



The COURIER OF THE CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

CLEVELAND, OHIO

APRIL, 1965

Vol. 8, No. 7

69th Meeting

"Ladies' Night"

DATE: TUESDAY, APRIL 13, 1965
SPEAKER: MRS. MAGGIE DAVIS
SUBJECT: A SOUTHERN NOVELIST TAKES A
REALISTIC VIEW OF THE WAR
PLACE: HERMIT CLUB - DODGE COURT
PRELIMINARIES: 6:00 p.m. DINNER: 7:00 p.m.
See below for reservation details

FUTURE MEETINGS & SPEAKERS

70th Meeting

MAY 11, 1965

JAMES K. FLACK
"Confederate Generalship
at Gettysburg"

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71st Meeting

SEE YOU IN THE FALL!

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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PAST MEETING

To read, one hundred years from now, editorials that were written or sermons that were preached a few days after the assassination of President Kennedy would be to air again the confused alarms, the haste to pin guilt upon political groups in popular disfavor at the time, the tendency to sense vast plots, the disappointment at the bungling of petty officials concerned with the crime, and the regret at being unable to bring the perpetrator of the deed to trial. Future students of the history of our times would be aware of the falseness of many of those contemporary reactions, and yet would feel again the shock and anguish that sweeps the country at such times.

Mr. John Stevning:

Please make _____ reservations in my name for the Ladies Night Meeting, April 13th.

The cost per reservation will be \$5.00 (Husband and wife - two reservations, \$10.00).

Enclosed is my check for \$_____.

(Please print name clearly)

THE CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

FOUNDED FEBRUARY 20, 1957

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT. Lester L. Swift
VICE PRESIDENT Donald W. Hamill
SECRETARY. Guy Di Carlo, Jr.
TREASURER. James K. Ramsey

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

TERMS EXPIRING:

1965: Donald MacDowell
Edward S. Wells
1966: David C. Humphrey
Frank A. Moran

EDITOR OF NEWSLETTER . . Theodore I. Adams
REPUBLIC STEEL CORPORATION, CLEVELAND, OHIO

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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PAST MEETING (continued)

And that is the reaction of many of the members upon listening to the last meeting's talk given by Stuart Torrey. The bulk of the talk consisted of readings from an unpublished sermon that was delivered to his congregation by a minister in a New England church a few days after the assassination of President Lincoln. Mr. Torrey has unearthed an interesting document; but, it seemed to your editor, that he took the florid sentiments a little too seriously. He seemed to set aside his advantage in having at hand the results of a hundred years of study. This is the study that helps us to understand the motivations of the masses of people who were ultimately concerned with the Civil War. It helps many of us to replace hot partisanship with tolerant sympathy.

The question period afterward and the "unofficial" conversations of Mr. Torrey with various members showed him to be the possessor of many interesting facts about the events of the Assassination. It puts us in mind of the policeman who talked to the P.T.A. about his department's concern for public safety. The parents would rather have heard his personal experiences in the chase of criminals and the bringing down of traffic malifactors. One senses that our group would have liked to sift again the

circumstantial evidence that has been uncovered to implicate such persons as Stanton and Lafayette Baker with the makings of the plot against Lincoln. Mr. Torrey would undoubtedly be an excellent leader for such a meeting.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

To The Ladies

Herewith are four sidelights on the fair sex during the Late Unpleasantness. We confess to having a great deal of difficulty in writing this message and have tried mightily to present something out-of-the-ordinary trite Civil War anecdote.

"I think it would be well for you and me to come to some definite understanding. . . If you will release my husband and set him free, so that he may join me here in England by the beginning of March, I pledge you my word that my book shall be suppressed."

Thus wrote Belle Boyd from London on the 24th of January, 1864. She stated that her book revealed "many atrocious circumstances respecting your government with which I am so well acquainted & which would open the eyes of Europe to many things of which the world on this side of the water little dreams."

Ten days later Belle's husband, a former U. S. Naval officer, was released from Fort Delaware by order of the Secretary of War. But there is no proof that Lincoln ever received and read this threatening letter. Again, Stanton may have been the one with a guilty conscience.

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The Confederate General Bonham was surprised to see the beautiful girl who approached him. She appeared determined but cautious. She was "a brunette with sparkling black eyes, perfect features, glossy black hair. . . a fine person of medium height. . . with the glow of patriotic devotion burning in her face.

She had a message from General Beauregard, she said. She wanted to be sure it would be forwarded right away.

"Upon my announcement that I would have it faithfully forwarded at once," wrote the general, "she took out her tucking comb and let fall the longest and most beautiful roll of hair I have ever seen. She then took from the back of her head, where it had been safely tied, a small package, not larger than a silver dollar, sewed up in silk."

This was Betty Duvall, dispatch-bearer for Rose Greenhow. . Remind me to ask someone to show me a "tucking comb."

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"Lady Ouseley wore a rich, blue brocade trimmed with Honiton lace, with a wreath of flowers upon her hair, fastened at each side with a diamond brooch; Miss Lane, the President's niece, wore a dress of black tulle, ornamented with bunches of gold leaves, a head-dress of gold grapes; Miss Cass, the stately daughter of the Premier of the Administration, was magnificently attired in pearl colored silk, with point lace flounces, but wore no jewelry of any kind; Mrs. Brown, the wife of the Postmaster General, wore a pink silk dress with pink roses in her hair. Madame Sartiges, the wife of the French Minister, wore a rich chene silk."--at a social function during Buchanan's administration.

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"It was probably towards the middle of September when Lt. Hotchkiss reported for duty; his wife, a very handsome woman evidently traveling on her shape, was with him, and I had to give up our only floored officers' tent to them. . .He was a malingerer who even the privates detailed for cooks ridiculed and the airs he put on before his wife to show his superior rank were too much. I remember seeing his wife stand in a chair and try to see how high she could reach her foot on the wall, and once she came rushing down stairs to us while we were having a game of cards, saying, "The General is coming."

We snatched things lively, and as the

door opened and her husband walked in, she introduced him as old general debility."-- from the unpublished memoirs of Captain Gus Dana, my friend who later joined the Signal Corps.

LESTER SWIFT

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"YANKEE" SUBMARINES

We have all marveled at the astounding feats of daring of the ill fated "Hunley" of the Confederate Navy that sank the Housatonic in Charleston Harbor, going down herself for the fourth and final time, thus destroying 32 out of her four crews of 36 men.

It seems, however, the "Yankees" were not idle; and even before the War, there were brave souls that tried their hand at submarine building. An interesting example was a shoemaker named Philips that launched his first boat in Lake Michigan in 1851. The cigar shaped boat was 40 feet long and four feet in its greatest diameter. In the course of a few years, Philips had so far perfected his arrangements for purifying the air, etc., that he was able, on one occasion, to take his wife and two children with him and spend a whole day exploring the bottom of the lake! It was propelled by two men working cranks turning a two bladed propeller.

Philips had a large supply of air contained in cylinders eight feet long, 13 inches in diameter, made of 3/4 inch iron, riveted and the seams brazed - he claimed he could "put up" a pressure of 500 pounds per square inch by a small, two cylinder air pump worked by himself.

Philips descended into Lake Erie, near Buffalo, in a wooden boat built on his principles; and since he never reappeared, it is supposed he accidentally went too deep and the boat was crushed by the pressure of the water.

The prize submarine story of the Civil War seems almost as fantastic as a Jules Verne tale when you think of the red faces of some of the government officials.

It seems a Frenchman appeared and, for \$10,000 paid to him by the Government, agreed

to build a "diving boat" or submarine - he further agreed that for the nice sum of \$5,000 per trip, he would operate this boat against the enemy under command of an officer selected by the Navy Department!

This boat was actually built at the Washington Navy Yard, and a Naval officer applied for and received orders to take charge of her with the express design of using her to blow up the rebel iron-clad Merrimac at Norfolk! (All the while the Monitor was being built. The U. S. Government was apparently taking no chances!)

Upon reporting to take charge of his unusual command, the Naval officer found the boat completed, but the inventor, having received his \$10,000, had absconded! The inventor also took with him, when he left, the knowledge necessary to the operation of the principal part of the invention, an apparatus for restoring the air in the boat after it became impure by breathing.

The boat was 35 feet long, built of boiler iron, triple riveted, in the shape of a cigar, six feet in diameter. It was made to descend by filling compartments with water and made to ascend by expelling the water by means of two force pumps. These tanks ran the full length of the hull. The weight of 16 men were required to sink her when the compartments were full. It was propelled above and below water by 16 oars, eight on a side.

It was found on trial that this boat would do only 2 1/2 knots on the surface when worked by the full crew of 16 men. There were two machines intended to purify and restore the air. Not being able to work the chemical "purifiers," the officials of the Navy Department considered they had been imposed upon and that the invention was worthless. No doubt the Monitor had done its work by then, although there are no dates given.

Nothing was ever accomplished with the boat beyond a few experimental trips to the bottom of the river. She was subsequently fitted with a propeller and sent in tow of a steamer to Port Royal, but was lost in a gale off Cape Hatteras - strangely enough the grave of the Monitor.

The above story was submitted by member Frank Gillen.

OHIO AT APPOMATTOX

In the early morning action at Appomattox, April 9, were three Ohio cavalry and three infantry regiments. In Sheridan's cavalry were the 2nd Ohio (Western Reserve Counties), 6th Ohio (Trumbull, Highland), and the 13th Ohio (Hamilton, Franklin). In the 24th Corps were Ohio infantry regiments 62nd (Muskingum, Guernsey, Morgan), 67th (All parts of the state), and the 116th (Monroe, Meigs, Athens).

In the evening of the 8th, the 2nd Ohio cavalry had participated in the capture of the railroad train loaded with supplies from Lynchburg for Lee's army, and that night bivouacked on the Appomattox-Lynchburg stage road, Lee's line of retreat. Nearby, lay the 6th and 13th Ohio cavalry. John B. Gordon's daybreak assault to open the road to Lynchburg fell heaviest on George Cook's division of which the 6th and 13th Ohio were a part. The 6th Ohio claimed to have fired the first volley of the engagement.

As the cavalry fell back before Gordon's onslaughts, they cheered the infantry regiments coming on the double-quick to their support, among them the 62nd, 67th, and 116th Ohio. These regiments in the 24th Corps had marched day and night from Farmville, 35 miles in 18 hours. This heavy line of infantry massing in his front prompted Gordon to send his famous message to Lee, "I have fought my corps to a frazzle." The first flag of truce from the Confederate lines was received by the 2nd Ohio Cavalry.

The 123rd Ohio (Huron, Erie, Crawford, Seneca, Wyandot) were nearer to the surrender site even than their comrades in the Union lines. They were in the Confederate camp as prisoners-of-war, having been captured after a gallant fight against heavy odds in an expedition to seize High-Bridge, near Farmville. They were prisoners for only two days, but time enough for the Rebels to strip from them "everything valuable, even their shoes and hats," according to a lieutenant of the regiment.

The above story was submitted by member Ned Downer.

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