

THE CHARGER

January 2013

492nd Meeting

Vol. 34, #5

Tonight's Program:

The Dick Crews Annual Debate:

Topic: President Lincoln's Biggest Mistake

Moderator: William F. B. Vodrey

Perhaps excepting only extreme historical revisionists, Abraham Lincoln is today regarded as one of America's greatest presidents, if not the greatest. We have, in fact, so shrouded Lincoln in glory and adoration that it can be difficult to find the man under all those alabaster robes, and heresy even to suggest that the Great Emancipator had flaws or made mistakes.

With our January debate we intend to plow head on into Lincoln idolatry and tackle the question, what was President Lincoln's biggest mistake? Join us for what will certainly be a lively debate.

Tonight's Debaters:

Ed Chuhna - Suspending habeas corpus

John Harkness - Failing to fight corruption

**Mel Maurer - McClellan, McClellan,
McClellan**

Garry Regan - Neglecting his own security

**Marge Wilson - Selecting Andrew Johnson
in 1864**

Date: **Wednesday,
January 9, 2013**

Place: **Judson Manor
1890 E. 107th Street
Cleveland, Ohio**

Time: **Drinks 6 pm
Dinner 6:45 pm**

Reservations: **Please send an email to
ccwrt1956@yahoo.com with your reservation, or call
Dan Zeiser at (440) 449-9311 by 9 pm the Sunday
before the meeting.**

Meal: **Entree, vegetable, rolls, salad, and dessert.**

**CLEVELAND
CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE
FOUNDED 1957**

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Cleveland Civil War Roundtable Past Presidents

2012 Paul Burkholder
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2010 Dennis Keating
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1987 George Vourlojianis
1986 Tim Beatty
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1974 Nolan Heidelbaugh
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1969 Donald Heckaman
1968 Frank Moran
1967 William Schlesinger
1966 Donald Hamill
1965 Lester Swift
1964 Guy DiCarlo Jr.
1963 Paul Guenther
1962 Edward Downer
1961 Charles Clarke
1960 Howard Preston
1959 John Cullen Jr.
1958 George Farr Jr.
1957 Kenneth Grant

President's Message

"I claim not to have controlled events, but confess plainly that events have controlled me." Abraham Lincoln to Albert G. Hodges, April 4, 1864 With this understanding of his limitations as a war manager, President Lincoln would not be surprised at our January debate topic about Lincoln's greatest mistakes. We will be treated to the informed opinions of several members as they square off and discuss various aspects of presidential war policies and choices that we now see as gone awry (perhaps). Which was the greatest miss (or not)? Join us on January 9th and add your informed opinion to those of your comrades in Civil War scholarship. Bring a friend; I hope to.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Wells



The Great Emancipator

**CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE
2012-2013 SCHEDULE**

September 12, 2012

South Mountain

**John
Michael
Priest**



January 9, 2013

***Dick Crews Annual Debate:
President Lincoln's Biggest Mistake***

Moderator: William F. B. Vodrey

February 13, 2013



***Edwin M. Stanton
Buckeye Warlord***

William F. B. Vodrey

October 10, 2012



Morgan's Raid

Lester Horwitz

March 13, 2013

The Assassination

Michael Kaufman



November 14, 2012



Fort Pillow

**Dr. John V.
Cimprich**

April 10, 2013

Lincoln

Harold Holzer



December 12, 2012

***The Irish and the
Civil War***

Dr. W. Dennis Keating



May 8, 2013

***Cleveland Civil War Roundtable
Players Present:
Grant and Lee at the White House***

Article I, Section 9, clause 2 of the Constitution, which states, "*The Privilege of the Writ of Habeas Corpus shall not be suspended, unless when in Cases of Rebellion or Invasion the public Safety may require it.*"

A writ of habeas corpus is a judicially enforceable order issued by a court of law to a prison official ordering that a prisoner be brought to the court so it can be determined whether that prisoner had been lawfully imprisoned and, if not, whether he or she should be released from custody. A habeas corpus petition is filed with a court by a person who objects to his own or another's detention or imprisonment. The petition must show that the court ordering the detention or imprisonment made a legal or factual error. The right of habeas corpus is the constitutionally bestowed right of a person to present evidence before a court that he or she has been wrongly imprisoned.

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

A Proclamation

Whereas, it has become necessary to call into service not only volunteers but also portions of the militia of the States by draft in order to suppress the insurrection existing in the United States, and disloyal persons are not adequately restrained by the ordinary processes of law from hindering this measure and from giving aid and comfort in various ways to the insurrection;

Now, therefore, be it ordered, first, that during the existing insurrection and as a necessary measure for suppressing the same, all Rebels and Insurgents, their aiders and abettors within the United States, and all persons discouraging volunteer enlistments, resisting militia drafts, or guilty of any disloyal practice, affording aid and comfort to Rebels against the authority of the United States, shall be subject to martial law and liable to trial and punishment by Courts Martial or Military Commission:

Second. That the Writ of Habeas Corpus is suspended in respect to all persons arrested, or who are now, or hereafter during the rebellion shall be, imprisoned in any fort, camp, arsenal, military prison, or other place of confinement by any military authority or by the sentence or any Court Martial or Military Commission.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand, and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

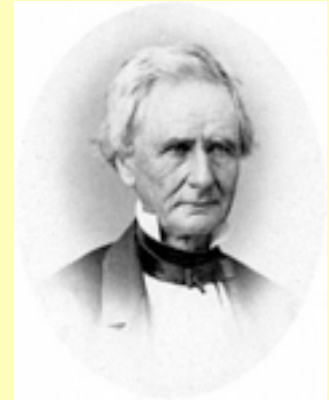
Done at the City of Washington this twenty-fourth day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-two, and of the Independence of the United States the 87th.

By the President: ABRAHAM LINCOLN

WILLIAM H. SEWARD, Secretary of State.

Simon Cameron (1799-1889)

"The Great Winnebago Chief" and "Czar of Pennsylvania," Simon Cameron was the Pennsylvania Republican leader who served in the Senate (1845-49, 1857-61, 1867-77), and replaced James Buchanan. A former Democrat with such widespread business interests in newspapers, banking and manufacturing that he resembled a Whig in political philosophy, Cameron had been a friend and colleague of James Buchanan. He had a reputation of abandoning and manipulating the Democratic party for his own interests. In 1857, Thad Stevens decided to help return Cameron to the Senate as a Republican where he was serving when he sought the Republican presidential nomination in 1860.



After Lincoln's election, he was first offered a cabinet post. The offer was withdrawn, then extended again. Cameron actually wanted to be Secretary of the Treasury. His nomination was pushed by Illinoisan David Davis and New Yorker Thurlow Weed for whom Cameron's ethical problems were not disabling. Rumors of alleged corruption dated back to his alleged swindle of Indians and provided his "Great Winnebago" nickname. A split with the faction of the Pennsylvania Party headed by Andrew G. Curtin and Alexander K. McClure caused him repeated problems in reaching his political aspirations during the Civil War period. Mr. Lincoln met with Cameron twice after his arrival in Washington and finally appointed him to the cabinet on March 5, 1861, the day after the Inauguration.

One story about Cameron's reputation is disputed but it was widely repeated during his lifetime. Mr. Lincoln reportedly asked Thaddeus Stevens about Cameron's honesty and was told that "I do not believe he would steal a red hot stove." When the President repeated the story, Cameron was offended and a retraction from Stevens was demanded. The crusty Republican congressman replied that he could have been wrong and thus suggesting that perhaps Cameron might steal a red hot stove. Rumors of political and financial corruption plagued Cameron throughout his career although the financial beneficiaries were usually his friends, not Cameron himself, who maintained that he could have earned much more had he remained outside politics.

John Usher, who also served in Mr. Lincoln's cabinet, recalled a dinner party where Cameron defended himself against any involvement in corrupt contracts, saying: "If I have any ability whatever, it is an ability to make money. I do not have to steal it. I can go into the street any day, and as the world goes, make all the money I want. It was absurd to accuse me of that. When the war broke out I knew that the railroad from Baltimore to Harrisburg, the Northern Central of Pennsylvania, was bound to be good property; the soldiers and people devoted to the preservation of the Union traveling to Washington would necessarily be transported over it. The stock was then worth only a few cents on the dollar. I knew that from the very necessity of the case it would advance in value to par or nearly so. I bought large blocks of this stock, and told Mr. Lincoln if he would give me ten thousand dollars I would make him all the money he wanted." Cameron said the President declined his offer.

It was harder to defend himself against charges of incompetence. "We were entirely unprepared for such a conflict, and for the moment, at least, absolutely without even the simplest instruments with which to engage in war," Cameron later remembered. "We had no guns, and even if we had, they would have been of but little use, for we had no ammunition to put in them - no powder, no saltpetre, no bullets, no anything."

As a Secretary of War, he proved not very competent at organizing the logistical support of the army but far too adept at annoying the President. John Nicolay noted that Cameron was "Selfish and openly discourteous to the President. Obnoxious to the country. Incapable either of organizing details conceiving and executing general plans."

Historian Doris Kearns Goodwin wrote: "Determined to protect his position, Cameron sought to ingratiate himself with the increasingly powerful radical Republicans in Congress, led by Massachusetts' Charles Sumner, Ohio's Ben Wade, Indiana's George Julian, and Maine's William Fessenden. Though known as a conservative on the issue of slavery, Cameron began by degrees to embrace the radical's contention that the central purpose of the war was to bring the institution of human bondage to an end." Among the controversies in which Cameron engaged was his annual report in December 1861 which stated: "Those who make war against the Government justly forfeit all rights of property, privilege and security derived from the Constitution and laws against which they are in armed rebellion; and as the labor and service of their slaves constitute the chief property of the rebels, such property should share the common fate of war to which they have devoted the property of loyal citizens. It is as clearly the right of the Government to arm slaves when it may become necessary as it is to use gunpowder or guns taken from the enemy." President Lincoln rejected this premature emancipation proclamation (which had been written by Edwin M. Stanton) and ordered copies of it recalled.

Cameron served until removal in January 1862 for mismanagement, corruption and abuse of patronage as well as unauthorized endorsement of emancipation. Cameron blamed his ejection from the Cabinet in part on General John C. Frémont, who had been dismissed from his western command a few months earlier: "It was necessary for somebody to go out and attend to Fremont. [Montgomery] Blair went first and came back and equivocated. Then they all said I must go. I told Lincoln, I understand this - Fremont has got to be turned out, and somebody will have to bear the odium of it - if I go and do it I will probably lose my place here. In that case you must give me a foreign mission. That was the beginning of the Russian Mission."

Many Cabinet members claimed credit for suggesting Cameron's replacement. Before he replaced Cameron, President Lincoln visited Secretary of State William H. Seward to talk about a successor. He had apparently settled on Edwin Stanton although as historian Doris Kearns Goodwin observed: "In the end, each of the three men- Seward, Chase, and Cameron - assumed he was instrumental in Lincoln's appointment of the new secretary of war." Cameron himself recalled: "When I went out of the Cabinet Lincoln asked me whom I wanted for my successor. I told him I wanted [Edwin M.] Stanton. Well said he go and ask Stanton whether he will take it. I started to go down and on the way I met Chase, and told him I was just going down to see Stanton - and told him what I was going for. No said he don't go to Stanton's office. Come with me to my office and send for Stanton to come there and we will talk it over together, and I did so."

A few months later, a congressional committee censured his handling of War Department purchases. President Lincoln defended Cameron and took responsibility for the irregular handling of procurement at the beginning of the war—a defense for which Cameron remained grateful. Over the objections of his critics, Cameron was confirmed as Minister to Russia where he served very briefly—spending most of his time in travels across Europe—before he traveled again to Washington in late 1862. Cameron was then replaced by his predecessor in that job, Cassius Clay.

Taken from www.mrlincolnwhitehouse.org.

Andrew Johnson (1808-1875)

Andrew Johnson was the war Democrat who became Lincoln's second vice presidential running mate in 1864 after being offered the Democratic vice presidential nomination by Stephen A. Douglas in 1860. Johnson supported John Breckinridge in the 1860 general election, but broke with Southern Democrats on the issue of secession in 1861 for which he was widely vilified in the South. A tailor by trade, he served as a state legislator (1836-37, 1842-43), Congressman (1843-53), Governor (1853-57) and Senator (1857-62). He served on the congressional Committee on the Conduct of War. He resigned from the Senate when he was appointed military governor of Tennessee by President Lincoln in early 1862.

Johnson was selected as a logical War Democrat to place on the ticket of the Union presidential convention in Baltimore in 1864. Hannibal Hamlin's replacement on the ticket came as a public surprise. There has always been a question about how much or whether President Lincoln intervened in Johnson's selection. New York Republican Chauncey M. Depew, for one, recalled that in a meeting with fellow New Yorker Seward before the Convention, "Mr. Seward said that the situation demanded the nomination for vice-president of a representative from the border states, and whose loyalty had been demonstrated during the war..." You can quote me to the delegates, and they will believe I express the opinion of the President. While the president wishes to take no part in the nomination for vice-president, yet he favors Mr. Johnson."

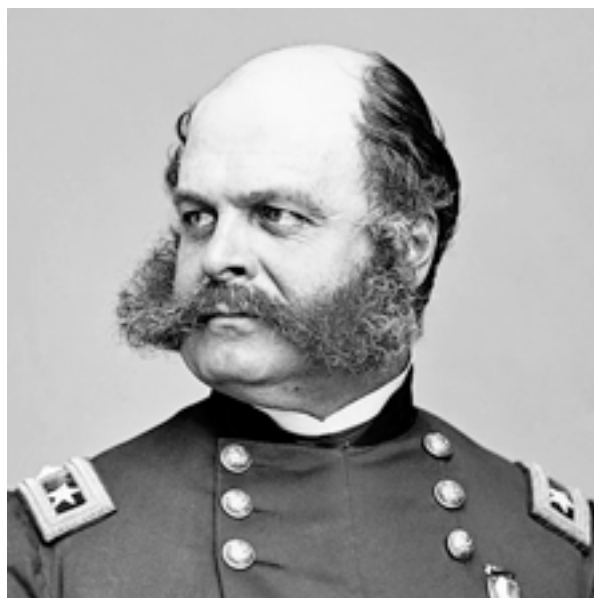
Johnson surprised Mr. Lincoln himself when he asked if his presence was necessary for the inauguration; "This Johnson is a queer man," Mr. Lincoln told Shelby M. Cullom. The public was also surprised when a sick Johnson fortified himself with liquor in order to prepare for his swearing-in as Vice President on March 5, 1865. His subsequent speech in the Senate chamber was a strange humiliation of himself and everyone else present. "I am a-goin' for to tell you here to-day; yes, I'm a-goin for to tell you all, that I'm a plebian! I glory in it; I am a plebian! The people—yes, the people of the United States have made me what I am; and I am a-goin' for to tell you here to-day—yes, to-day, in this place—that the people are everything."

Afterward, according to Senate aide John W. Forney, "Johnson was under a state of great excitement, and was in my immediate charge. I was confident, however, that he would be subdued before the President finished his inaugural. To the surprise of everybody however, except, perhaps, the Cabinet, Mr. Lincoln did not consume five minutes in repeating it. As soon as the people outside saw that he was done, loud cries were raised for Johnson, upon which we hastily retreated to the Senate chamber, and closed the unhappy and inauspicious day." The President later said: "I have known Andy for many years...he made a bad slip the other day, but you need not be scared. Andy ain't a drunkard." Forney quoted the President as observing: "It has been a severe lesson for Andy, but I do not think he will do it again." Forney was well versed on the situation since, according to Johnson biographer Hans Trefousse, "...on the night before the inauguration, he celebrated with his friend Forney, with whom he shared many glasses of whiskey." Trefousse noted that Johnson had had at least three glasses of whiskey before he went to the Senate, going back to Hamlin's Senate office to drink the third. Although Johnson was occasionally a heavy drinker, Trefousse determined that there was no evidence that Johnson was an alcoholic—unlike his two oldest sons, both of whom were alcoholics.

Frederick Douglass later contended that Johnson revealed another aspect of his character that day: "On this inauguration day, while waiting for the opening of the ceremonies, I made a discovery in regard to the vice president—Andrew Johnson. There are moments in the lives of most men, when the doors of their souls are open, and unconsciously to themselves, their true characters may be read by the observant eye. It was at such an instant I caught a glimpse of the real nature of this man, which all subsequent developments proved true. I was standing in the crowd by the side of Mrs. Thomas J. Dorsey, when Mr. Lincoln touched Mr. Johnson, and pointed me out to him. The first expression which came to his face, and which I think was the true index of his heart, was one of bitter contempt and aversion. Seeing that I observed him, he tried to assume a more friendly appearance; but it was too late; it was useless to close the door when al within had been seen. His first glance was the frown of the man, the second was the bland and sickly smile of the demagogue. I turned to Mrs. Dorsey and said, 'Whatever Andrew Johnson may be, he certainly is no friend of our race.'



Ambrose Everett Burnside (May 23, 1824 - September 13, 1881) was made commander of the Army of the Potomac on November 7, 1862. After Fredericksburg, he offered to resign. On January 1, 1863 President Lincoln rejected the offer. After the infamous "Mud March," Burnside requested that several officers be courtmartialed or he would resign. Lincoln accepted the resignation on January 26, 1863.



NEXT MONTH

**EDWIN M. STANTON
BUCKEYE WARLORD**

MODERATOR: WILLIAM F. B. VODREY

OHIO CIVIL WAR ADVISORY COMMITTEE ANNOUNCES

2013 MONTHLY THEMES

The Ohio Civil War Sesquicentennial is about to start its third year and the Ohio Civil War 150 Advisory Committee is announcing its themes for each month. The theme for 2013 is “Ohio’s Impact on the War” and each month’s theme will focus on a different aspect of Ohio’s impact on the war effort. Ohio organizations and groups are welcome to use these themes as they plan their Civil War programming. The 2013 monthly themes are:

- January – Emancipation
- February – Ohio Generals
- March – Medal of Honor
- April – The Costs of War
- May – Ohio Civil War Road Trips
- June – United States Colored Troops
- July – Ohioans in Battle
- August – Ohio’s Regiments and Militia
- September – Political Leadership
- October – Immigrants in the Civil War
- November – Why They Fought
- December – Supplying the Military

“The monthly themes are a way to provide cohesion and focus for a sesquicentennial celebration that lasts for four years,” said Amy Rohmiller, Local History program assistant working with the Ohio Civil War 150 Advisory Committee. “This year we have themes that speak to the depth and breadth of Ohio’s experience in the Civil War. For instance, October’s theme, ‘Immigrants in the Civil War,’ is an important theme that provides an additional perspective on Ohio’s experience in the Civil War, which is particularly significant considering the number of immigrants in Ohio in the mid-century.”

The 2013 monthly themes also correspond to important historic dates. January’s theme – “Emancipation” – will allow organizations to plan programs around the anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation. In addition, May’s theme – “Ohio Civil War Road Trips” – allows groups to plan trips that capitalize on the beginning of the summer tourism season. And, July’s theme – “Ohioans in Battle” – will correspond with commemorative events for Morgan’s Raid and the battle at Buffington Island.

Organizations that use a monthly theme to create programs and events can receive help planning and promoting events. For more information, contact Amy Rohmiller at (614) 297-2609 or arohmiller@ohiohistory.org.



Edwin Stanton, William Rosecrans, James McPherson, Clement Vallandigham, and Salmon Chase