



News Letter

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

CLEVELAND, OHIO

2060 Illuminating Building
Cleveland 13, Ohio

May 3, 1961

"THE BATTLE OF ATLANTA"

Time: 6:30 P.M. - May 9, 1961

Place: University Club, 3813 Euclid Avenue

Speaker: Col. Allen P. Julian, U.S.A. (Ret)

Our last meeting of the 1960-1961 season will feature a nationally known Round Table speaker. Colonel (Ned) Julian is director of the Atlanta Historical Society. A life-long student of the Civil War, he is a recognized authority on the campaign that resulted in the fall of Atlanta and the march to the sea. Those who attend may look forward to an informative talk and a lively discussion period.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

At the meeting on May 9, President Charles Clarke will deliver his valedictory, the nominating committee will report, and officers for the year 1961-1962 will be elected. This issue of the Newsletter will be the last regular issue until September.

"LEGEND INTO HISTORY - GEORGE A. CUSTER"

Bill West and Sam Wang, at the meeting on April 11, gave one of the outstanding talks of our current program. Generously illustrated with slides, they covered the story of George A. Custer from childhood to his last stand on the banks of the Little Big Horn. It was obvious that they devoted hours of research to the activities of this controversial Civil War cavalryman and Indian fighter.

PLEASE RETURN YOUR CARD TODAY

Due to illness there was unavoidable delay in sending this issue of the NEWS LETTER and the announcement for the next meeting.

For this reason it is essential that you RETURN YOUR CARD TODAY. The secretary must be able to advise the University Club of the approximate attendance before the week-end.

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OHIO IN THE CIVIL WAR

THE NASBY LETTERS

By John Cullen

In a speech at Cooper Union, New York City, at the close of the Civil War, George S. Boutwell, Secretary of the Treasury under President Lincoln, said that the crushing of the rebellion could be credited to Three forces, the Army, the Navy and the Nasby letters.

David Locke, the author of the famous letters, was the publisher of the Weekly Jeffersonian at Findlay, Ohio. His first letter appeared on March 21, 1861 and under the name of Petroleum Vesuvius Nasby.

The Nasby letters were masterpieces of ridicule. Petroleum Vesuvius Nasby's arguments were so ridiculous that they rendered the north incalculable benefit, as Locke intended they should do. He added to the force of his letters by the style and spelling used. He wrote all the words just as they sounded.

The following are quotes from the first Nasby letter:

"South Carliny and sevral other uv the trooly southern states hev secesht--gone orf, I may say, onto a journey after ther rites. Wingert's Corners, ez trooly sympathetic ez any uv em, hez follered soot...

"A meetin wuz held last nite, uv which I wuz chairman, to take the matter uv our grievances in2 consideration and it wuz finally resolved that nughin short uv seceshn wood remedy our woes. Therefore the follerin address wich I rit, wuz adoptid and ordered to be published:

"Wingert's Corners hez too long submitted to the imperious dictates uv a tyranikle government. Our whole histry hez bin wun uv aggresing on the part uv the state and uv meek and pashent endoorunce on ours...

"It refoosed to locate the state capitol at the Corners, to the great detriment uv our patriotic owners uv reel estate...

It refoosed to locate the Penitenshury at the Corners, notwithstanding we do more towards fillin it then any other town in the state...

"It refoosed to locate the State Fair at the Corners, blastin the hopes uv our patriotic groserys...

"It hez compelled us, yeer after yeer, to pay our share uv the taxes...

"It hez never appinted any citizens uv the place to any offis wher theft was possible, thus wilfully keepin capital away from us...

"Therefor, not bein in humor to longer endoor sich outrajes, we declare ourselves Free and Independent uv the state and will maintain our position with arms, if need be...

"We are in earnest. Armed with justice and shot-guns, we bid the tyrants defiance...

"P S.--The feelin is intense--the children hev imbibed it. A lad jest past, displayin the sechesn flag. It waved from behind. Disdaining concealment, the lionhearted boy wore a rounabout. We are firm.

"N.B.-We are still firm.

"N.B. 2nd-We are firm, unyieldin and resolooot.

PETROLEUM V. NASBY"

OHIO AND THE FIFTH COLUMN

On the Ohio home-front in 1863, affairs were sometimes and in some places no less peaceful, even if less bloody, than with Ohioans in the army. The emancipation proclamation took effect on January first. Early in the year the 37th Congress passed the Conscription Act and also a bill giving Lincoln the right to suspend the writ of habeas corpus.

Vicksburg, Gettysburg and Chattanooga were in the future. Fredericksburg and Chancellorville were bitter facts. The anti-war and anti-abolitionists were on the warpath in the North. Ohio, far from being an exception, was to some extent the center of the "peace with honor" or anti-war and anti-administration movement. Its adherents were known as "butter-nuts" or "copperheads."

General Ambrose E. Burnside, fresh from the debacle at Fredericksburg and his famous "mud-march," was assigned to command the military department of Ohio, with headquarters at Cincinnati. Scarcely waiting to sand his quill he drafted his famous General Order 38. It read in part "The habit of declaring sympathies for the enemy will not be allowed in this Department. Persons committing such offenses will at once be arrested ... or sent beyond our lines into the lines of their friends."

Ohio had two men in Congress who were a thorn in the side of the administration and, in particular, of the military regime. Clement T. Vallandigham, congressman from Dayton, and the less well known S.S. ("Sunset") Cox. The latter was not a radical, an irresponsible partisan, or a pro-slavery man, but was a strong anti-abolitionist.

Opposing the Conscription Act which, as originally drafted, proposed to take emancipated Negroes into the Union Army he said: "The gentlemen from the border states here, gentlemen from Kentucky and Ohio -- for there are two sides to the border -- ... will tell you that the Union will be forever rendered hopeless if you pursue this policy of taking slaves from their masters and arming them in this civil strife. It will only keep alive and aggravate this alienation of sections, which had its beginning in hate, and would have its end in vengeance."

Vallandigham, not as circumspect as "Sunset" Cox, got his cravat in Burnside's wringer at Mount Vernon, Ohio, May 1, 1863. Most school boys know the story, but very few students of the era realize the extent and depth of the copperhead sentiment which existed in Ohio which had such an enviable war record. The following are excerpts from the Mt. Vernon Democratic Banner in its report of the meeting which led to the arrest and ultimate exile of Vallandigham: "Friday, May 1st 1863, was a proud and glorious day for the faithful and unconquerable Democracy of old Knox (County, Ohio) ... Between ten and eleven o'clock the processions from the several townships arrived ... A profusion of butternuts and liberty or copperhead pins, Union badges, and other appropriate emblems of Liberty and Union, were also distinguishable features ... The grand procession filed through the principle streets,

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making a splendid display. It was four to five miles in length, and was over two hours in passing any one point ... (There) was a wagon drawn by six horses from Wayne Township, containing thirty-four young ladies representing the thirty-four States of the Union --- Messrs. Vallandigham, Cox and Pendleton spoke --- Vallandigham ... was received with such a shout of applause as fairly made the welkin ring ... Mr. V. spoke for about two hours, and was listened to with the greatest attention, accompanied with tremendous shouts of applause."

Burnside didn't agree with the Knox countians. On May 4, Vallandigham was arrested, tried by a Military Commission, and sentenced to imprisonment for the duration. Lincoln commuted the sentence and Valladigham was turned over to the Confederates. They had no precedent, civil or military, for dealing with him, but finally "paroled" him to Wilmington, North Carolina. In 1864, he returned to the United States and delivered the keynote address at the Democratic convention. He died in 1871 and there are some who suggest that this Ohioan was the model for Hale's Man Without a Country.

CURRENT EVENTS

Growing interest in the Civil War is bringing increased demand for articles and addresses by members of the Round Table. Talks before a number of school and church groups, as well as television and radio appearances, have been made by our members.

Frank Gillen had an article in "The Clarkazette," official organ of The Clark Controller Company. Frank also had an extensive display of his Civil War artifacts at the Maple Festival in Chardon.

Lester Swift was author of a feature article in the Plain Dealer's Sunday magazine for April 30, entitled "When Governors Held a War Council Here."

The Western Reserve Historical Society "News" for March, 1961, summarizes the material which it has available for writers on the Civil War. The material includes unpublished manuscripts, regimental histories, and a large collection of prints, lithographs, and photographs.

NEWS OF OTHER ROUND TABLES

CWRT of Northern New Jersey, was organized in November 1960 and now published a newsletter "Grape and Canister" ... Winchester, Virginia, at the April meeting, heard Virgil Jones on "The Civil War at Sea" ... Waco, Texas has a student membership which is open to Junior High School and High School students ... Colonel J. Gay Seaborne, who addressed our meeting on "The Battle of Brandy Station," talked to Kansas City in April. His subject was "The Seven Days Battle" ... Wilmington, Delaware, cooperating with the Junior League, sponsored a Civil War exhibition at Wanamakers from March 15 to 18 ... Tri-State CWRT has been organized at Quincy, Illinois ... Richmond, Va. will discontinue its monthly Newsletter and will issue only a quarterly publication ... Toledo will be addressed by Col. Allen P. Julian on May 8. He talks in Cleveland on May 9.