



THE CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

P. O. BOX 5028, CLEVELAND, OHIO 44101

SEPTEMBER 1976

Vol 20 No 1

----- 164th Meeting -----

Date: Tuesday, September 14, 1976

Speaker: Professor John Cary

Subject: "Patriots, Loyalists and Redcoats: Why the British Lost the War"

Place: The G A R Hall, Penninsula, Ohio (Route 303)

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

IMPORTANT: This is our annual meeting in conjunction with the Western Reserve Round Table. Please note the location. Reservations are a MUST. To reserve call Charles Spiegle at his new office number, 241-1800 or his residence, 461-9096.

BIG BICENTENNIAL BLAST! Being a scholarly bunch our Roundtable does not end the celebration with the Fourth of July. We have already had speakers on Revolutionary subjects and our last field trip was to battlefields of that war.

So we start the Fall season with a talk by the distinguished Professor of History at Cleveland State University. After some discussion of the role of the Loyalist and of blacks in the American Revolution, Professor Cary will discuss the relative advantages and disadvantages of the British and revolutionary sides and the problems and strategical mistakes of Britain.

Prof. Cary is an authority on Colonial and Revolutionary history, and constitutional law. He obtained his Ph.D at the University of Wisconsin, his dissertation was on Joseph Warren the Revolutionary leader. He is Chairman of the American Revolution Bicentennial Committee of the Ohio Academy of History.

COMING FIELD TRIP

Our indefatigable ex-prexy, Jim Chapman is concluding arrangements for our annual facts and frolics fest to be held September 23-26. The trip will center around the ever fascinating battle of Antietam, also covering the preliminary fights at the South Mountain passes. Second Manassas, which led to the first Confederate invasion, and Harper's Ferry are also on the itinerary. For full details, contact Jim at 621-0200 or 991-1286.

SECRETARY'S CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Chuck Spiegle is now associated with E. F. Hutton Co. To call him regarding reservations, etc. phone him at 241-1800. His home number remains the same, 461-9096.

BOOK REVIEW BY "JOSH" BILLINGS of the DIST. OF COLUMBIA CWRT

Gettysburg: A Journey in Time. By William A. Frassanito. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1975. \$12.95.

William Frassanito has examined 230 photographs taken in the immediate 2-1/2 years after the battle and has selected 100 of them for his study. With maps and sketches he pin-points the exact spots from which most photographs were taken, some being located precisely for the first time. Many photographs which have been mislabeled in the past have been corrected with respect to subject and location. The book is characterized by unparalleled knowledge of the early history of photography and of the battle of Gettysburg, together with thorough familiarity with the terrain around Gettysburg. Frassanito has used the skill of a detective in his analysis of the photographs utilized.

The book may best be described in his own words:

...This book contains the first systematic examination of the Gettysburg series as a group, and most of the information uncovered about the photographs is presented for the first time here. ...By treating each photograph as an irreplaceable moment fixed in time and space, and by sharing with the reader the behind-the-scenes detective work used to document these views, I have attempted to focus on the overwhelming reality of each photograph, thereby transporting the reader back to the moment of exposure - and creating, in effect, a journey in time.

Hence his subtitle.

There is much of interest in the methods employed, the questions raised and the answers attempted, and other aspects of Frassanito's "detective" work which will intrigue the reader. Present-day photographs taken from the same sites as those of the 1860's add to the value of the book.

This is a unique and intriguing method of historical research that that holds much promise for the future.

THE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE OF CLEVELAND, OHIO

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"THE FLOWER OF LEE'S ARMY"

September being the anniversary month of the Army of Northern Virginia's first invasion of the North, it is interesting to review how the army looked at the time. Accounts and descriptions by friend and foe, civilian and military, all have a remarkable similiarity.

A young Marylander who witnessed the crossing of the Potomac later wrote:

"They were the dirtiest, lousiest, filthiest, piratical-looking cut-throat men I ever saw. A most ragged, lean, and hungry set of wolves. Yet there was a dash about them that the Northern men lacked. They rode like circus riders. Many of them were from the far South and spoke a dialect I could scarcely understand. They were profane beyond belief and talked incessantly."

A young Confederate private observed:

"...for six days not a morsel of bread or meat has gone into our stomachs--and our menu consisted of apples and corn. We toasted, we burned, we stewed, we boiled, we roasted these two together, and singly, until there was not a man whose form had not caved in, and who had not a bad attack of diarrhea. Our under-clothes were foul and hanging in strips, our socks were worn out, and half the men were bare-footed, many were lame, and were sent to the rear.

"While behavior was good, appearance left much to be desired. Frederick citizens remembered for a long time the ragged look of their invaders. 'They were the filthiest set of men and officers I ever saw; with clothing that...had not been changed for weeks. They could be smelt all over the entire inclosure.'"

Another Marylander commented on their efforts at sanitation as follows:

"Every evening, hundreds could be seen, sitting on the roads or fields, half denuded with clothes in laps, busily cracking, between two thumb-nails, these creeping nuisances (graybacks or body lice)...the men would boil their clothes for hours--next day these confounded things would be at work as lively as ever...many used to place their under-raiment, during the night, in the bottom of some stream and put a large stone to keep them down; in the morning they would hastily dry them and get a temporary relief..."

One Frederick woman's account has become a classic description of the Confederate soldier during the autumn of 1862. She wrote to a relative:

"I wish, my dear Minnie, you could have witnessed the transit of the Rebel army through our streets...Their coming unheralded by any pomp and pageant whatever. No burst of martial music greeted your ear, no thundering sound of cannon, no brilliant staff, no glittering cortege dashed through the streets; instead came three long, dirty columns that kept on in an unceasing flow. I could scarcely believe my eyes; was this body of men moving so smoothly along, with no order, their guns carried in every fashion, no two dressed alike, their officers hardly distinguishable from the privates, were these, I asked myself in amazement, were these dirty, lank, ugly specimens of humanity, with shocks of hair sticking through holes in their hats, and dust thick on their dirty faces, the men that had coped and encountered successfully and driven back again and again, our splendid legions with their fine discipline, their martial show and color, their solid battalions keeping such perfect time to the inspiring bands of music? I must confess, Minnie, that I felt humiliated at the thought that this horde of ragamuffins could set our grand army of the Union at defiance.

"Why it seemed as if a single regiment of our gallant boys in blue could drive that dirty crew into the river without any trouble. And then, too, I wish you could see how they behaved--a crowd of boys on a holiday don't seem happier. They are on the broad grin all the time. O, they are so dirty! I don't think the Potomac River could wash them clean; and ragged! There is not a scarecrow in our cornfields that would not scorn to exchange clothes with them; and so tattered! There isn't a decently dressed soldier in the whole army.

"I saw some strikingly handsome faces though, or rather they would have been so if they could have had a good scrubbing. They were very polite, I must confess, and always asked for a drink of water, or anything else, and never think of coming inside of a door without an invitation. Many of them were barefooted. Indeed, I felt sorry for the poor, misguided wretches, for some of them limped along so painfully trying to keep up with their comrades.

A junior Confederate officer wrote:

"There was no one there who would have been 'run in' by the police had he appeared on the streets of any populous city. Yet those grimy, sweaty, lean ragged men were the flower of Lee's army."

SECOND NATIONAL CWRT CONGRESS SCHEDULED

An outstanding line-up of speakers, headed by nationally-known Lincoln scholar Ralph G. Newman of Chicago, has been scheduled for the program of the second annual National Congress of Civil War Round Tables, to be held at the Army War College, Carlisle, Pa., October 21-23, 1976. Newman, owner of the Abraham Lincoln Book Shop in Chicago, was one of the founders of the original Civil War Round Table organization.

Jerry L. Russell, national chairman of Civil War Round Table Associates, expressed pleasure at the response to the first National Civil War Round Table Congress, held last October at Manassas, Va.

"We were delighted to have nearly 200 people, representing some 27 Round Tables in 23 states, at the Congress last fall," Russell said. "This was the first gathering of the Round Tables since the Civil War Centennial years of the early 1960's, and the response was outstanding. All the delegates in attendance were unanimously in favor of having a second Congress in the fall of 1976. As in the case of the first Congress, the theme of the meeting will be "Battlefield Preservation."

Joining Newman on the program will be Dr. Russell Weigley of Temple University, Philadelphia, Pa.; Dr. Robert Meinhard, Winona State College, Winona, Minn.; Dr. Jay Luvaas, Allegheny College, Meadville, Pa.; Dr. B. Franklin Cooling, assistant director for historical services at the U. S. Army Military History Research Collection Carlisle Barracks; Dr. Harry Pfanz, chief historian for the National Park Service, Washington, D. C.; and a tour of the Antietam battlefield in northern Maryland, to be hosted by the Hagerstown, Md. CWRT, and conducted by National Park Service historian Ed Bearss.

Russell said "Civil War historic sites, especially battlefields, are increasingly endangered by commercial encroachment, and sometimes just plain neglect, and we hope that our gathering together to discuss the problems of historic preservation will alert the public to some of the dangers faced by our American heritage."

Anyone wishing more information on the Congress may write the sponsors, Civil War Round Table Associates, P. O. Box 7388, Little Rock, AR 72207 or call Jerry Russell at 501-225-3996.

SEVENTEENTH CENTURY ORIGINS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

(This is the first of a three part series on origins of the American Revolution written by our member Ray Swanson)

Shortly after the first settlements were made in America, England became engaged in a savage Civil War at home and little help or attention could be given to the plantations abroad. Cromwell was raising an army in England to use against the King's forces. This army, under the command of Philip Skippon, a veteran of the Spanish Dutch Wars, was strictly disciplined. To improve the morale, each man was given a new red coat. This was the origin of the term "red coat," to describe the British soldier.

Even as early as 1640, the colonists had to provide their own defence against the Indians. The only protection were the armed bands gotten together by Captain John Smith for the defence of Virginia settlements and similar bodies raised in New England by Miles Standish who had seen service in the Netherland Wars.

With Civil War raging in the Mother country, the attitude of the New England and the Southern Plantations toward the contest differed widely. While the Puritans fully sympathized with Parliament's anti-monarchism, it also strongly disapproved of the military autocracy which was replacing it rapidly. In fact, the Mass. Assembly actually declared the absolute independence of the New England Plantations basing their fiat, ironically enough, on the somewhat ambiguous terms of a Royal Charter whose validity at other times they had often questioned. But to aspire to independence before protection had been assured brings disaster; as to the massacre of seven hundred settlers by the Indians in 1644 demonstrated. Also the increasing threat by the Dutch who held New York and the Hudson river gave good cause to reconsider their hasty early sentiments.

In contrast, Virginia, then the biggest colony, was strongly Royalist in sympathy and Cromwell had sent a powerful fleet to the Chesapeake to bring the people of the Plantation to a proper sense of their duty. However, headed by their Governor, Sir William Berkeley, the show of resistance by the colonists was so strong that an agreement was won by which the liberties of the colonists were more fully secured. Indeed, they were allowed all the rights which the Declaration of Independence a century and a quarter later charged the King of Great Britain with violating.

When it became obvious that Cromwell's regime was falling apart Berkeley proclaimed the exiled Charles and Monarch and issued writs for an assembly in the name of the King. With due formality, Charles II had been hailed as Sovereign of England, Scotland, Ireland and Virginia. In acknowledgment of this, the still exiled Monarch had given orders that the armorial bearings of the Old Dominion be quartered with those of the other three countries in the National Flag. In response, the Virginia Assembly had dispatched an embassy to Breda to invite the Royal exile to cross the seas to become in actual fact, King of Virginia. Charles had been on the point of sailing for America when the summons came which restored him to the English throne. It is fascinating to speculate what might have happened if that had occurred.

However Charles had a long memory, both for injuries inflicted and benefits conferred. If he felt less warmly for disapproving Puritan New England than for loyal Virginia, he was too shrewd not to recognize that, where their well-being and progress were concerned, all the Plantations were interdependent.

Other facets of colonial life which tended toward eventual independence will be discussed in future articles.

"BILLY" SEWARD AND R. E. LEE COME TO CLEVELAND

The recent prestigious exhibit at the Cleveland Art Museum, entitled, The European Vision of America, included portraits of the above mentioned Civil War biggies. Both oils are by the Swiss painter, Frank Buchser, and were sent over from Basel especially for the exhibit. The portrait of Seward was painted in his garden in the pre-impressionist manner. The heroic size portrait of Lee shows him in mufti, but his sword and sash are on a nearby stand. Painted just one year before Lee's death, the painting makes him more robust than he actually was at that time. Buchser developed a profound contempt for Seward as one of "the intriguing wire pullers who are called politicians in this country." Of Lee he wrote in his diary, "What a fine, noble soul, good and lovable, the old warrior is!"