



THE CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

P. O. BOX 5028, CLEVELAND, OHIO 44101

SEPTEMBER 1974

Vol 18 No. 1

_____ 146th Meeting _____

DATE: TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 1974

SPEAKER: EDWIN C. BEARSS

SUBJECT: ANDERSONVILLE

PLACE: THE G.A.R. HALL in Peninsula

PRELIMINARIES: 7:00 PM DINNER: 7:30 PM

EDWIN C. BEARSS

The members of the Cleveland Civil War Round Table will greet an old friend and hear a noted National Park Service Historian and authority on the Vicksburg campaign at the same time. He's Edwin C. Bearss and his subject will be "Andersonville."

Now stationed at Washington, D.C. in the Eastern Service Center, National Park Service, Office of History and Historic Architecture, Mr. Bearss spent several years at the Vicksburg National Military Park. While there he worked with the Mississippi Commission on the War Between the States, was the organizer of the Mississippi Civil War Round Table, and made intensive studies of the Stones River, Five Forks, Wilson's Creek and Fort Donelson operations. He had a leading part in the location and raising of the sunken Union gunboat, Cairo, in the Yazoo River and made studies for the Park Service of the Wilson's Creek National Battlefield and the Pea Ridge National Military Park at Rogers, Ark.

He is one of the half-dozen historians who have been presented the Harry Truman Award for meritorious service in the field of Civil War History. Mr. Bearss received his master's degree in history at Indiana University, after studying at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. and during World War II was with a Marine raider battalion in the invasions of Guadalcanal and New Britain.

Books by the speaker include DECISION IN MISSISSIPPI (Little Rock Pioneer Press, 1962); Hardluck Ironclad (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1966), and Fort Smith, Little Gibraltar on the Arkansas (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1969).

MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS - MOST IMPORTANT!

We have had to guarantee attendance of 50 men to engage the GAR Hall. Western Reserve CWRT is also involved. Please call Guy now for your reservation now. Please attend and make this one of the biggest meetings for our group. Call now 687-2803.

1974 - 1975 OFFICERS

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DUES

Would you believe that there are still over a dozen men who have forgotten to mail in their 1874 dues. Our new treasurer's first order of business will be to contact those of you who have forgotten this most important item.

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MEMBERSHIP

Several members have asked about the membership status of the Round Table. Currently our roster stands at 82 members. We have an authorized limit of 100. As you can see there is currently room for additional members. See Secretary Guy Di Carlo for membership applications.

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The 39th New York
"Garibaldi Guards"

They were a temperamental, untamed, capriciously officered, courageous body of men, the first three-year regiment recruited in New York, whose career had become more checkered as the war progressed. They were a goodly representation of most of the armies of Europe, three companies being Hungarian, three German, one Italian, one Swiss, one French, one Spanish and one Portuguese. They were at both battles of Bull Run, with Fremont at Cross Keys, and with Blenker; and it was not a surprise to hear either that one of the companies had mutinied or that they had stood heroically in some action.

When at Centerville, Va., their Hungarian count-colonel Frederick G. d'Utassy, lived in the most splendid house and had his meals sumptuously cooked in Washington, thirty miles away, then gently transported by ambulance, packed so artfully that they could be placed before him warm and palatable.

The "Guards" became involved with Colonel Dixon S. Miles in the Harper's Ferry garrison during Lee's Maryland campaign. When Miles ignominiously lifted the white flag and they became prisoners and parolees, their esprit de corps plunged downward. The soldiers of fortune among their officers slackened the reins. The men were anything but responsive soldiers when they passed under the command of Alexander Hays.

They claimed for one thing that they had not been exchanged properly, and consequently were still on parole and not subject to duty. D'Utassy encouraged them in this belief, which Hays, who knew it was groundless, "knocked out of their heads." Then he reorganized the regiment. Among the first to go was D'Utassy with his caterers. He mustered out a goodly number of lackadaisical noncommissioned and some commissioned officers, and put an efficient Prussian Major Hugo Hildebrandt, in command. Thus this regiment of many tongues was made into a sturdy fighting unit in time for service under Hancock at Gettysburg.

from Glenn Tucker's "HANCOCK THE SUPERB".....

THE COURIER
of
THE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE OF CLEVELAND, OHIO
FOUNDED FEBRUARY 19, 1957

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SCENES FROM OUR LIFE IN THE SOUTH
BURNING OF BOWLING GREEN HOUSE

by
Mrs. M. B. McGehee

Published in the "Army and Navy Herald" January 5th, 1865.

October 26, 1864.

Reverend Sir:

An opportunity is offered me by which letters can be sent to the North without being subjected to the inspection of the officials of the free and happy (sic) Government of the United States. I avail myself of this opportunity to send you a chapter from the history of the Southern Confederacy of rather "Scenes from our life in the South."

I ask you, then, to imagine a bright and lovely morning in October in which a family of six persons, an aged father of seventy-eight years, a mother, three daughters, and a little grandson, are startled by the awful boom of cannon and the rattle of musketry, tearing and crashing among the oaks and bushes surrounding their home. In a few minutes, fugitives are seen hastening from the scene of unequal conflict where less than a hundred Confederate cavalry meet and contend with more than fifteen hundred Federals. Some of these unfortunates fly to the shelter of the cotton and corn fields which are near the mansion and thus escape their pursurers. A few minutes more and a body of negro cavalry, armed to the teeth, enter the enclosure and surround the dwelling, some of them pushing their way into its apartments. Exert all your powers of conception and description--they cannot exceed the scene which I would now present to you.

The apartment of a daughter on the lower floor and in the wing of the building, were first entered. The doors are rudely burst open with oaths and curses, pistols are leveled at the heart of the young lady who "dared to fasten the door," against these foul intruders. Sir, I ask you to suppose this your daughter; I ask you to see your child in her maiden purity standing between her sister, ill and in bed, and these hideous human fiends, who, with foul oaths and obscene abuse, are threatening her life and forcing their way to the bedside of the invalid. I ask you to conceive, if you can, of the mother's feeling, who hastens to the protection of her daughters, and who, while ordering these miscreant from her presence, is answered by cowardly blows and curses, too vile to be remembered, but too terrible to be forgotten. Follow the mother from this scene to another part of the dwelling -listen yourself- while she hears the shot fired at the

hall door, the door which separated her husband from the wild beasts who are hunting him. See! The door is opened! They rush into the hall to hear those words- "Damned old scoundrel, what did you shut that old door against us for?" Unarmed, alone, he stands while heavy blows from a horseman's pistol and from a sabre fall on that venerable head- venerable with its white hairs, venerable for every virtue which can dignify manhood. Faint, staggering, deadly pale, see him dragged by ruffian hands through his own door! Look! His wife interposes her own person between him and his foes. Watch the pistol is pointed at her head and hear the oaths and obscenity with which she is insulted, a negro draws his sabre, bravely flourishes it over her head and threatens her life; but as she looks unflinchingly at him, the coward quails and the cold steel falls in a heavy, but not fatal blow on that bare head. You are a husband--conceive if possible, of your feelings in witnessing such an outrage on the head of your wife, yourself helpless, unarmed, surrounded by men, more cruel, more brutal than the brutes. Where are the officers of these men which these outrages are being perpetrated? One white man on horseback is seen among the crowd of negroes at the door of the meat house, which is opened, and its contents distributed. He is appealed to by the wife to rescue her husband, to protect herself and daughters from further insult. Does he do it? No Sir, he repels her with fierce invectives only less abusive than these of his menials and turning to them says "Take him off, George, take the old scoundrel to the Colonel and tell him they are cooking rations for a hundred Rebels here this morning." About this time two officers are seen approaching from the front gate. The master of the house is permitted to meet them and enter his own door.

Meantime, the robbers, disguised as United States soldiers are not idle. The large range of basement store-rooms swarm with the black crew, every door is burst open and all their contents given up to unbounded pillage. All that constitutes the abundance of a wealthy home is there, all that housewifely skill and forethought provide and prepare for a household is there, all are either devoured, destroyed or carried off. Barrels of sugar are broken open and the sugar taken away in bags, hats, and handkerchiefs, and what cannot be taken is strewn like sand upon the floor. Jar after jar of sweetmeats, catsup, pickles, jam and sauces are eaten and the jars dashed to pieces. Rich syrups and delicate jellies saturate the pavement. The dairy is invaded and the contents of the basins are drunk and the basins are broken into fragments. The domestic wines meet the same fate--the bottles and demi jons which cannot be drunk up or carried off are broken. Nothing escapes them. Hams, soaps, lard, candles are mingled in one mass and mad waste; or are removed by the thieves and the comrades in crime, whom they find in the plantation negroes.

This is not all. While the scenes of bold theft are being enacted a part of the troop have set fire to the gin house, with all its valuable contents and machinery in the diabolical hope and belief that confederate soldiers are concealed there; and the flames are already rising over the roof. But this is only the beginning of these fraternal proceedings, which are designed to induce the South to return to the old Union and to renew the ties of amity which once existed between here and the North.

The officers before alluded to consult together and after a few minutes, the master of the household sees his wife. The result of the conference is told in these words, "Mary, our house is to be set on fire in twenty minutes, we have only that time to save what we can. Once more an attempt is made to reach the sense of compassion and of justice in these hard men. "Madame," is the only reply of the Major, "I wish you to understand that I am not acting on my own discretion. I am only obeying orders." "What have I done," said the aged father and husband, "that my family are to be expelled from their home and my house to be burned?" "Sir", was the reply of this same officer, "you

are losing time; if your family are not out in twenty minutes, the house will be burned over their heads."

The work of destruction has already begun. The table was laid for breakfast, a few strokes of the sabre in willing hands and the glass and china are swept from it; the table itself is overturned and broken into pieces; the overturned table and table cloth are piled for kindling in the middle of the apartment. The axe now resounds through the building while they split up furniture, bannister railings and other combustibles to add fuel to the fire. The pictures on the walls of the dining room, portraits of honored and beloved friends are the object of insult and abuse. The benignant face of Bishop McKendree is slashed with a sabre; Webster and Clay are hurled from their places of honor; loud oaths and vulgar slang rises above these sounds of destruction. That apartment, so often the scene of a large hospitality, where innocent festivity has made the "foot of time to trend on flowers"; where the pleasant reunion of families has commemorated domestic anniversaries; where the grandsire had caressed the meeting had made this earthly home a faint type and foreshadowing of a better, even an heavenly home, this apartment, so endeared, is now filled with smoke and flames.

Proceed, sir, to the lofty and spacious parlors, and there contemplate the works of these "Missionaries of Civilization and Philanthropy" as with wonderful celerity, they execute the orders of their superiors, and show how well they have learned the lessons taught in the certain well known Journal of Civilization." In less than twenty minutes, turpentine is poured every where and those beautiful rooms, with their valuable books and furniture with all their articles of taste and beauty, are one wide sheet of flame.

But they pause not here. Greedy as wolves, these robber soldiers hurry through the dwelling; the attic with its immense stores in ransacked; from room to room they pass, bearing household goods, precious articles, every one of the dear and familiar, making part of that beloved home. In spite of smoke and flame, the pillage goes on, every bureau, every parlor, every secret closet, is searched, and the plunderers are laden with every possible variety of booty to be obtained from such a mansion. Rich silk dresses and soft cashmeres float over their saddles as they ride away; ladies' scarfs and mantles hang from their filthy shoulders; ladies delicate handkerchiefs and curtains, linen and blunders, boots and gentlemen's clothing are borne off as trophies of the "Great Federal Victory."

Up the broad staircase, tongues of flame are now shooting from the heaped up combustibles at its foot. But once more, and for the last time, ascend and visit with me those beloved apartments. This was occupied by a dear suffering son, from hence he ascended to Heaven. This is a daughter's chamber filled with numberless beautiful articles such as young womanhood loved to surround herself with, books and flowers, vases and plants, soft curtains and low chairs. These chambers have afforded rest and quiet to many a weary head. The invalid, with shattered lung, flying from the keen blasts of his own Northern climate, has found healing amid the warmth and sunshine of this home; ministers of Christ have here rested and prayed and gone on their way refreshes the stranger has been made welcome and friends, dearly loved received with a great hospitality.

The visiters now seem infernal spirits, come on some hellish errand. From beneath the shade of their own trees, the assembled family, father, mother, daughters, may gaze upon the household wreckage. From every door and window bursts out black smoke and through the hallways, fierce flames. Down the long hall and through the wide portal surges the fiery flood; from that open door no stranger was ever turned away, no applicant for food and shelter was ever refused. The roar and crackling of the fire, the crash of falling timber is terrific. It is gone! The roof has fallen in; of these rooms, ample and beautiful as they were, associated with so many social festivi-

ties, once aglow with lights, filled with music, fragrant with flower with their loved mementoes, their priceless treasurers, where friends have so often met, and where sire and sons and grandsons have gathered youth to listen to ripe wisdoms of age, and age to sun itself in the glow and sunshine of youth, of all these, nothing now remains but the stately walls and shutterless windows, to ell of the senseless barbarity with which officers; wearing the uniform of the Federal Government are this war; they tell, also, of the infamy of these who pretend to see Reunion with the South by such means as these who, unable to conquer us by open and honorable warfare, have stolen our bondsmen and putting arms in their hands, have instigated them by every hellish motive, to use the knife of the assassin and the torch of the incendiary.

We may be so unfortunate, so miserable, as to fall in our efforts to free ourselves from the despotism of the Abolitionists; but hear us when we say that we would rather sleep in one common gravesires and sons-mothers and daughters; than submit to a union with such a people. Let us rather suffer extermination and let our names be preserved in history as a brave and heroic nation who perished a struggling for their rights, than endure the intolerable humiliation of subjugation.

From these walls, these exiles go forth to seek shelter somewhere, to find hom nowhere, until they find it where wars rude sounds are heard no more, "where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest.

Think not, sir, that I have presented these scenes before you, merely to excite your sympathy we demand, but justice. In the name of our common humanity, which is so foully outraged, in the name of our Holy Christianity who name has been assumed, as a cloak for the most hideous crimes, we demand justice, we humbly implore that justice which has been denied us by our fellow-man. At the bar of Almighty God, at the foot of that awful throne of which "Justice and judgement are the habitation"; We a wronged and suffering people, cite the wrongdoer. There we stand, a whole nation of witnesses, against the cruelty and crimes which our foes have committed, not only against us, but against humanity, crimes which are without parallel in the history of modern warfare, except by the deeds of the infamous Sepoys

We tell you, sir, exiles and suffering as many of our people are, that this day we had rather be the wronged than the wrong-doers; we had rather suffer from arson than be the bearers of the torch of the incendiary. At whose hands will God require all these misdeeds? With whom will he reckon for these desolate heartstones and for all these outrages perpetrated on the aged, the helpless women and innocent children?

I have nothing to say here of the political questions which were involved in this strife; nothing to say of the sovereign right of a state to secede from a confederation which has become oppressive nor of the right of a Federal Government to coerce such a state. I leave these questions to the statesmen.

Of the moral aspect of this strife, I could say much. The manner in which this war has been conducted by the abolition government will render that government, and its wicked tool, Abraham Lincoln, infamous for all times. You Sir, voted for that man and endorsed his measures. You believed in the cruel policy of immediate emancipation-cruel to two races. The warnings of the wise and the prescient were unheard, of if heard, were unheeded by you. To such as you, honest and well meaning, though misguided and most fatally deluded and ignorant, may God show mercy and forgiveness for all the evil brought by them upon this afflicted land! But to these selfish bad men, North or South, who through ambition and party rancor, have sent these hell hounds and still shout "Oh" -may God Almighty reward them according to their works, who hath said "Vengeance is mine, I will repay."

I could add to these already tedious details, many more incidents painful to record and indelibly burned into the memory of the sufferers. Of all the abundant comforts which were theirs, they have five blankets with which to meet the coming winter. A large part of the small amount of their wearing apparel rescued from the fire, was stolen after it was put under the appointed negro guard-themselves breaking open some of the trunks, appropriation part of the contents and distributing part to the thevish and evil disposed among the slaves of the plantation. While many of these shared in the plunder and joined eagerly in the pillage. Others of them adhered to their master in spite of blows and abuse and have shown a fidelity, a tender sympathy, and a reverent loyalty, as honorable to the slaves as it is gratifying to the master.

The most urgent necessities of this family have been supplied by the generous kindness of friends and neighbors out of their war worn and reduced stores. They may not need more than this self-denying generosity has to bestow, for every night brings anxiety and every morning renews the dread. At every hour, the coarse voices and rude steps of the foe may be heard. They cannot feel assured of an hour's security for property or life. Shall I add to enhance this tale of sorrow that the married daughter then confined to bed? That when she heard from the adjoining room, the oaths and curses directed against her mother as she attempted to prevent the entrance of these armed negroes into her chamber, she raised herself up in the bed, threw aside the curtains and entreated her mother to permit them to enter, and herself, cool, scornful, defiant, bade them "Come in and search the room." They will find there neither firearms or rebels, nothing but a sick woman. Let not one act of consideration be omitted --the only one. At the earnest request of the young lady, the Major made his men bring her grand piano and part of her music out, the only articles saved from the parlors.

This county has been ravaged by repeated incursions of those hordes. They have stripped the people of their cattle, horses, mules, and carried off by force and cunning, numbers of their negroes. They come from Natchez, from Port Hudson, from Vicksburg. They have entered the residences of widows and taken every article of value and have not left one milk cow. From one widow, they stole her husband's watch and horse and took away every animal on the plantation, leaving her in her desolate home without one cup or plate knife or fork. They collected the wagons and harness from the plantation over the country and made bonfires of all which they did not want for their own.

I will not dwell longer on these painful reminiscences. They are simple truths as far as we can ascertain truth. You may make use of them as you see fit. They will not suit the tone of Harper's Weekly nor will they supply subjects for such illustrations as they delight to offer to a discriminating public. But you may place them on record in the New York News or the World. If you choose to do so, as specimens of the humanity and civilization on the Honorable and Chivalrous officers who serve under Abraham Lincoln in the Army of the Southwestern Department.

I am, very respectfully yours, etc.

M.B. McG.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The above article was sent to THE COURIER by member Jack Cullen. Thanks for your interest Jack. May I take this opportunity to ask other members to send in articles, writings, etc. they think appropriate for the newsletter.

By the flow of the inland river,
Whence the fleets of iron have fled.
Where the blades of the grave-grassquiver,
Asleep are the ranks of the dead;
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment-day;
Under the one, the Blue
Under the other, the Gray.

These in the robings of glory,
Those in the gloom of defeat,
All with the battle-blood gory,
In the dusk of eternity meet:
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment-day;
Under the laurel, the Blue
Under the willow, the Gray.

From the silence of sorrowful hours
The desolate mourners go,
Lovingly laden with flowers
Alike for the friend and the foe:
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment-day;
Under the roses, the Blue,
Under the lilies, the Gray.

So with an equal splendour,
The morning sun-rays fall,
With a touch impartially tender,
On the blossoms blooming for all:
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment-day;
Broidered with gold, the Blue,
Mellowed with gold, the Gray.

So, when the summer calleth,
On forest and field of grain,
With an equal murmur falleth
The cooling drip of the rain:
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgement-day;
Wet with the rain, the Blue,
Wet with the rain, the Gray.

Sadly, but not with upbraiding,
The generous deed was done,
In the storm of the years that are fading
No braver battle was won:
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment-day;
Under the blossoms, the Blue,
Under the garlands, the Gray.

No more shall the war cry sever,
Or the winding rivers be red;
They banish our anger for ever
When they laurel the graves of our dead!
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment-day;
Love and tears for the Blue,
Tears and love for the Gray.

EDITOR'S NOTE: These well known lines, by Francis Miles Finch, were inspired by a visit to Arlington Cemetary. Death and time, they seem to say, heal all discords, and in paying honor to the dead, enmity is forg-