

The Charger

CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

P.O. BOX 5028 • CLEVELAND, OHIO 44101

October, 1979

191st Meeting

Volume 23 No. 9

DATE: TUESDAY, OCTOBER 9th
SPEAKER: MEMBER AND FORMER PRESIDENT JIM CHAPMAN
SUBJECT: "THE MONITOR AND THE MERRIMAC"
PLACE: THE HERMIT CLUB, Dodge Court
HAPPY HOUR: 6:00 P.M.

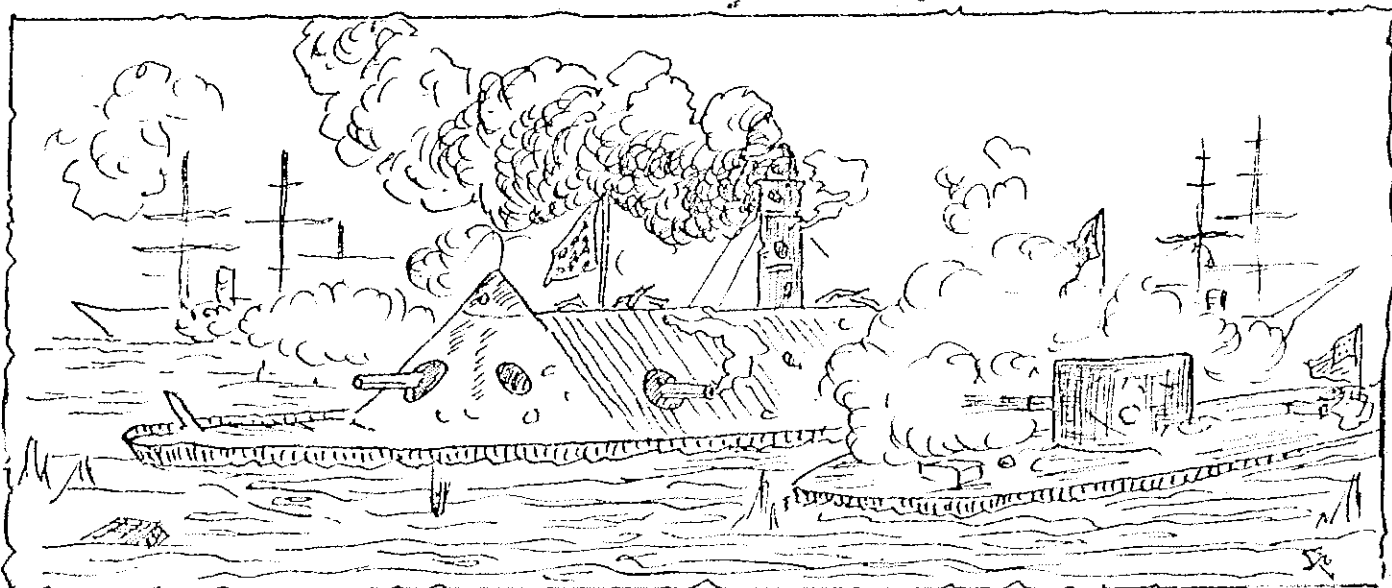
DINNER: 7:00 P.M.

James E. Chapman, as if he needed any introduction, is an attorney in the firm of Baker and Hostetler, a graduate of Ohio State University (cum laude); attended Mexico City College in 1950; is Juris Doctor, College of Law, Ohio State University (cum laude); Editor-in-Chief of the Ohio State Law Journal in 1954. Served in the U.S. Army, 1945 to 1947, and is a member of the Ohio State and American Bar Associations. He is a 32 degree Mason (Scottish Rite) and is a former President of the Cleveland Civil War Round Table.

On two previous occasions Jim Chapman has addressed the Club; one, "Blockade-How The Navy Won The War," and the other on Admiral David G. Farragut. Those who heard these talks know how thoroughly he goes into his subjects, and we can all look forward to a rewarding evening devoted to "The Monitor and the Merrimac." Jim has actually gone over "the ground" (by boat) where this classic duel took place.

* * * * *

Which One Really Won ?



CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

Founded Nov. 19, 1957

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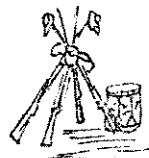
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On Battlefield Preservation

Urban encroachment was cited as the main enemy of Civil War Battlefields by Dr. Robert Meinhard at our September 11th meeting. Meinhard, professor of history at Winona State U., Winona, Minn. said the second problem was the increasing use of battlefield parks for recreational purposes. "In some cases they have had to close the parks to let some leave before letting others in." Some master plans, he said, stress recreation rather than appreciation of the historical values, and "battlefield parks were never created for recreation. They were created to remember what happened there in 1861-65... recreation increases vandalism and littering.

A third problem at park service areas is living history with the interpretation having nothing to do with the battle or the war. He complained of the use of women on the gun crews and that the amount

of cannon and musket-firing does little to interpret history. The automobile was also blamed as "an intruder on the historic scene" and Dr. Meinhard called for its abolishment and cited the use of park road by commuters to compete with visitors to the (Frederickburg, Va.) battlefields.

He called for "interested and concerned people" to press for zoning to preserve our historic resources, and charged that our enemies were towers, amusement parks, high rises, sewerage plants, shopping centers and interstate highways. The talk was illustrated with excellent colored slides of various battlefields.

Our speaker urged us to individually DO Something, such as taking a few minutes to write to our own Congressmen and Senators; and to key Senators Byrd, Warner and Bumpers. Just state how you feel about the extension of the Bull Run Battlefield and the preservation of the others. Every card or letter will help. The Cleveland CWRT officers and board endorse this 100%. We are certainly "interested and concerned people," and it is our duty to ACT NOW.

How to Write Your Congressmen

Writing your congressman or senators is a simple matter. You do not need a street address or a room number. Just address your letter to Congressman _____, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515. Or Senator _____, U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510.

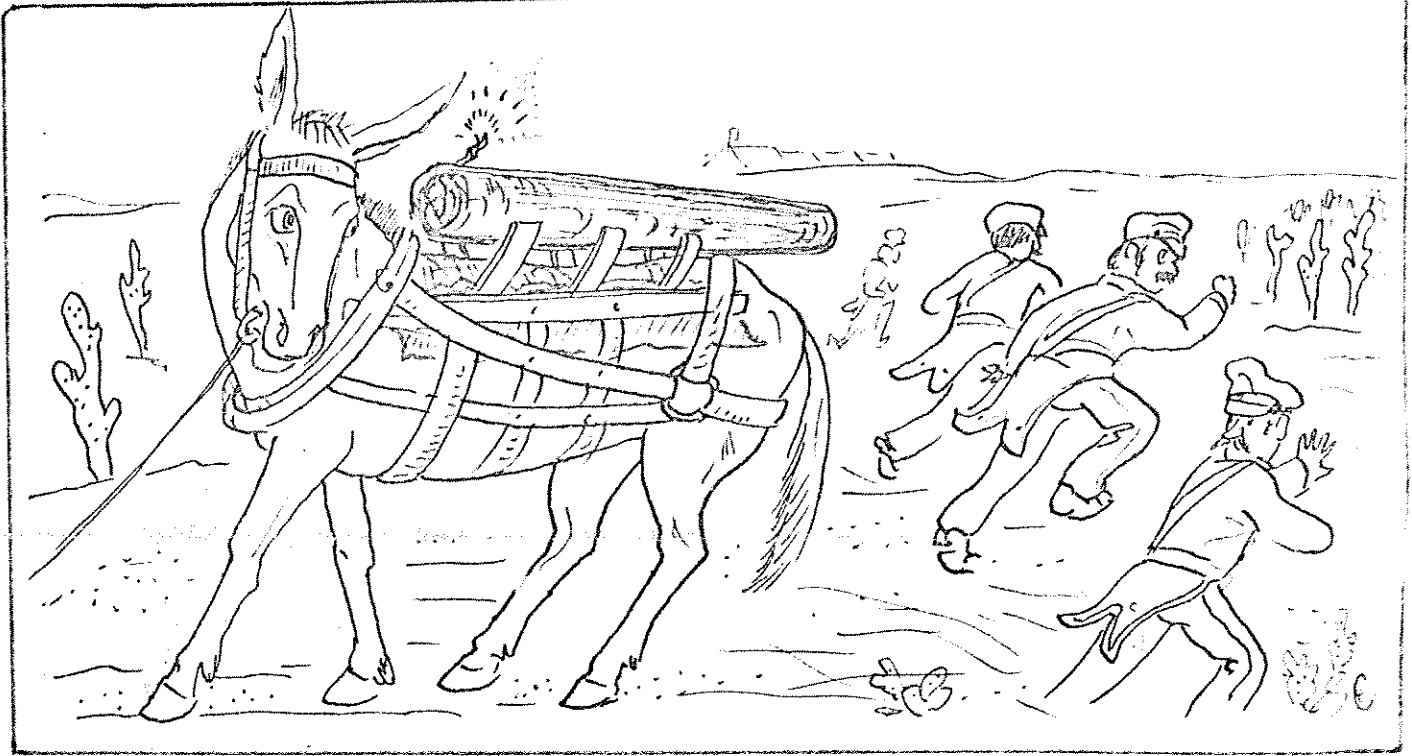
DO IT! NOW!

Write to support HR 5048 to expand the Manassas Battlefield by 1,715 acres of actual battlefield. The Prince William County Board opposes this because they have been trying to expand their tax base for years. The Greater Manassas Chamber of Commerce opposes the bill because they want to use this land for industrial expansion.

We should bear in mind that these are NATIONAL Battlefield Parks; they were not established for the convenience of local communities.

Tell our stellar leaders in Washington in your own words that these parks were established to commemorate those who died there, and not for the benefit of jogger, baseball players, picnickers...not for fast food corporations, who fight on hallowed ground for the best sauces, fries and crispiest chicken.

Scenes I'd Like to Have Seen



During the Mexican War, Capt. Sam Grant was a conscientious quartermaster. One time he and some buddy officers were discussing improvements in mobile artillery. It may have come out of a flowing bowl, but the idea of strapping a cannon to the back of a mule sounded pretty good - much faster for changing a gun location than with a six-horse team. So they decided to experiment.

The gun tube was fastened to a mule, and given a good charge of black powder and rather than bother with a lanyard and friction fuse, they simply attached a long regular fuse. They lighted it and stood back.

But they didn't count on the curiosity of a mule. When he heard the fuse start to sputter, he turned 'round and 'round, trying to find out where the hissing was coming from. Every time he turned around, the barrel was pointed at the experimenters - who naturally had to run and duck every which way.

When the gun finally went off it blew the mule about twenty feet in a jumble of legs, straps and buckles.

Thanks to Bernie Drews
for this information.

BOOK SALE IN NOV.

This year our annual sale will be expanded to include all books, manuals, and other military material on ALL WARS. In addition we are offering military artifacts, such as old uniform swords, guns, bayonets, leather and web accouterments, in fact, anything of a military nature.

Co-chairmen Drews and Heckaman are providing a home pick-up service. Call them:

Drews: Office- 491 6767

Home - 442 4611

Heckaman: Office- 522-1350

Home: 382 0915 or 381 5996

Items should be in hands of committee by the October 9 meeting, with Prices. If desired above two troopers will help you with pricing.

Call Berny if you'd like to be a panelist on Quizz Program at November Meetg.

Fate of the Monitor

In late 1862 John Ericson's 987-ton turreted ironclad warship, "Monitor" was being towed by the sidewheeler U.S.S. "Rhode Island" to Beauford, N. C., through very rough seas. Her strange proportions (172 feet long, 41½ feet wide, with a 10½ foot draft) were no match for an ocean gale. The Atlantic accomplished what the "Merrimac" couldn't, and the "Monitor" sank with a loss of 16 men, somewhere south of Cape Hatteras. There she nestled along with some 500 other wrecks off the Virginia-Carolina coast.

Many attempts were made to find the famous fighter, but it wasn't until 111 years later that it was definitely located, resting on her gun turret, hull up in 220 feet of water 16 miles southwest of Cape Hatteras. In 1975 it was designated a Marine Sanctuary and was placed under control of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

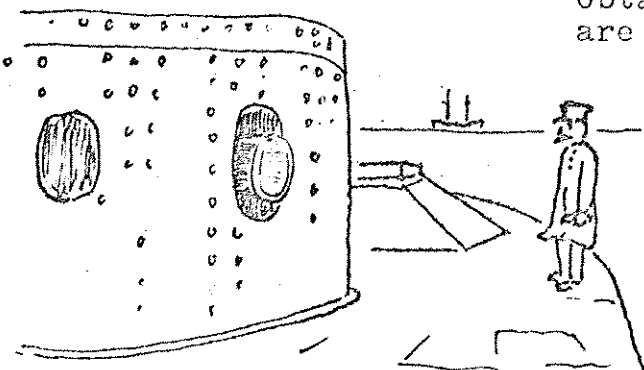
In 1977 Comdr. Phillip Johnson headed a search sponsored by NOAA and the Harbor Branch Foundation using two submarines plus supporting craft. For the first time the wreck was seen by the human eye. Two artifacts were retrieved: a brass lantern with red glass, and a heavily barnacled, irregular iron bottom plate. So at last the "Monitor" was thoroughly photographed for scientific and preservation purposes. It had taken 117 days to launch her, one night to sink, and 111 years to find. The question is, how long will it take to raise her?

Salvage experts figure it will take \$10 million to recover the vessel, and the Florida Division of Archives, History and Records Management estimate a tab of \$110 million to preserve it. An example of the possible expenses is the treatment of the ship's recovered lantern. Since 1977 this artifact has been in a casement of distilled water at Smithsonian Institution undergoing "leaching," a process to prevent oxidation and remove impurities. Such technical work runs about \$6,000 for this item alone. Wood and iron have to be treated differently, and the "Monitor's" deck planking is 17 inches thick, covered with ¾ inch iron plate.

Much discussion and various opinions have been argued over the fate of the "foremost among America's maritime treasures that lie beneath the sea." In 1978 the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the North Carolina Division of Archives and History sponsored a conference in Raleigh to assess these opinions. The forum, called "The "Monitor": Its Meaning and Future," was attended by geologists, conservators, marine archaeologists, engineers, historians and government officials. Two opposing points of view became evident, the wait-for-a-comprehensive-plan proponent versus the raise-her-now group. Other experts advocate leaving the derelict where it sank.

The Union gunboat "Cairo," (discovered by Ed Bearss) was badly mangled in an effort to raise her from the mud of the Yazoo River, and only 30% of the wood survived. Questions and problems multiply the more one thinks about it - so join the crowd and speculate about what will be done.

Proceedings of the above Conference may be obtained in printed form for \$6.50. If you are interested contact Stu Cramer.



Left: comparative size of "Monitor" turret. Pilot house forward was crushed.

BOOK REVIEW by FRED GILL

A STRANGE AND UNLOVABLE MAN

JEFFERSON DAVIS by Clement Eaton. The Free Press, N.Y. 1977

What one believes about Civil War events and people depends on what one has read and because so little has been written to read about the President of the Confederacy, I have never had a clear picture of the man. Everyone remembers his strange backing of Bragg in the near mutiny of his subordinate officers in Tennessee, and the story of his flight from Richmond subsequent capture are certainly well-known. Otherwise, to me anyway, he has been a misty figure in the background of great events. Compared to the volume of writing about other great figures of the time, the biography in this book lists only nine Davis biographies, the most recent nearly thirty years old.

Now I have plowed through this biography and can understand a little why more has not been written about the man. He was in the main simply not very interesting. If you can believe his contemporaries, extensively quoted by the author, he was difficult, enigmatic and really unlovable. James Seddon, one of Davis' many secretaries of war, once said Davis was one of the most difficult men to get along with he had ever known. In four years Davis had six secretaries of war, which should tell us something. His meddling in military matters was little short of disastrous. But then suppose he had become general in chief instead of president as was suggested before the convention in Montgomery? The Confederacy might well have collapsed in 1862. Or, at least, so it seems to me.

A good biography should, for me, anyway, start at the beginning and end at the end. Here the author has strung together a series of essays on Davis and the chronology flits here and there in time and makes the reading dull and confusing..

Further, to make the reading difficult, is the author's verbose style. Professor Eaton is a scholar of great repute, as the book demonstrates, but his prose style proves again unhappily that professors simply do not write well. For instance take this passage from page 233: "...he explained Lee's withdrawal from Pennsylvania after the battle of Gettysburg as caused by the extraordinary flooding of the Potomac River that prevented the supplies upon which he relied from reaching the army." Just for fun I eliminated fifteen of the thirty-three words, changed the tense of one, and at least the passage ran and did not ramble, even if the facts are wrong.



* * * * *

Lincoln...

re:

*The Monitor
before the
confrontation
with the
Merrimac.*

Hon. Sec. of Navy

My dear Sir

I have just seen Lieut Wordon, who says the "Monitor" could be boarded and captured very easily first, after boarding by wedging the turret, so that it would not turn, and then by pouring water in her and drowning her machinery -- He is decidedly of the opinion she should not go sky larking up to Norfolk.

Yours truly

A. Lincoln

Executive Mansion
March 10, 1862

A Report on the 1979 Field Trip to Shiloh

Invasion forces of the Cleveland CWRT, widely scattered, began their movement toward the target area of Shiloh, Tennessee, several days before the final rendezvous date of Thursday, September 20th.

Our fighter airforce, Bob Thum, flew from his base at Dorset, Vt., on Monday, but because of weather was grounded in Kentucky and finished the rest of the journey from Bowling Green on wheels. "Heavy vehicles" Leigh Tanger drove a van from Pineville, Arkansas; Commander and Quartermaster John Harkness moved troopers Riel and McCrea in his personnel carrier; Heidi Heidelbaugh drove from Florida (with a charming companion); our medical Corps, Chamberlin, and Armsmaster Drew sped down in a fast weapons carrier while the balance of the force Clarke, Cramer, Bayless, Bates and Spiegle met at Hopkins Field for air transport by Delta, without benefit of commissary. Combat Commander Ed Bearss flew from Washington, D.C..

At noon on 20 September, the assembled force at Shiloh National Military Park visited the Park Service museum and saw a movie reviewing the great battle. They then started a rainy march at Farley Field, where the Confederates debouched from the woods and surprised Sherman's camp at 5 A.M., April 6th, 1862.

In his incredible manner, Ed Bearss led the men from one point to another, explaining and dramatizing each step as the Rebels pushed back the flanks of the Union army. At one point some of the troops elected to sash through the woods to see the mass Confederate grave, where 700 unknown were buried, but they made a wrong turn and Ed had to go after and rescue them. Meanwhile, back at Shiloh Church the others waited, mostly under umbrellas. Bernie was heard to say, "When people say we're nuts, I almost think they're right." The whole bunch then slogged half a mile along the sunken road that marked the "Hornet's Nest," where the Yankee General Prentiss gained four precious hours that denied the Confederates a complete victory that first day, but lost his whole regiment.

That night they bivouaced at Corinth Holiday Inn, 20 miles south, and after hot showers and inner fortifications, returned to famous Catfish Inn, at Shiloh on the Tennessee (sic). Huge platters of delicious catfish and pitcher of beer were consumed. Back at the bivouac the usual songs, stories and limericks were heard that sent everyone to bed in a good mood. (Clarke and Cramer stayed up to watch "Custer's Last Stand". "No scalp 'em, him brave brave.")

Friday early reveille and a fresh Bearss led a bleary cavalcade on the route taken by Nathan Bedford Forrest's little army to take care of the superior force of General Sturgis, who had been sent out to destroy "that Devil Forrest".

Sign seen at a hamburger joint on the road to Booneville: "If an onion rings answer it."

Forrest planned his battle at Brice's Crossroads, craftily taking advantage of his knowledge of the terrain and correctly predicting the weather and how it would affect the enemy infantrymen. Ed Bearss guided our troopers from place to place along Tishamingo Creek. At the Crossroads, a local female resident joined the group and added a few confused two-cents worth, telling some she had lived there 46 years and had seen the battle as a girl 117 years ago (or maybe this recorder didn't have his earphone turned up.) After clobbering Sturgis, Old Bedford "kept the skeer on 'em" as the Federals fell back. We saw Hatchie Bottom, where over 200 wagons and some 16 guns got bogged and lost. Sturgis abandoned each place he decided to defend and kept going back faster, at last uttering the height of futile statements as the Confederates continued to press him, "If Mr. Forrest will let me alone, I will let him alone." He finally fled back to Memphis on a train and left his army to straggle back as best it could. It is said that General Foche used this battle as a perfect example of plan, execution and follow-up, when he taught at L'Ecole Militaire.

That night our troops messed in a private diningroom at the Holiday Inn and enjoyed a Fish Jamboree buffet - except for a few who had eaten too many catfish the night before and preferred "chewin' meat."

There was a little magic and sleight-of-hand before the tired Clevelanders went back up to their bull-sessions, but none stayed up very late. Pooped.

On Saturday, after a hefty buffet breakfast (and what a blessing this turned out for some who went back to Cleveland later on Delta, the airline that feed its passengers peanuts for dinner,) they did the battles at Iuka and Tupelo.

At one point the caravan followed the same route taken by the forces of A.J. Smith's Union Army as it was falling back, followed by General Stephen Lee's Confederates, and, at a different time, by Grierson's successful cavalry raid. The only way to put all these marches, skirmishes and battles in their proper order is to read Ed Bearss's latest book, Forrest at Brice's Corners which also includes the Corinth and Tupelo campaigns.

Before leaving Tupelo, it must be admitted that the car caravan went several miles out of the way so that some of the younger members could say that they had visited the birthplace of Elvis Presley. (A very tiny house built by his father - oh love me tender!) Also, at one point the cars pulled over on the road and the gang got out to cross the street and stand there deployed while Ed pointed out across the fields to a Union position. One of the locals drove up, parked in front of the cars, leaped out and ran across the road to see what everyone was looking at. He returned to his little truck mumbling to himself. At another stop a teen-ager came running up the street while the group was standing in a woods listening to Ed, "Whashappnd, whassapened???" Someone informed the kid (there was considerable argument afterwards whether it had been a boy or a girl) that they were investigating a shooting. It might also be mentioned in passing that Tupelo is the home of the Tupelo Branch of Itawamba Junior College.

On the way back two buses were passed, one bearing the name "Apostolic Airlin" and the other, "Glory Wagon."

During the past two and a half days, miles of that weird blight, the KUDZU plant were passed. At first glance it looks like a grapevine, hanging from trees, but the broad leaves of this Japanese horror are about 4"x4" and grow on long stems - many inches in a 12-hour period - covering the ground, bushes, trees, in fact enveloping anything in its way. It grows up and down the tree forming a veritable blanket that shrouds with its thick-woven leaves forming crazy shapes that look like something out of science fiction. Frightening!

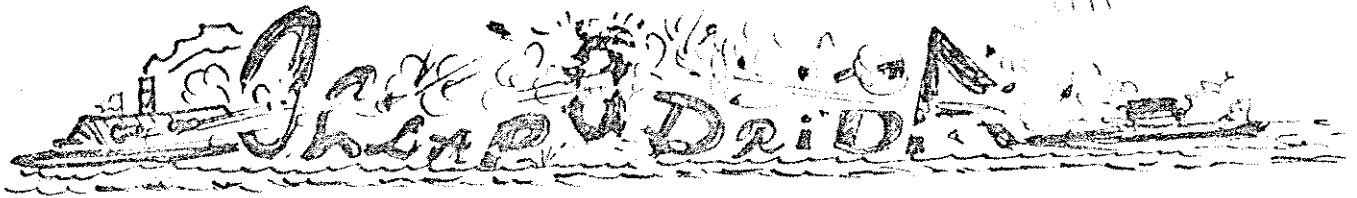
Back to Shiloh. Here is the solemn, the silent, the impressive National Cemetery on the left bank leading down to Pittsburgh Landing, where over 3,500 Union soldiers are interred, only one third of them identified. While down at the landing a gigantic five-barge coal combination was pushed by, by the "Mister Charles Walker" giant tugboat. A BONUS SIGHT.

The last stop within this well-kept, magnificent park was to deploy and examine the ground where General Lew Wallace arrived on the night of the 6th, from Camp's Landing via Stoney Lonesome.

But our adventures were not quite over. At Corinth, where we checked out, at one of the main crossroads, the KU KLUX KLAN were out in full garb, passing out handbills for a rally. John Harkness is to be congratulated for a fine job of planning and coordinating this field trip - right down to all the unexpected extras.



Bill Bates said sheets are available at Higbees.



During the Civil War, subluxation was made illegal. If I have my facts straight this practise of pulling diseased or dead teeth and replacing them with good ones extracted from a corpse became so popular that the market for the latter skyrocketed. It was made illegal because it was found that too many wounded, lying on battlefields unconscious, would awaken to find themselves toothless!

* * * * *

Food for Thought: Why are the portraits of Civil War Generals all un-smiling? (Question submitted by Fred Gill, who avowed that indeed they had little to smile about.)

Or did they have bad teeth? Or no teeth? Or was it the fashion in pre-Victorian and Victorian times for subjects to look grim, as do our forebears in our family albums of antique photos? Or was it that the photographic process then called for holding a smile too long to make it look natural?

* * * * *

Pennsylvania was not the only state to form a regiment of lancers. In March, 1862, the State of Texas announced that Colonel James P. Morgan had been commissioned to raise a regiment of lancers. He did. And it fought in Sibley's campaign in New Mexico. Like the Pennsylvanians, these Texans found the lance awkward and ineffective.

In medieval times, the pennons fastened to the ends of the lances were put there for the purpose of making the horse against whom the knight was charging shy away from the fluttering cloth.

The pennons used in later wars were for martial appearance and identification of regiment.

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Vol. I of Around the World With Gen. Grant

tells of a discussion between Gen'l. Grant and Bismark about the obsolescence of the bayonet. Yet a 1/4 Century later, the armies of W.W.I. were issued this weapon by the hundreds of thousands.

* * * * *

"What do you do for congestions?" asked one C. doctor of another. "Well was the reply, there are three things I get the best results from: I purge 'em, or I bleed 'em. Now-a-days, it would be either blue

white or red pills. . . right, Doc? * * * * *

In the July issue of the Charger, a General Armistead was mentioned as being in command of the U.S. Army in Florida during the Seminole War. It has since been learned that he was the father of the General Armistead who was killed at Gettysburg during Pickett's charge.