



The COURIER OF THE CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

CLEVELAND, OHIO

JANUARY, 1965

Vol. 8, No. 4

66th Meeting

DATE: TUESDAY, JANUARY 12, 1965
SPEAKERS: J. STEVNING, J. RAMSEY, and G. DICARLO
SUBJECT: SICKLES - JEB STUART - BEN BUTLER
PLACE: HERMIT CLUB - DODGE COURT
PRELIMINARIES: 6:00 P.M. DINNER: 7:00 P.M.

PAST MEETING & SPEAKER

Stephen Z. Starr, in the introduction to his fascinating and well-documented talk, given at the December Meeting, purposely admitted his reluctance to say, categorically, that a Northwest Conspiracy, as such, existed. Then he proceeded to marshall his facts in such a way as to prove that many anti-administration movements, political, social, and economic, did exist and exert influences counter to the main war effort of the North.

Many of these movements were conspiratorial, and crossed over the sometimes nebulous border that separates legal political opposition from outright treachery, in seeking to accomplish the desires of their adherents. Of special interest were Mr. Starr's descriptions of the quasi-fraternal organizations, such as the Knights of the Golden Circle, the essentially narrow and bigoted nature of which was clothed in a ludicrous mish-mash of medieval ritual, and ostensibly motivated by pure, if grandiosely stated, objectives that could never be achieved by the means which were openly encouraged to bring them about. This sort of nonsense, combining high flown ambiguous, obtuse, and anachronistic objectives with essentially unscrupulous methods, is a phenomenon that has appeared in all stages of American history, and unfortunately, is by no means dead today.

The methods used, by persons in authority, to negate these conspiracies and counter-governmental activities, were often questionable, too, not excluding Mr. Lincoln's suspension of the Writ of Habeas Corpus. That our basic liberties have survived such a fratricidal ordeal as the Civil War is a tribute to the fairness and political astuteness of a large number of the American people, and of the soundness of our Constitution. It is to be hoped that the pleasurable study of American history, including the Civil War, can have the beneficial bonus of helping to protect our birthright. Certainly, to ignore history is a condition of intellectual recklessness, and while a few, weak compliments might be paid to ingenuousness, what good can be said of ignorance?

DINNER RESERVATIONS

Please use the enclosed, stamped envelope to forward your dinner reservations for the January 12 meeting (\$3.75 per person) for you and your guests. This will help greatly to reduce the usual confusion caused by at-the-table collection.

If your decision to attend can be made only at a time too late for mailing your check, please do not hesitate to come on this account. You can pay JOHN STEVNING on arrival.

THE CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

FOUNDED FEBRUARY 20, 1957

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Our good friend and former member, Don Ryan, wrote us a letter recently containing all the latest information on Fort Jefferson, on the Dry Tortugas. Anyone visiting the Florida Keys this winter may be interested in knowing that it is now possible to take a day-long trip out to this National Monument, which is almost 70 miles west of Key West. A boat, the SKIPPER K, makes the trip out in the morning, allowing five hours at Fort Jefferson and returns the same day.

The National Park Service has one man at this location who is not supposed to conduct tours, so the visitor must amuse himself swimming, skin diving and taking pictures. However, there is a free glass bottom boat tour over the coral reefs.

Reservations are necessary. Phone Key West 294-2824; or write P.O. Box 1617. The NPS operates a chlorinator to provide safe drinking water.

THE LOT OF THE HORSE

Prime battlefield targets during the late unpleasantness were officers, colorbearers, gunners and artillery horses. After the Battle of Stone's River, an officer wrote to his wife that the atmosphere even in the town of Murfreesboro hung heavy with the stench of dead animals. There were no burial

or rendering details except buzzards so the carcasses were left generally to Mother Nature to ponder over.

One source avers that at the outbreak of hostilities there were more than 4,500,000 horses and 450,000 mules in the country. Before the shooting ceased the Federal Government was purchasing animals from Canadian dealers.

Toward the end of the second year of the war, a 2,650 horse hospital was established in Washington. Some 170,650 cavalry mounts and 12,000 artillery horses went through this giant hospital.

A battery with its full compliment of six guns, caissons, and mounted troops called for 111 horses. Ten of these were classified as "spare." Confederate horse-power was so reduced after the first two years of conflict that individual guns were moved by teams of four - two wheel horses and two lead horses. Harness was of simple design and wounded or dead animals could be quickly extricated.

. . . From the GAUS BUGLE, Newsletter of the Nathan Bedford Forrest Round Table of Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

GETTING INTO THE ACT

Many patriotic households in the South gave their full measure of devotion in a most peculiar way. These valorous acts consisted of sending on to the munitions factories the liquid contents of their bed pans...Periodically, government wagons loaded with barrels would make the rounds.

The manufacture of gunpowder required a king-size dosage of saltpeter and lesser amounts of sulfur and charcoal. Blockading closed foreign shipments of saltpeter so artificial fields were laid out. Through a process known as lixiviation (leaching) the soil was saturated with human urine thereby joining with other elements to quickly form the precious ingredient.

Consequently, "Have you done your best for the Cause?" took on significant meaning during these troubled years. The act, once regarded as a contempt symbol, now became one illumined with the light of dedication.

. . . Also from the GAUS BUGLE.

We wonder whether the writer of the above gem has ever read the poem on this subject, which is a century-old bit of mild earthiness. It is addressed to Niter and Mining Bureau Agent Jonathan Haralson who was located in Selma, Alabama.

Mr. Haralson, according to the best information available, put this advertisement in the local paper:

"The ladies of Selma are respectfully requested to preserve their chamber lye collected about their premises, for the purpose of making niter. Wagons with barrels will be sent around to collect this.

Several verses of doggerel were soon circulating. We regret that it does not seem advisable to reproduce this literature in its entirety and can only include here:

Jon Haralson, Jon Haralson, you are a funny creature,

You've given to this cruel war a new and curious feature;

You'd have us think, while every man is bound to be a fighter

The women, bless them, must be put to making lots of niter.

Lester Swift

COMING MEETING

One of our new members, Effloe A. Plazer, will discuss General George H. "Pap" Thomas and some of the main events of the general's career. Here's a chance for members to brush up on the western theater for a change.

Mr. Plazer is well qualified to speak about The Rock of Chickamauga, having researched the career of General Thomas for a number of years. Although in the time permitted, he cannot cover all the major battles in which Thomas participated, he will discuss the general's strategy at Chickamauga and at Nashville.

January, 1865

An Ohio General Goes Statistical

On a promontory at West Point stands a Battle Monument erected to commemorate the Regular Army Men Killed in the Civil War. But, one unreconstructed Rebel once cynically referred to it as a Monument to Southern Marksmanship.

Major General William S. Rosecrans, who grew up in Delaware County, Ohio, once went statistical to measure the marksmanship of his soldiers. In his official report on the Battle of Stone's River (Murfreesboro) he estimated the number of Confederates "struck by our missiles" at 14,500. Accordingly, he calculated that 20,000 rounds of artillery hit 728 men, and that 2,000,000 rounds of musketry struck 13,832 men. Thus, 27.4 cannon shots were fired to hit one man and 145 musket balls for each man struck. Braxton Bragg claimed that his losses in killed and wounded were less than 10,000, so even these figures may be too flattering to Rosecran's cannoneers and riflemen.

Ned Downer