

The Charger CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

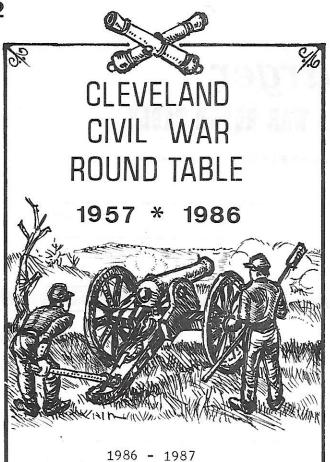
P.O. Box 5786, Cleveland, Ohio 44101

SEPTEMBER 1986		253rd Meeting VOLUME 8 NUMBER 11
	DATE:	September 9th
	PLACE:	The Hermit Club
	SPEAKER:	Professor William J. Ulrich, John Carroll University
	SUBJECT:	"Lincoln's Plan of Reconstruction for the South and Congressional Reaction"
	TIME:	Preliminaries 6:00 p.m. Dinner 7:00 p.m.

1986 -87 Coming Attractions

October	Professor Allan Peskin, Cleveland State University	"The Influence of the Civil War on the Gilded Age"
November	Neil C. Magnum, Chief Historian, Custer Battlefield	"The Battle of Little" Big Horn"
December	Professor Frank Byrne, Kent State University	"Northern Soldiers as a POW Labor Force"
January 1987	Book Sale and Quiz	
February	Judge Norman Fuerst, Club Member	"Lincoln"
March	George N. Vourlojianis, Club Member	"The Mexican War as a Cause of the Civil War"
April	Kathleen George Harrison, Chief Historian, Gettysburg Battlefield	"An Aspect of the Battle of Gettysburg" (To be announced)
May	Dr. John Hubbell, Director, Kent State	"William T. Sherman and the Atlanta Campaign"

RESERVATIONS A MUST



President - Geo. Vourlojianis
Vice Pres. - Marty Graham
Secretary - Neil Glaser
Treasurer - Ken Callahan, Jr.
Sgt.-at-Arms - Doug Baldwin
Editor of the Charger Ted Adams

Ass't Editor - Betty Adams
Editorial Office:
38299 Roselawn Ave.
Willoughby, OH 44094

216 942-4152

STUART CRAMER HONORED BY ALL OF US

For many years the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable has been very fortunate to have Stuart Cramer as the editor and illustrator of the Charger. None of us can begrudge his decision, after such a long and probably tiring tour of duty, to pass the responsibility to another editor.

MAY MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Professor James M. McPherson of Princeton University addressed the May meeting of the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable on the topic of "Lincoln and Unconditional Surrender." In the course of his talk, Professor McPherson pointed out that Union political and military goals changed dramatically during the war. In 1861, the federal government sought to restore the Union on pre-war terms while the military tried to bring this about by occupying Confederate territory. As the war dragged on, these goals evolved politically into no peace without emancipation and militarily the destruction of Southern armies and resources. Professor McPherson described Lincoln as the linchpin between these evolving political and military goals.

Our newsletter has been one that compares favorably with that of any Round Table--an achievement of which we can all be proud. For his devoted service, not to mention his past successes as a speaker on several occasions, the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable has elected him a lifetime member. His long and impressive service to the club will be a "tough act to follow" for his successors.

HAPPENINGS IN SEPTEMBER

During the "Late Unpleasantness"

- 1861: No major engagements. Both Union and Confederate governments are under pressure by their supporters to "get moving" and pressure the enemy. On September 10 Lincoln receives Mrs. John Fremont who has come to the capital to plead her husband's cause in the altercations that have arisen in Missouri over General Fremont's dictatorial conduct. The interview was an unpleasant one, according to some observers. On the 12th, Lincoln contacts Mrs. Fremont to assure her that he is not "acting in any hostility" toward General Fremont.
- 1862: The invasion of Maryland by Lee's Army of Northern Virginia culminates in the Battle of Antietam, said to be the bloodiest single day of the war. Although it is not a decisive victory for the North, it provides President Lincoln with the opportunity to introduce his noteworthy Proclamation of Emancipation, to take effect in January of 1863.
- 1863: In September, the Battle of Chickamauga, a victory for the Southern forces, presages the discrediting of both Bragg and Rosecrans, commanders of the opposing forces, neither of whom performed decisively.

 Crucial decisions in the battle were taken by subordinate officers, principally by Longstreet for the South and by Thomas for the North.
- 1864: Notable events in this month are the taking of Atlanta by Sherman, and the successful Shenandoah Valley Campaign of General Sheridan against General Early. On the political scene, General George B. McClellan accepts the Democratic nomination for president. Meanwhile, General Grant's forces close in on Petersburg, Virginia. On Lake Erie, a Confederate attempt to free the Confederate prisoners on Johnson's Island is unsuccessful.



Skirmish: 14th Brooklyn Rey't and Conted Cavalry at Antietom 9-17-1862

FRED GILL'S BOOK REVIEW

THE MEDICAL DEPARTMENT OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY IN THE CIVIL WAR by Captain Louis C. Duncan, Medical Corps, U.S. Army

Butternut Press, Gaithersburg, Maryland. 1985

Have you ever noticed that the battle reports of Civil War commanding officers never mention activities of the Medical Department? There is never a word about the most heroic action, never a word about the gargantuan efforts of the Medical Department in one campaign contributing to the military success of a following one. Reading in this book about the effects of a battle on the army makes you wonder if the commanding generals simply did not - or could not - think about the hellish things battle did to the troops.

Early in the war there was little reason for a commander to mention the Medical Department, for the department did very little. There was no provision made for more than nominal care of the wounded. Surgeon officers were attached mainly to regiments but scant thought, it seems, had been given to what to do with wounded men beyond the regimental surgeons' commandeering houses, barns, mills or other completely unsuitable buildings close to the battle lines. The quiet account in this book, written in the early 1900s, of the confusion that the Medical Department not only encountered but compounded at Bull Run will appall you. You wonder what those Medical Department guys had been thinking about. Didn't they know that battle produced wounded? Were they not aware of the experience of people in their jobs in other wars? Apparently no one in the Medical Department was aware. This changed when William A. Hammond became Surgeon General following the retirement of Clement A. Farley, a man with over forty years of service, and his imagination never exceeded the army's outmoded regulations. The Sanitary Commission, that marvelous organization, had the clout to enable it to dictate Hammond's appoint-Now, this Hammond was a superior doctor and a man who had the brains to see what was wrong and the immense energy to do something about it.

Probably his greatest accomplishment was to appoint Jonathan Letterman as Medical Director of the Army of the Potomac. Letterman was a man of rare vision and courage. In what was a very short order for the times, he devised a system to handle the wounded of a fighting, moving army. His plan for an ambulance corps was submitted to McClellan, as the author says, "a high priest of organization," who quickly approved it. This was the best thing that could happen. The plan

was not referred to Washington, for there it probably would have died a death of strangulation due to regulations. Instead the plan was put into action by a general order of the Army of the Potomac. This surely was one time McClellan did something exactly right. Maybe Letterman did not originate the ambulance corps idea, but the happy conjunction with McClellan gave it life.

This was the first step in eliminating horrors similar to those produced by Bull Run. But Letterman was not through. He soon devised and had promulgated the orders establishing a medical supply and equipment system and, most of all, a system of field hospitals, a precursor of the modern MASH system with which television watchers are familiar.

The great test of Letterman's work came at Gettysburg. Wounded, both Union and Confederate, were collected promptly and treated in field hospitals. Some confusion occurred between July 5th and 7th when the army moved south. The ambulance train and the field hospital organization of course had to move also, leaving a horde of wounded in and around the town. It was only on July 7th that the railroad was repaired and trains could start removing the casualties. This was a tragic gap in the system, a gap the Sanitary Commission filled. Letterman was criticized for this melancholy gap, his critics forgetting he had to move with the army.

Attesting to the efficiency of Letterman's ambulance and field hospital operation is the record in this book of the confusion and suffering attendent to moving the Confederate wounded. A seventeen-mile column of springless wagons crammed with casualties from Gettysburg had to scale a mountain and descend to the Potomac River crossing which the Confederate army made. Most of the operation was carried out at night in a violent storm. The genius of Letterman and his system can be pointed up by a comparison with General Imboden's description of this macabre journey. Imboden was the Confederate officer who had the unfortunate responsibility of being placed in charge.

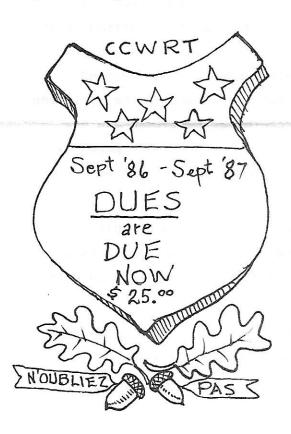
Incidental to the account of Letterman's great work are fine capsule descriptions of many of the war's battles and campaigns. The whole book is a tribute to the author's considerable search of the records and his wish to detail with pride the accomplishments of the Medical Corps.

All of us can add to our Civil War history competence by reading this book and being reminded of the little noted monumental horrors of battle and of the legion of unsung heroes which must exist.

FIRST BATTLE OF BULL RUN RE-FOUGHT. On July 20th of this year, on a 500 acre tract of land about five miles from the original battlefield there was a reenactment of the First Battle of Bull Run (or First Manassas), one of the largest of its type held in recent years. There were about 5,000 uniformed participants, and the event drew about 32,000 spectators. It was held just one day shy of the 125th anniversary of the battle. The re-enactment was organized by the American Civil War Commemorative Committee, Inc. Plans for it were started in May 1985, as the first of four re-enactments to be held over the next four years.

For authenticity, plywood replicas of the Henry House and the Stone House were erected on the site of the mock battle. The actual battlefield was not used in order to protect it from damage. As in the original conflict, it was a hot day in the mid 90's. Ambulances were kept busy picking up some of the "soldiers" overcome by the oppressive heat. However, for most the similarity of the conditions to those prevalent in the original battle was appreciated. They were there to experience the feelings, as far as possible, of the troops at the real battle.

Participants that came from many parts of the country included groups from Minnesota, Louisiana, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and, of course, many from Virginia. The battle began at 1:00 p.m. and ended properly at 3:30 p.m. with a disorganized retreat of the Union forces. Participants and spectators alike reported a "good show."



CONGRESS OF CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLES Marietta, Georgia, Oct. 2-5, 1986

There is still time to make arrangements to attend this convention. Tours of historical spots in the Atlanta area are of especial interest. Tim Beatty will bring the printed schedule and registration blank to our next meeting for anyone interested in attending the Congress.

SOMETIMES THERE'S GOOD NEWS ON THE BATTLEFIELD FRONT: The newsletter of the Harpers Ferry CWRT tells us that a near disaster was recently averted in the Antietam area. Several key areas of the Antietam battlefield remain in private hands, because Congress, in their 19th century wisdom, laid out the Antietam National Battlefield in strips, never dreaming of late 20th century developmental pressures. One of those areas in private hands is the rolling, expansive Roulette farm, bordering Bloody Lane. Over these open fields, two divisions of the Union 2d Corps attacked the Confederate center on September 17, 1862. Several weeks ago, a real estate developer almost purchased 400 acres of this historic farm. Fortunately, a member of the Save Historic Antietam Foundation (formed in response to the threat to Grove Farm) learned of the impending deal and notified the Antietam NB superintendent. Supt. Leimer reacted quickly by meeting with the owner and guaranteeing him that the Park Service would move quickly to compensate him for the Roulette Farm, and the owner scotched any deal with the developers.

We all owe a debt of thanks to a private citizen in Sharpsburg and to Supt. Leimer--their quick response helped save the Roulette farm from split-level homes and barbecue grills overlooking Bloody Lane.

- Lifted from March-April 1986 Issue of CWRT Digest

DID GEN. SHERMAN'S "SCORCHED EARTH" PERFORMANCE PAY OFF? An excerpt from a conversation of Burke Davis, historian, author and former editor of the Charlotte News says that it did. The question was asked of him: From a a military standpoint, would Sherman's march have been as effective if he had maintained discipline? A: "I don't think so. The real effect of his march - the last straw for the South militarily - was the drawing home of many thousands of soldiers in Lee's army. Mama was writing and telling what had happened the day or week before, saying that the home place was in ruins. Confederate troops were deserting by whole companies and regiments even before Grant broke the line. If Sherman's troops had simply marched past the farms, this wouldn't have happened."

-- From The Charlotte Observer 11-8-84 --

A SUGGESTION FOR OUR ANNUAL MEETING DEVOTED TO THE BOOKS AND ARTIFACTS

SALE. Why not have a table for the display of things not for sale? An idea not as silly as it sounds. Members could bring a few items of great personal interest, not with the idea of disposing of them, but just to share their knowledge, even their pride of possession, with others. It would be a miniature museum, of sorts, and surely be of interest to nearly all of us. It might even be the most fascinating table there.



CLEVELAND GRAYS

Military Library and Archives

The Cleveland Grays are presently establishing a military library and archives in their Armory. The Grays are a 501 C3 organization and as such all donations are tax deductible. The library will be open to students of military history. In addition to books, the Armory library will serve as a repository for military related documents, letters and memorabilia. Anyone wishing to make donations to the Grays military library may call Mrs. Amanda Francazio at the Armory. telephone is (216) 621-5938.

GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY OF A CIVIL WAR CLASSIC What the armies of the Confederacy failed to accomplish on the battlefields of the Civil War, a tiny Atlanta woman; Margaret Mitchell, almost accomplished using a portable typewriter perched on a sewing table. She single-handedly saw to it that the Civil War Era South and the views of its people came to life again in a remarkably popular 1,037-page novel that is enjoying its "Golden Anniversary" this year. Fifty years after its original publication in 1936, GONE WITH THE WIND is still in print, still selling briskly, and its main characters are today probably even better known to the American public than General Grant or General Lee!

Adapted from Civil War Times

AN INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PREPARATION OF YOUR NEWSLETTER Your editor will welcome any items submitted by the members of the Cleveland CWRT, personal ones especially. Share with other members news of the battlefields or museums visited by you and your family, collections of memorabilia you are making, or books you have read, good or bad. Subjects related to the Civil War, in which you are particularly interested, can be the basis of interesting conversations at our pre-meeting get-togethers, too, if others know what these subjects are, Keep those items coming!

HIGH HEARTS

by Rita Mae Brown Bantam Books, New York, N.Y., 1986

This book review was written especially for this issue of <u>The Charger</u>, by the Assistant Editor. Those of you who subscribe to CIVIL WAR TIMES may note that <u>HIGH HEARTS</u> was reviewed in the September issue of the magazine, and can compare the similarities and differences in the reactions of the reviewers to the book. This review was written before the magazine was received, so that one was not influenced by the other. TIA

Civil War novels have become popular again since the North and South books and the TV mini-series. However, most of them don't tell the reader very much about the Civil War--more is written about illicit love affairs, the horrors of miscegenation, or the true-blue family slave versus the surly, mean-spirited white overseer with a mention or two of historic battles and familiar names like Lee or Grant to keep it an authentic "period" novel.

HIGH HEARTS has most of the above yet is different. The plot is ingenuous. Geneva Chatfield, a newly-married young woman, born and bred in Albemarle County, Virginia, cuts her hair, dons a uniform, changes her name to Jimmy, then enlists in the First Virginia Cavalry (their actions often parallel those of the troops belonging to Colonel Fitz Lee) to be with her husband. We're told that Geneva is also the best rider since Light Horse Harry Lee and as headstrong as Andrew Jackson. "Jimmy" makes an excellent soldier. She rides fearlessly into skirmishes and battles with all the dedication and bravery of any professional soldier. But, alas, she outshines her husband, Nash Hart, who as a sensitive, poetic man, recoils from the horrors of war. And, naturally, the handsome and dashing Major Mars Vickers, the quintessential soldier, finds himself inexplicably drawn to this young soldier in his company. Latent homosexual feelings are hinted at in this book but not brought to fruition as in Tom Wicker's moving Civil War novel, UNTO THIS HOUR. All is resolved in a rather pedestrian way.

The setting is authentic, as the author did much research which is evidenced by her extensive bibliography; however, the characters are one-dimensional and the reader is unable to feel anything for them. The only parts of the novel that come to life are about the wounded--their transportation back to whatever make-shift facilities that were available, their terrible suffering plus the stunning reality of the war on on the residents of Albemarle County.

BOOK REVIEW continued

Ms. Brown writes about Virginia's lack of recognition of women in the Civil War: "nowhere . . . is there mention of the sacrifices of women and blacks. Some paid with their lives, all paid with their worldly goods, many paid with their health, and, no one, no one was ever the same again." No nation can go to war without the tacit support of its women and in the case of the Civil War some women disguised themselves as men to fight. There were no physical examinations. The two Northern women often cited for becoming soldiers were Frances L. Clalin of the Fourth Missouri Heavy Artillery, later of the Thirteenth Missouri Cavalry, Company A, and Doctor Mary Walker of New York who passed as a male surgeon. Then, too, for every woman who came forward after the war and revealed herself, there is no way to know how many melted back into society to continue life as a man or quietly change back into a woman.

The author raises another side of the effects of the Civil War that has not been thoroughly researched: "... there is little psychiatric research applied to this time. Aside from the jolt to everyone's psyche, other problems became evident. Many men, permanently disabled or disfigured, committed suicide. We have no statistics on this since it was almost always covered up. In fact, this is often one of the reasons families want their papers kept private. Suicide remains a terrible stain. We also have little information about mercy killing. I bring this up in the hope that it will spur someone into a new area of inquiry ... We also have no statistics on subsequent addiction to alcohol and morphine. We know it existed, but how wide the scope? How did the sight of a maimed and sometimes chemically incapacitated generation affect their children?"

The author includes in the Epilogue, the information that on April 3, 1865, most of the records of the Confederacy were destroyed in a fire in Richmond. With some other old records pieced together, she lists the dead from Albemarle County, Virginia. She writes: "I do not believe you can read this list without being moved by it. Perhaps you will find a list for your own county and find the names of your people. What I pray is that neither you or I, wherever we live, will have to read a list like this in the future."

I feel badly about this book--I wanted it to capture my attention and keep me interested in the story. It didn't. I have great admiration for the author's extensive research and her ability to write, outside of the novel form, so movingly as she did in the Forward and the Epilogue, but that left 446 pages in between that failed.

BA