



News Letter

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

CLEVELAND, OHIO

1002 Citizens Building
Cleveland 14, Ohio

April 8, 1960

THIS SHOULD BE A DONNYBROOK

MONDAY, APRIL 18, 1960 - UNIVERSITY CLUB - 6:30 P.M.

Don Hamill, Dr. T. W. Knickerbocker, Dr. William Rothe, Lester Swift and William West will be allowed 12 minutes each to defend their individual selections for the best and worst Union General. Although Confederates will be neutral, all weapons will be checked at the door. Doctors, other than those on the panel, will be in attendance. George Farr will be promotor and matchmaker.

SEND YOUR CARD - WIN AN ATLAS

The "West Point Atlas" is the door prize. Get your card back by return mail. Sam Wang was the lucky man last month.

MARCH MEETING EXCEPTIONAL

Dr. James I. Robertson, Jr.'s talk at the March meeting "Longstreet - The Man Without a Country" was at once scholarly and entertaining. Dr. Robertson, editor of Civil War History, displayed a thorough knowledge of his subject and a sense of humor that pleased his audience. Watch for his new edition of Longstreet's FROM MANASSAS TO APPOMATTOX which will be published in the fall.

NEWS OF OTHER ROUND TABLES

The Hartford Civil War Round Table and The Mark Twain Masquers arranged for actors dressed to represent Abraham Lincoln, Gideon Welles and Mayor Allyn, to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Lincoln's visit to Hartford on March 5.... Richmond CWRT is considering establishment of a permanent home where there can be made available to members "books and other publications and papers, and ... display pictures, flags and other items of Civil War interest." ... At its February meeting, Evansville, Indiana, CWRT featured a debate between two members on the question "For the South - of The Two, Inland Waterways or Railroads, which Was The More Vital?" ... Dr. Allan Nevins, Ralph G. Newman, and Carl Haverlin were awarded presentations for outstanding service to the field of Lincolniana by Lincoln Sesquicentennial Association of California. All three are members of the Chicago CWRT.

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INVICTUS

I

For Seven Days they dogged our tracks
As Abe withdrew McDowell
They took our trains and haversacks
When Mac threw in the towel.

II

At Ole Bull Run we took to flight
And Pope gave Porter Fitz.
Antietam was quite a fight
But Mac developed "sitz."

III

We followed after Burnside's beard
A wavin' in the breeze;
At Fredericksburg the Johnnies jeered
And beat us to our knees.

IV

At Chancellorville we struck at Lee
We got him in a vise;
But Hooker'd missed his morning "tea"
And Jackson switched the dice!

V

At Gettysburg we set 'em back
And laid Ole Pickett low;
When Lee withdrew his last attack,
George Meade was too dang slow.

VI

But Grant came East, refutin' Greeley,
"Go South, Young Men!" he roared,
We up and battled Lee right freely
He surrendered -- Praise the Lord!

Chet Land 7th O.V.I.

OHIO IN THE CIVIL WAR

Western Reserve class of '45, of which William Burnham Woods was a member (CWRT letter, February 1960), had another member, Halbert Eleazer Paine, an Ohican who was a Major General USV (Brevet). Paine and Woods were fraternity brothers at Western Reserve.

After graduating from Western Reserve, Paine was for a time a law partner of Carl Schurz. He was Colonel of the 4th Wisconsin VI, was promoted Brigadier USV on March 13, 1863 and commanded the 2nd Brigade, 3rd Division, XIX Corps during the siege of Port Hudson, where he lost a leg. He was breveted Major General USV and, after the war, was a member of Congress and, later, Commissioner of Patents.

OHIO BATTLE FLAGS

Ohio's Civil War Centennial Commission, at its first meeting in Toledo on March 23, decided to undertake to arrange for permanent preservation of the battle flags of the 230 Ohio fighting units. Furled on their staves, they stand in glass cases in the rotunda of the capital. Presently there are no funds available for preserving these battle flags.

GRANDSTAND MANAGERS BEWARE!

They may not win the pennant but the Indians will never be out-generated. Lane has Grant, Lee, Thomas, Gordon, Bell, Bond, Perry, Phillips and Hardy. They are from the Union and the Confederacy and comprise the best general staff in either league.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Anyone interested in reasonably priced additions to a Civil War library will find it worthwhile to investigate a series of fifteen paper-backed volumes published by Jack Brussel, 100 Fourth Avenue, New York 3, N.Y. Written by participants such as M. F. Force, J. D. Cox and A. T. Mahan they were originally published during the nineteenth century. Single titles are \$1.25 and they are sold by most book-sellers.

HOW TO BE A CIVIL WAR HISTORIAN

IN

ONE EASY LESSON

(1) Adopt the historians-are-nuts technique. Pick some character who is generally recognized as a failure, or one whose reputation is beyond reproach. Apply reverse English. Make the villain the hero and vice-versa.

Remember, most book reviewers don't know a Lincoln pie from a coehorn. Most readers never saw a Springfield. Many think a Napoleon is either brandy or a French pastry. Show no fear.

(2) Even a blind sow will find an acorn now and then. Most incompetents performed well in some minor battle or skirmish. Try Franz Sigel for size. His tactics at Pea Ridge (Elkhorn Tavern) were exemplary. If he had been in supreme command at Shiloh, Chickamauga or Antietam, he would have annihilated the enemy and changed all subsequent history. He was fired for "lack of aggression." What of it? This proves your point. He was the victim of jealous associates and traitorous politicians who feared his outstanding qualifications and his fierce independence.

(3) Most of the best generals performed badly on occasion. Jackson had his White Oak Swamp; Lee his Gettysburg; Grant his Cold Harbor.

Jackson wasn't as popular with his men as the historians would have the gullible believe. What proof is there he was accidentally shot by his own men? If you find any proof, ignore it. A dues paying member of the sensational historian's union must not only have the vision to see things no one else has seen. He must have an effective set of blinders.

(4) Practice quoting the authorities out of context. Look what you can do for your hero, Franz Sigel, with the following from Force's From Fort Henry to Corinth ... "Colonel Baldwin (Buchner's Division at Fort Donelson) in his report says that deployment forward ... under fire is a different thing from practice on the drill ground. The movement that Colonel Baldwin attempted ... is the same that General Sigel accomplished at Pea Ridge with such brilliant success ..."

What more do you need? With such quotes in adroit hands, Sigel is a triple-threat man -- a Quintus Fabius Maximus on defense, a Hannibal on offense, a Napoleon on maneuver.

Ignore the facts, which Force points out, that Buchner and Baldwin were operating in difficult terrain and that they had inadequate artillery while Sigel was on fair ground and had ample guns. Details are for statisticians. Who wants to be a Univac?

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(5) Become adept in the use of the non-sequitur. For instance, Grant arrived at Pittsburgh landing without his false teeth. An orderly arrived with them in the afternoon. Grant was his old self. The tide of battle turned. A set of falsies saved the Union. Don't miss on this. The public loves trivia against the horizon of history.

(6) Scatter historical ifs like confetti at Mardi Gras. Tom Rosser's shad bake is a jewel. "If Pickett and Fitzhugh Lee had been at Five Forks, Lee might have escaped and joined Johnston. Together they could have beaten Grant and Sherman in detail." That's just a sample of what can be done when trivia, a dash of historical if, and a jigger of non-sequitur are blended in the cocktail of history. WARNING, leave the cigar wrapper incident before Antietam alone. That's old hat. Even Freeman couldn't resist it.

(7) Copy a Civil War bibliography from some reliable historical work. Copy the longest one you can find. It isn't your fault if the public assumes you have really perused the material listed.

(8) Lay the groundwork for proper public relations. You aren't writing for posterity but for royalties. Speaking engagements are a must. They involve challenging interrogatories from your audience. Prepare, not to answer questions, but to dodge them.

Let it be known that you are engaged in vital research. Some phenomenon of basic and vital Americana is your field. Proper subjects might well be "What brand of pomade did Pickett use?" or "Was Pickett's hair naturally curly or was it waved?"

Involvement in vital research is a perfect alibi for not having sufficiently collated all the data to give an answer to an embarrassing question. You are an oracle. As a nationally recognized authority you can't afford to go off half-cocked. Audiences will eat it up!

And be on the look out for a pick up here and there. Some cosmetic manufacturer might pay what is quaintly known as a pretty penny for your findings on Pickett's hair oil. This is known in historical circles as a fellowship, a grant-in-aid, or an honorarium. Payola is for disc jockeys.

(9) Visit some battlefield or battlefields. Avoid Virginia, Gettysburg, Shiloh and Vicksburg. Too many have been there. They're booby traps for speakers. Olustee, Florida, or Edwards, Mississippi, are splendid. Champion's Hill is difficult to locate and, like Olustee, is off the bus routes. Get a nodding acquaintance with the terrain, the flora and the fauna. Remark about the rattlers in the scrub palmetto, "where Seymour stood during the fight at Olustee." You will rate with Dr. Livingstone, a dauntless researcher risking life and limb in search of Facts.

Get with it. The Centennial starts in '61. Publishers will be avid. Reap the harvest. You can't lose. There's nothing at stake but intellectual integrity. As for that -- if you're qualified for the job, you're already fresh out.