

uendo flourish, which seems apt and more than a little funny. My friend Gusov rang up a few weeks ago, to report that he had spoken with a woman from the recording company. "I asked them what they thought of the Bocelli photos," he said, already chuckling in anticipation. "He is delighted!" the woman said. I said, "How do you mean, *he* is delighted? . . . I mean, he is . . ." "Well," said the woman, "you know what I mean. His manager is delighted." And then, again, hissing into the phone, that *leitmotif* of our Forte dei Marmi days:

*Culture for the people,
A store where you shop for free!*

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European correspondent.*

Letter From Maryland

by Joyce Bennett

The Andersonville of the North



After the Battle of Gettysburg, a prison camp was established in occupied Maryland on a low peninsula lapped by the waters of the Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay. All told, 52,000 people—Confederate soldiers, Maryland and Virginia civilians, blockade runners, and spies—passed through the portals of the "Andersonville of the North." In 1910, because erosion threatened Confederate cemeteries near Tanner Creek north of what had been the prison compound, the prisoners' remains were moved up the peninsula to a patch of land owned by the federal government near Scotland, Maryland. There, a monument marking the Confederate graves was erected by federal officials. A little girl who lived at Scotland Beach passed the new national cemetery on her way to and from school and witnessed this re-interment. Many years later, she described to her grandson, Donald Hammett, now a veteran ranger at Point Lookout State Park, what she had seen: wagons heaped with the bones and skulls of the fallen Confederates and the mounds of excavated earth. To this

day, according to Ranger Hammett, fragments of human remains are found in the vicinity of the prison camp's burial grounds. Although the federal government claims that approximately 3,500 perished, the number of men who died at Point Lookout is unknown. The hypothesis that the death rate was high—perhaps 25 percent—because President Lincoln had hardened his heart to the plight of the Confederates in his custody is worth investigating, not with an eye toward a "balanced" picture of how prisoners were treated by the North and the South or to present "both sides of the story," but simply to discover the truth about what happened at Point Lookout.

In the meantime, the living must remember the men who suffered there. For the last two years, I have participated in the Point Lookout Prisoners of War (PLPOW) Organization's annual pilgrimage to Point Lookout. Unfortunately, a sour note was sounded as last year's Saturday morning program was getting under way. As Robin Pohlman of the Veterans Administration stepped to the lectern to speak, someone shouted, "Where's our flag?" The PLPOW descendants, angry over the VA's recent decision to take down the Confederate Battle Flag at the cemetery, were unmoved by Mrs. Pohlman's response that they were gathered not to honor emblems but the men who had died at Point Lookout. Tired of the crumbs thrown by bland bureaucrats, they greeted with silence her announcements that the VA had documented a few more deaths at the prison camp and that the cemetery's wrought-iron fence would soon be painted.

Following Mrs. Pohlman, Patricia Bradley Buck, founder and president of the PLPOW Organization, stepped to the microphone and shared with us some information challenging the federal government's arithmetic. She had discovered the writings of Dr. Joseph Jones, a civilian who had been captured by Union troops at Isle of Wight, Virginia, and sent to Point Lookout, where he was put to work at Hammond Hospital. Dr. Jones estimated that 8,000 died during the time he spent there. Patricia Buck also has in her possession Pvt. James Spicer's firsthand account of the conditions at the camp. Pvt. Spicer, who was with the 7th Virginia Infantry, Company K, wrote that looking through a knothole in the stockade fence, he saw "acres of coffins stacked one on the other." Finally, we learned that the contractor who

had exhumed and moved the prisoners' remains in 1910 had calculated that over 10,000 had succumbed to the hardships of the prison camp. Mrs. Buck ended her speech by imploring the Veterans Administration to restore the battle flag and to acknowledge the number of Confederates who had died while in the care of a government flush with resources—the same government that could have alleviated the suffering of both Yankees and Confederates by agreeing to the prisoner exchanges repeatedly proposed by the South.

Patricia Buck's address and an *a cappella* rendition of "Dixie" performed by Carolyn Billups of the United Daughters of the Confederacy's Colonel Richard Thomas Zarvona Chapter were the highlights of the morning. After wreaths were placed at the base of the monument and the colors were retired, we left the cemetery and drove down to the exhibit area near the site of the prison camp. Representing the local historical society, I had earlier in the day set up a table decorated with black-eyed susans, miniature Confederate, Maryland, and Virginia flags, and a Troilani print depicting a Second Maryland CSA Infantry rifleman. During the morning and afternoon, PLPOW descendants from all over the South stopped by to see me and to talk about the war. Having manned a table the previous year, I was prepared for the occasional unkind remark concerning my home state. One man, sure enough, leaning down to inspect the print, said to his companion, "Look—a Northerner fighting for the South."

As the day grew warmer and the sheep flies were biting, my thoughts turned to the prisoners eaten alive by insects from early May to late October. I also considered the winter months that the men endured without adequate firewood and provisions. While Point Lookout is hot and humid in the summer, its winters can be bitter cold, as salt-water-laden winds blow from the Potomac to the Chesapeake. On a frosty morning, it was not unusual to find prisoners who had frozen to death during the night, even though abundant Yankee blankets and surplus uniforms were stored in ships just offshore. The hours from dusk to dawn were perilous at Point Lookout. Guards entertained themselves by firing into Sibley tents filled with sleeping men. Those who survived the cold and the sport of the guards faced starvation, in spite of the efforts of local people such as the legendary

Pig Man Brewer, who earned his nickname by pretending to slop hogs near the stockade. When no one was looking, he would throw scraps of food to the hungry prisoners. Others tried to supply the men with country hams, but the Yankees confiscated those delicacies. A gentleman in Florida wrote to me that his grandfather, after his stay at Point Lookout, was so emaciated he could encircle his upper arm with his middle finger and thumb. Another prisoner, a Marylander, was so desperate to escape the camp that he hid beneath a pile of corpses on an outbound cart.

Saddened that such a place is associated with my native soil, I was nevertheless proud to have taken part in the descendants' pilgrimage. But as I packed up later in the afternoon, I found myself looking ahead to November, when Point Lookout would be all but deserted, and I would drive back down to pay my respects at the small marble memorial next to the federal obelisk. Financed by the proceeds of jousting tournaments and socials, and originally located at the Tanner Creek burial grounds, the memorial was erected in post-Reconstruction Maryland to honor the men who died at Point Lookout. The words cut into the monument's north face, "*Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*," will remind a forgetful world of their last full measure of devotion, no matter which flag flies over the bones of these honored dead.

Joyce Bennett writes from Leonardtown, Maryland.

Letter From Canada

by Sean Scallon

CRAP Happens



My summer vacation along Lake Superior's western shore into Canada took place just before the anniversary of a milestone, although it was marked by no celebrations or remembrances, and nobody I saw on my quick stay in Thunder Bay showed any sign of acknowledging it. The anniversary was not the subject of conversation in the lounge of the Valhalla Hotel, but the effects of what happened on June 23, 1990, are by now

deeply etched into the Canadian soil and psyche. For on that day, the Meech Lake Accord died.

As a gift to his supporters in Quebec, Progressive Conservative Prime Minister Brian Mulroney negotiated a constitutional deal with the ten provincial premiers that redefined the federal relationship between Ottawa and the rest of Canada, specifically with the old New France colony. Such deal-cutting was a time-honored tradition in Canadian politics. This one would have largely undone the work of former Liberal Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, who in 1982 had added a Bill of Rights-style Charter of Rights and Freedoms to the old British-style constitution, creating the multicultural Canada he sought over the opposition of many Quebecers.

The premiers and the prime minister, a.k.a. "the 11 men in suits," arrived in limousines at a resort on Meech Lake in Quebec's Gatineau hills. They forged an agreement that only a zealous centralist could oppose. The Meech Lake Accord granted Quebec control over immigration, and the other provinces could negotiate for the same power; Quebec's three judges on the nine-member Supreme Court would become a permanent constitutional fixture; the central government would compensate any province that opted out of future national programs in areas of provincial jurisdiction; and any further constitutional reforms would have to receive the unanimous consent of both Ottawa and the provinces. That's devolution. Can you imagine any American president negotiating this kind of deal with the states?

If Meech Lake consisted of only the items mentioned above, it would have been approved quickly, and Canada would still be out of sight and out of mind. But there was just one sticking point: French Quebec insisted on being called a "distinct society." While most believed that this language was symbolic, Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa claimed that it would change the way the constitution would be interpreted in Quebec's courts. But English Canadians objected to what appeared to be an attempt by Quebec to obtain special status for its citizens.

"Distinct society" was a phrase strong enough to defeat the Meech Lake proposal. It was the sore thumb, a red cape to the English Canadian bull, unleashing an ugly wave of anti-Quebec, anti-French, and, inevitably and subtly,

anti-Catholic feeling among the Anglo-Protestant Canadians. Can you imagine a similar reaction if Hispanic legislators from California or New Mexico declared their states or populations to be a distinct society?

For years, the onslaught of American culture and Third World immigration has weakened the Anglo-Canadian identity. If Canadians are simply Americans who don't know any better, then what is the purpose of their nation? What is the meaning of being a Canadian? Why would a Canadian rock group, The Guess Who, sing "American woman—stay away from me"? And why should Canada try to keep Quebec in the federation?

Since Quebecers could be a distinct society, other ethnic groups in Canada decided that they wanted to be recognized as distinct societies—especially the Cree Indians. The Meech Lake Accord had been passed in every provincial legislature but Manitoba. (Newfoundland later rescinded its approval.) A Cree Indian deputy named Elijah Harper opposed Meech Lake for its lack of attention to the nation's indigenous population. Day after day, he refused to give the unanimous consent necessary to allow the introduction of the accord into the legislature, sometimes by lifting a single eagle feather. The deadline for passage came and went: Meech Lake is dead; long live Meech Lake.

The political repercussions were profound: The ruling Progressive Conserva-

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