

Thursday, September 8, 2011

HISTORICAL OR HYSTERICAL PERSPECTIVE

A piece of steel girder from one of the Twin Towers came into our City today. The newsreader on TV said it would be part of a Memorial to the only time when our Nation has been invaded by another. And all the newscasts recite the number killed in the attacks of 9-11 with many photos of those who died. Besides the point that we were not invaded by another Nation on 9-11, there were 2976 people killed (not including the Terrorists) and it is important to remember them. Well, the United States mainland was invaded by a Nation in the War of 1812. That would be England! 2,260 Americans were killed in action; 4,505 were wounded; 15,000 (est total.) died from all causes and all Government Buildings and most of Washington DC itself were burned to the ground. Far greater carnage and destruction than 9-11. A good explanation of the War of 1812 can be found [HERE](#) We are told we must never forget what happened on 9-11. How come we do not remember the invasion of 1814? What is the difference? Which did more damage? Here is an eyewitness account of the invasion of Washington-

"the British send a truce party to negotiate with the Americans ...scarcely had the party bearing the flag entered the street, than they were fired upon ... they proceeded, without a moment's delay to burn and destroy everything in the most distant degree connected with government. In this general devastation were included the Senate House, the President's palace, an extensive dockyard and arsenal, barracks for two or three thousand men, several large storehouses filled with naval and military stores, some hundreds of cannon of different descriptions, and nearly twenty thousand stand of small arms. There were also two or three public rope works which shared the same fate, a fine frigate pierced for sixty guns and just ready to be launched, several gun brigs and armed schooners, with a variety of gunboats and small craft. The powder magazines were, of course, set on fire, and exploded with a tremendous crash, throwing down many houses in their vicinity, partly by pieces of the wall striking them, and partly by the concussion of the air whilst quantities of shot, shell, and hand grenades, which could not otherwise be rendered useless, were thrown into the river."While Gleig's regiment was sacking the city, the remainder of the British force marched into the American capital as night approached:"... the blazing of houses, ships, and stores, the report of exploding magazines, and the crash of falling roofs informed them, as they proceeded, of what was going forward. You can conceive nothing finer than the sight which met them as they drew near to the town. The sky was brilliantly illuminated by the different conflagrations, and a dark red light was thrown upon the road, sufficient to permit each man to view distinctly his comrade's face....When the detachment sent out to destroy Mr. Madison's house entered his dining parlor, they found a dinner table spread and covers laid for forty guests. Several kinds of wine, in handsome cut glass decanters, were cooling on the sideboard; plate holders stood by the fireplace, filled with dishes and plates; knives, forks, and spoons were arranged for immediate use; in short, everything was ready for the entertainment of a ceremonious party. Such were the arrangements in the dining room, whilst in the kitchen were others answerable to them in every respect. Spits, loaded with joints of various sorts, turned before the fire; pots, saucepans, and other culinary utensils stood upon the grate; and all the other requisites for an elegant and substantial repast were exactly in a state which indicated that they had been lately and precipitately abandoned. You will readily imagine that these preparations were beheld by a party of hungry soldiers with no indifferent eye. An elegant dinner, even though considerably overdressed, was a luxury to which few of them, at least for some time back, had been accustomed, and which, after the dangers and fatigues of the day, appeared peculiarly inviting. They sat down to it, therefore, not indeed in the most orderly manner, but with countenances which would not have disgraced a party of aldermen at a civic feast, and, having satisfied their appetites with fewer complaints than would have probably escaped their rival gourmands, and partaken pretty freely of the wines, they finished by setting fire to the house which had so liberally entertained them....Of the Senate house, the President's palace, the barracks, the dockyard, etc., nothing could be seen except heaps of smoking ruins."References: Gleig, George Robert, A History of the Campaigns of the British at Washington and New Orleans (1826), reprinted in Commager, Henry Steele and Allan Nevins The Heritage of America (1939); Lloyd, Alan, The Scorching of Washington (1974); Seale, William The President's House, Vol. I (1986).

Posted by Cal in Current Events at 18:47