



News Letter

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

CLEVELAND, OHIO

March 9, 1959

MARCH MEETING

Topic: "The Assassination of Lincoln"

Speaker: Thomas W. Hamlin, Sr.

Time: March 17, Tuesday, Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

Place: The University Club, 3813 Euclid Avenue

Price: \$3.25 per plate

Tom Hamlin, one of our own members, has some interesting theories about the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. Tom is in the furniture business in Alliance, Ohio, and comes over fifty miles to attend the meetings of the Round Table.

FUTURE MEETINGS - MARK YOUR CALENDAR

April 6, Monday. Hubert H. Hawkins, Secretary, Indiana Historical Society, on "John Hunt Morgan and His Raid Across the Ohio."

May 18, Monday. E. B. "Pete" Long on "Lyon and Wilson Creek." Long is regarded by many as the top factual authority on the Civil War: he is now collaborating with Bruce Catton on the coming Centennial history of the War. So brush up on the "struggle for Missouri" in the summer of 1861.

MEETING OF FEBRUARY 24. Neville Bayless talked on the Battle of New Market, May 15, 1864. As background he explained the significance of the Shenandoah valley in the Union strategy for the eastern campaign in 1864, then with the aid of an excellent sketch map of the field, he traced the steps in the battle itself, closing with a description of the dramatic charge of the V.M.I. cadet corps. His talk was followed by pictures of the battle area and scenes from the V.M.I. parade grounds. The members found this scholarly talk so worthwhile that they voted unanimously to have it printed to be distributed. It was not possible to print Neville's notes in time to have them accompany this Newsletter, but you may shortly expect to receive a copy in a special mailing.

SPRING ASSEMBLY OF ROUND TABLES IN RICHMOND. In the February issue we announced a National Assembly of Civil War Round Tables in Richmond, Virginia, April 16 and 17, under the auspices of the Civil War Centennial Commission which will be devoted to planning for the Civil War Centennial. This meeting should not be confused with the Spring Assembly of Round Tables in Richmond, May 15 through 17 with the Richmond Civil War Round Table as host. This later assembly is designed as a battlefield study program, accompanied by diversional and entertainment events.

Members wishing to attend this Spring Assembly of Round Tables should communicate with Mr. William H. Stauffer, 3809 Hill Monument Parkway, Richmond 27, Virginia. Already 100 persons from 15 Round Tables have indicated their intention to attend.

CIVIL WAR CALENDAR FOR MARCH

1862

- 5 - 7 Battle of Pea Ridge (Elkhorn Tavern), Arkansas - Curtis vs. Van Dorn.
- 8 "Merrimac" sank U. S. Battleships "Congress" and "Cumberland."
- 9 Battle of the "Monitor" and the "Merrimac."
- 14 Burnside captured New Bern, North Carolina.
- 23 Stonewall Jackson defeated at Kernstown, Virginia.

1864

- 9 Grant made General-in-Chief of all the U. S. Armies.

1865

- 2 Remnants of Early's Army of the Valley defeated and destroyed at Waynesboro.
- 19 - 21 Battle of Bentonville, North Carolina - Joe Johnston vs. Sherman.
- 22 Sherman entered Goldsboro, North Carolina.
- 25 Fort Stedman (Petersburg) assaulted by Confederate General John B. Gordon.
- 31 Pickett checked Sheridan at Dunwiddie Court House.

A ROUND TABLE RHUBARB. Was John Imboden an artillery or a cavalry officer? "Cavalry," said Jack Frost. "But he commanded an artillery battery at Bull Run," remarked Jack Cullen. And so it went.

What do the records show? This much anyway. John Daniel Imboden organized the Staunton artillery at Staunton, Virginia, and commanded it at the capture of Harper's Ferry in 1861 and at Bull Run. However, in June 1862 he was with Stonewall Jackson at Cross Keys and Port Republic and says he had "a battalion of cavalry, four howitzers and a Parrott gun." Sometime after Port Republic, he organized the First Partisan Rangers which later became a regular command. During the fall, winter and spring of 1862 and 1863 he operated in West Virginia, collecting horses and cattle for Lee's army, doing damage to the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, seeking recruits and attacking enemy garrisons. In the Official Records his force is usually referred to as "Imboden's cavalry," but at times he had some infantry under his command.

In June of 1863, he had a cavalry command, protected the left flank of Lee's army advancing to Gettysburg, and covered the retreat to the Potomac. In 1864 he was again in the Shenandoah Valley commanding a cavalry brigade under John Breckinridge and Jubal Early until he became ill of typhoid fever.

Probably some member can fill in the gaps in this record. Just when did Imboden give up command of the Staunton artillery and why? What was he doing between Bull Run and Cross Keys - Port Republic? Also between Gettysburg and the battle of New Market in May, 1864?

SOME RECENT CIVIL WAR PUBLICATIONS

Reviewed in The New York Times during February 1959

The Great Rebellion: The Emergence of the American Conscience
By Earl Schenck Miers
World Publishing Company - Cleveland

The Civil War: A Narrative: Fort Sumter to Perryville
By Shelby Foote
Random House - New York

Toward Gettysburg: A Biography of Gen. John F. Reynolds
By Edward J. Nichols
Pennsylvania State University Press

The Angry Scur: The Story of Reconstruction, 1865-1890
By Hodding Carter
Doubleday

Red River Campaign: Politics and Cotton in the Civil War
By Ludwell H. Johnson
The Johns Hopkins Press

To Appomattox: Nine April Days, 1865
By Burke Davis
Rinehart and Co., Inc.

Out-of-Print Authorities Reprinted

The Generalship of Ulysses S. Grant
By J. F. C. Fuller
Indiana University Press

I Rode with Jeb Stuart: The Life and Campaigns of Maj. Gen. J. E. B. Stuart
By H. B. McClellan
Indiana University Press

Washington in Lincoln's Time
By Noah Brooks
Edited by Herbert Mitgang
Rinehart and Co., Inc.

A Rebel Clerk's Diary
By J. B. Jones
Edited by Earl Schenck Miers
Sagamore Press - New York

LESTER SWIFT sends an editorial from The Cleveland News of September 18, 1958. Many of you have read it, but it is worth reprinting:

THE WHY OF CIVIL WAR FANS

THERE ARE enthusiasms that - for some of us, at least - will never fade.

Take, for example, the Civil War. There never was anything like it and there never will be anything like it.

It is the Great American Drama, filled with more legends, more untruths, more heroism, more gallant humanitarianism, more stupidity and more villains than any other epoch in our history.

It is the dying Stonewall Jackson saying: "Let us cross the river and rest in the shade of the trees."

It is Ambrose E. Burnside weeping after his stupidity has led to the calamitous defeat at Fredericksburg. The man actually wept and he was a major general. It is a matter of record.

IT IS SHERMAN telling the people of Georgia that he didn't bring the war, that they brought the war to themselves, that destruction was a logical byproduct of war - in short, that war was hell.

It is Fighting Joe Hooker sitting tall and splendid on his great white horse, sitting there taking brandy and water and listening to the cheers of his men.

And most of all, it is the men who fought the war. Farmer-boys from Illinois, from Mississippi, from Wisconsin, New York, South Carolina. Irish immigrant men from New York, German immigrant men from Boston, clerks from Pennsylvania. Men - men who advanced into the mist and confusion of the great combat and didn't really know why they fought, who cheered their generals and jeered their generals but who fought.

More men were killed in the American Civil War than in any war in this country's history.

AND REMEMBER THIS: It was a CIVIL war. Men fought other men who worshipped in the same churches, spoke the same language and in most matters had the same attitudes.

This wasn't a case of fighting foreigners. These men all were Americans. They fought each other for four years, and then they all were Americans again.

They were gallant and they were cowardly and they were ridiculous and they died not pleasantly. And they all were Americans.

This is why there is such a thing as a Civil War enthusiast.