargantuan. An admirer of the Cleveland Museum and its staff, he has invited Painting Conservator Ross Merrill of the Cleveland Museum to travel to Atlanta to examine the damage. Merrill said he would be glad to serve as a consultant.

"A leak in the ceiling has caused water damage," explained Vigtel. "And after years of hanging from a pipe, the canvas has stretched so that it is wider at the bottom than at the top. It was painted in 12-foot-wide strips. It is likely that the painting must be taken apart at the seams, cleaned, backed, relined and reassembled. The trick is going to be precisely how to do it."

"One reason it is worth preserving is that it is not only of historical interest but it is also very well painted. The team of German academic artists who painted it were excellent. The crowd scenes are depicted with great feeling for the subject and vividly suggest the confusion of battle."

The story of how the painting was created is also part of America's art heritage. The artists were hired by William Wehner, who managed the American Panorama Co. in Milwaukee. The Germans had worked on a number of cycloramas glorifying German victories in the Franco-Prussian War.

The 12 artists had their specialties - landscape, figure and animal painting. The idea was to roll the painting up and travel with it,

exhibiting it in temporary wooden buildings and charging admission.

In 1883-84 the team worked on a canvas depicting the battle of Missionary Ridge (the Civil War battle near Chattanooga). The painting was destroyed by a tornado in Nashville in 1892.

They tackled "Battle of Atlanta" in the summer of 1885, just 21 years after the conflict, by erecting a wooden tower 40 feet high in Atlanta. From the tower they could make oil sketches and study the wartime landmarks and compare the landscape with official battle reports and military maps.

Theodore Davis, who witnessed and sketched the battle for Harper's Weekly, was on hand to give advice. So were a number of Confederate veterans, who wandered by as sidewalk superintendants.

GEORGE THOMAS SAYS, "A OK!" - By fellow member Ray Swanson

James B. Steedman was born of Scotch descent in Northumberland County, Pa., on July 29, 1817. At the age of 15 he worked for a printing firm in Lewisburg, Pa. and later acquired control of the Northwestern Democrat newspaper in Napoleon, Ohio. A number of years later, he joined forces with General Gibson in constructing the Toledo, Wabash & Western Railroad. In 1847-48 he was a member of the Ohio legislature and in 1849 went to California looking for gold but soon returned to Ohio. In 1857 he became Public Printer under President Buchanan's administration and in 1860 was a delegate to the Charleston National Democratic Convention.

At the outbreak of the War he became colonel of the Fourth Ohio Regiment. He was promoted to the rank of brigadier-general for outstanding service at the battle of Perryville and in July, 1863, was given command of the First Division of the Reserve Corps of the Army of the Cumberland.

At the battle of Chickmauga General Steedman's true character became apparent. His division had been posted at "Red House" bridge over the Chickmauga river and he was ordered to hold it at all hazards. The battle commenced on Saturday, September 19, 1863 and it was soon evident that a large battle was in the making. Both General Granger (his superior) and Steedman were dissatisfied; there was no enemy in front of them but they knew General Thomas was hard pressed by the overwhelming force thrown against his army. Longstreet's corps from Richmond had reinforced Bragg's army on Saturday evening and on Sunday morning the battle was renewed with mounting ferocity. The right and left Union flanks had been broken and Rosecrans had apparently given up all hope of reorganizing the disordered forces. He returned to Chattanooga to prepare for a siege.

General Thomas and his brave Fourteenth corps although driven back by overwhelming numbers had rallied in the center and were holding firm, repelling assault after assault of the whole rebel line. But they were worn down by superior numbers and their ammunition was

almost exhausted. Generals Granger and Steedman marched their men to this critical area guided only by the sound of cannon fire. The confederates had occupied a ridge which threatened the entire army and at this critical time General Steedman personally led the advance of the Union forces carrying the regimental colors himself. The Confederates were cleared off the hill but charged twice and were repelled. While forming for a third charge the Union forces found themselves completely out of ammunition. The order was given to fix bayonets and charge and the Confederates were driven back again. This was at the close of the day and that night Thomas collected his battered forces and retreated to Chattanooga.

For his outstanding courage and services, Steedman was promoted to the rank of Major-General on July 24, 1864. He took part in the Atlanta campaign under Sherman. In the battle of Nashville in 1864 he displayed unusual vigor and aided General Woods in storming Overton Hill.

After the War was over, Steedman was appointed provisional governor of Georgia and later Collector of Internal Revenue at New Orleans. He then returned to Ohio where he engaged in business and in 1879 was elected to the Ohio State Senate. Steedman then held other local offices in Toledo until his death in 1883.

After the War was over, General Thomas had been asked, "Who was the best division commander in your command, the most trustworthy and efficient?" Thomas replied without hesitation, "Steedman."

THE INITIALS SHOULD BE "F. G."! (INSIDE JOKE)

New Marker Found On Battlefield. (From the Gettysburg Times of May 27, 1977.) The Gettysburg CWRT was shown the 'newest monument on the field' during its meeting Thursday evening on Little Round Top.

Lt. Col. Jacob M. Sheads, who conducted a walking tour for the group, concluded the walk near the 20th Maine marker. At that spot someone recently has placed a bronze marker stating, 'There is on earth no worthier grave to hold the bodies of the brave than that place of pain and pride where they nobly fought and so nobly died.' also on the marker are the initials 'J. K.'.

Sheds said park officials claim to know nothing of the marker or how it got there. He suggested the initials 'J. K.' might refer to a quotation from John Keats. But others in the party suggested that since the small placque appears to commemorate the deeds of the 20th Maine regiment, that perhaps the 'J. K.' is a descendant of a member of the Maine Civil War regiment.