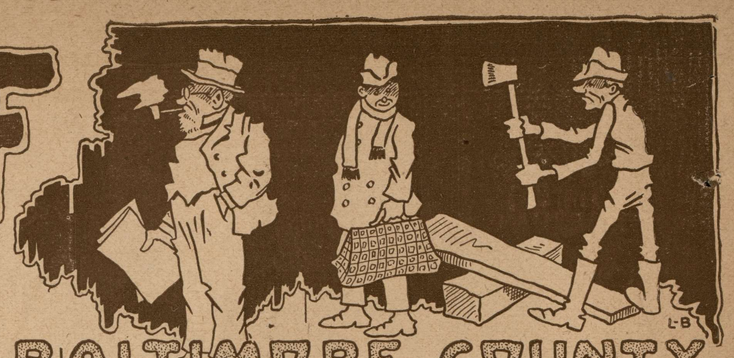
OLD TIME STUFF



WHAT OUR DADDIES AND GRAND DADDIES DID 60 YEARS AGO IN BALTIMORE COUNTY

An editorial headed "The War News" in the issue of the Baltimore County American gives the editor's idea of the situation between the contending armies. It is as follows:

"The War News—We are unable, from our limited space to give a twentieth part of the war news that would be interesting to our readers. Suffice it to say that the rebel army has been whipped by Gen. Grant in every pitched battle since Thursday last. On that, and on the day following, the fighting was terrible, and on Friday night Lee's army retreated towards Richmond, since which time, up to the time of writing this (yesterday noon) nothing positive is known. Our army has no doubt suffered severely, some ten thousand wounded having already been brought to Fredericksburg, which place is in our possession. Of the number killed we have as yet seen no estimate, but no doubt it is immense, from the number of wounded. The Maryland Regiments suffered severely. We have before us a partial list of the killed and wounded, but recognize no Baltimore county men in it.

"The 7th Md. Regiment suffered severely; they were attached to the Corps commanded by Gen. Warren, who was reported a day or two ago as being mortally wounded, but which turns out not to be so.

"Gen. Butler has been doing splendid service in the vicinity of Richmond, and we look daily for something from Gen. Sigel that will add materially to the taking of Richmond, which circumstance will occur before long, beyond a doubt."

While the County Commissioners are now engaged in perfecting plans for a new addition to the court house, it is interesting to read of the interest of the editor of the "American" in keeping up the court house grounds in 1864, as shown in the following item:

"Improvement in the Court House Yard—Some time during the past winter the County Commissioners contracted with Wm. D. Breckenbridge, Esq., of Govanstown, to plant a certain number of trees of various kinds in the yard surrounding our Court House. The work has just been completed, and we can testify to its being done in a workmanlike manner. This will be a great improvement, and should long ago have been attended to. We hope for the credit of our county and village, as well as for those who have it in charge, that no more cattle, horses and hogs will be permitted to roam over these grounds, destroying as they have done before, nearly every tree in the place."

Quite a lot of space is given to war operations in this issue. General Grant has been engaged around Fredericksburg, and Gen. Butler around Petersburg and in the vicinity of Richmond. Two despatches, one from Secretary of War Stanton, to Major General Dixon, and the other from General B. F. Butler (spoons) to the Secretary of War will be found interesting reading:

"Washington, May 4; 4 o'clock P. M.—To Major General Dix, New York—Dispatches have just reached here, directed from Gen. Grant. They are not full deciphered yet, but he is on to Richmond. We have taken 2,000 prisoners. A bearer of dispatches from General Meade's headquarters has just reached here. He states that Lee's army commenced falling back on the night of Friday. Our army commenced the pursuit on Saturday.

"The rebels were in full retreat for Richmond by the direct road. Hancock passed through Spottsylvania Courthouse at daylight.

"Our headquarters at noon yesterday were twenty miles south of the battlefield. We occupy Fredericksburg. The Twenty-second New York Cavalry occupied that place at 8 o'clock last night. The depot for our wounded is established at Fredericksburg.

E. M. STANTON,
Secretary of War."

"Headquarters near Bermuda Landing; May 9.—Our operations may be summed up in a few words: With 1,700 cavalry we have advanced up the Peninsula, forced the Chickahominy and have safely brought them to our present position. The colored cavalry are now holding position as our advance towards Richmond.

Gen. Kantz, with 3,000 cavalry from Suffolk, on the same day with our movement up the James River, forced the passage of the Blackwater, and burned the railroad bridge at Stony Creek, below Petersburg, cutting in two Beauregard's forces at that point.

"We have landed here, entrenched ourselves, destroyed many miles of railroad, and got a position which with proper supplies, we can hold out against the whole of Lee's army. I have ordered up the supplies.

"Beauregard, with a large portion of his command, was left south of the cutting of the railroad by General Kantz. That portion which reached Petersburg under him I have whipped today—killing and wounding many and taking many prisoners after a severe and well-contested fight. Lieut.-General Grant will be troubled with no further reinforcements to Lee from Beauregard's forces.

B. F. BUTLER,
Major General."

The campaign of Grant and Butler in opening the way to Richmond was so satisfactory to the Union cause that it brought forth a proclamation from President Lincoln as follows:

"The President calls on the friends of Union and Liberty to render thanks and prayers to the "Only Giver of all Victory."

Executive Mansion,
Washington, May 9th, 1864,

"To the friends of Union and Liberty:

"Enough is known of army operations within the last five days to claim our especial gratitude to God; while what remains undone demands our most sincere prayers to and reliance upon Him, without whom all human effort is vain.

"I recommend that all patriots, at their homes and their places of public worship, and wherever they may be, unite in common thanksgiving and prayer to Almighty God.—Abraham Lincoln"

Interesting to Pikesville people. Baltimore and Pikesville Railroad—The books for subscription to this passenger railway are now open, and the road will be made—passing through a thickly settled and one of the most delightful parts of Baltimore county. The grade of the road is very favorable, only requiring to be cut down in two places.

There is lots of truth in this old poem taken from the American of 1864:

HOME.

"Home's not merely four square walls,
Though with pictures hung and gilded;
Home is where affection calls,
Filled with shrines the heart has builded!
Home!—go watch the faithful dove
Sailing 'neath the heavens above us—
Home is where there's one to love,
Home is where there's one to love us!

Home's not merely roof and room
It needs somethings to endear it;
Home is where the heart can bloom,
Where there's some kind lip to cheer it!
What is home with none to meet,
None to welcome, none to greet us?
Home is sweet, and only sweet,
Where there's one we love to meet us!

In the issue of June 3d, 1864, just a week or more after the President's message published above the Union forces met with serious reverses. As a result the editorial is written in a very despondent strain. The editor says:

"The high hopes of the speedy capture of Richmond and the downfall of Confederacy, induced by the somewhat exaggerated accounts of recent successes, are meeting with a natural reaction in consequence of the conflicting and inconclusive reports of later dates. There were many who were all enthusiasm at first, but who are now almost ready to give up all as lost. These parties read in the check Grant has received in what was thought a few days ago would be almost an uninterrupted march upon the rebel capitol, omens of the most disheartening character, betokening defeat and disaster, We cannot share these gloomy forebodings; it may be because we have at no time felt assured of an easy victory. Everything has indicated a series of desperate battles before the rebel stronghold could be possessed, extending not only over considerable ground, but through protracted time. With three years to prepare and fortify, knowing all the time that Richmond was the turning point of the conflict, it is not surprising that the rebels now hold a position from which it will be found most difficult to dislodge them. We have never seen any reason to calculate upon anything but a hard, long fight. It would not be remarkable if in the course of this contest some portions of our armies should meet with reverses, and the whole of them by times be brought to a standstill; but all this does not in our judgment justify the conclusion that Richmond cannot be made to fall. The very nature of such a conflict is favorable to the Union arms. In such a contest, the result is simply a question of numbers and endurance, and in these regards it is clear that the North has the advantage. When two armies settle down against each other for a long series of detached conflicts, as Grant's and Lee's appear to have done, both fortifying as they advance or retire, the party which can bring the most men and the heaviest guns to bear is pretty sure to win in the end."

There appeared in the American of February 12th, 1864, a communication which we believe is the first suggestion ever offered for a bank in Baltimore counuty. It is signed "Unit," and of course we do not know who he was, but of course if he could return today he would see how abundantly his advice was acted on. The letter is as follows: "Messrs. Editors—'Tis a well known fact that Towsontown has greatly improved, both in population and wealth, within the last few years, and that as the county seat of Baltimore county, will continue so to do. It labors however, under one great disadvantage, and that is the want of a bank. The Treasurer of Baltimore county alone, for instance, has to give hundreds of checks in the course of a year, and if the amount be ever so small, the holder thereof must go to Baltimore city to get the money or suffer it to be discounted. The officers of the Court Clerk, Sheriff, Register as well as Collectors, &c., all handle a large sum of money during each year, and they are obliged to ride seven miles to deposit it in a Baltimore bank, which, perhaps in a day or two, has again to be checked out, and then another trip to Baltimore by the party getting the check, and no matter how trifling the amount you are obliged to go to the city. Baltimore county contains more real wealth than any county in Maaryland, and all its deposits must go out of the county. It is well known with what difficulty a note can be discounted in Baltimore city banks, if it is drawn by a Baltimore county man.

In the edition of March 18th, 1864, is published the bill providing for a call for the Constitutional convention.

On March 15th there was another proclamation of the President ordering an additional draft of 200,000 men.

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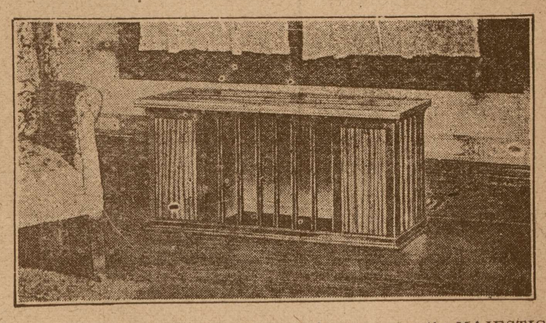

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