

THE CHARGER



CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

MAY 2019

VOL. 40 # 9

Executive Committee 2018/2019

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Historian: David A. Carrino

Website : clevelandcivilwarroundtable.com

E-mail: m.wells@csuohio.edu or w.keating@csuohio.edu

Editors: Dennis Keating, Michael Wells

Newsletter Design: Catherine Wells

A message from the president

American Civil War historians – welcome to the May 2019 issue of the Charger!

IMPORTANT: As I mentioned at our April 10th meeting, to celebrate Dave Carrino's retirement as Historian, *weather permitting*, our social at the start of the May 8th meeting will be on the rooftop of Judson with our usual beverages plus hors d'oeuvres. Additionally, we will have rooftop "After Meeting Beverages" (cash bar as usual) for those who would like to further celebrate with Dave and his wife subsequent to our regular meeting ending!

As I also stated on the 10th, the roof top is still under rehab and might not be completed by May 8th. If not, Judson has offered us the "Second Floor Terrace". To that end, I recently visited Judson to view the terrace. Instead of the view from the rooftop of the Cleveland skyline, it looks towards the Art Museum and would be a lovely alternative to the rooftop if it is not available.

So, when you arrive at the meeting on May 8th, look for signs that will direct you either to the "Rooftop" or the "Second Floor Terrace" where the check in table will be located. As usual, after the social hour we will return from the roof to our normal space for dinner, the meeting, our speaker, etc. Then afterwards, back up to the roof for those interested.

Geraldo in Cleveland: As you might know, Geraldo Rivera now lives in Cleveland while still working for Fox News. He started to do a regular radio show earlier this year called "Geraldo in Cleveland" on WTAM from 9 to 10 AM weekdays.

THE CHARGER



CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

MAY. 2019

VOL. 40 #9

Message cont.

Accordingly, I thought that he might like to come to one of our meetings so in my role as President of CCWRT, I began efforts to contact him through the radio station. Long story short, he was unable to attend a meeting, but over the past months as I communicated back and forth with WTAM, it turned out that Geraldo wanted to do a radio show featuring the Cleveland Civil War Round Table and the Monument.

So, myself and the other officers who were available on Monday April 29th: Ellen Connally, VP; Mark Porter, Secretary; and Dan Zeiser, past President and Communications Director, met Geraldo and his crew at the Soldier's and Sailor's Monument to tape an hour long radio show about the Civil War, our Round Table, and the Monument. Ted Prasse, President of the Monument Commission also participated. The show will air sometime on or close to Memorial Day or in July. WTAM will let me know the precise air date and we will pass that info to our members via email. Not only will it help educate the public on the Civil War, it will be fabulous publicity for our Round Table and the Soldier's & Sailor's Monument!!!...As a gesture of our CCWRT appreciation, I presented Geraldo with a copy of our own member/author John Fazio's recent book: Decapitating the Union, which fits squarely into Geraldo's admiration of President Lincoln!

At our April 10th meeting we continued my series theme of "Southern Invasions and Raids of the North" and finished our two month focus on the Battle of Gettysburg when Wayne Motts returned to our Round Table to present: "Trust in God and Fear Nothing: Confederate General Lewis A. Armistead".

After a rocky beginning at West Point, Lewis Armistead was "booted" from the Academy when he broke a plate over the head of classmate and future Confederate General Jubal Early. However, Armistead was determined to have a military career and directly joined the Army in 1839 and fought in the Mexican American war where he was wounded and noted for bravery. Armistead's courageousness continued during the Civil War's Peninsula Campaign where Commander D.H. Hill recounted that Armistead held a position with only a small force against an entire Union brigade. Subsequently, during the Seven Days Battles while leading his brigade into the thick of Union artillery fire at Malvern Hill, Armistead's bravery was again proven. Next, as part of McLaws division at Antietam Armistead was again wounded in the vicious West Woods fighting. He recovered in time for Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville where his brigade was assigned to the newly formed division under General Pickett but did not see major action in those battles. However, at Gettysburg's famous "Pickett's Charge" on the battle's third day - Armistead and his brigade played a pivotal role in the near success of Pickett's Charge.

Mr. Motts took us through Armistead's career and told us how his dramatic leadership at the "high water mark of the Confederacy" almost changed the entire direction of the war. A "takeaway" for me was when Mr. Motts debunked the modern view that Armistead was popular with his troops as he highlighted documented examples for instance of the General subjecting his soldiers to some of the harshest forms of drill. At one point, Mr. Motts even suggested that wounds during the war and particularly at Gettysburg could possibly have been from weapons discharged by his own men!

THE CHARGER



CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

MAY. 2019

VOL. 40 # 9

Message cont.

Looking ahead to our May 8th meeting, we will hear John V. Quarstein, Director Emeritus, USS Monitor Center & Mariner's Museum in Newport News, Virginia, and our guide for Immediate Past President Hans Kuenzi's Peninsula Campaign & Monitor/Merrimack field trip in September 2017. Mr. Q will present: "The Capture of the St. Nicolas." Although during the war there was never a semblance of an "amphibious invasion" of the north, in keeping with my series theme of "Southern Invasions and Raids of the North" Mr. Quarstein convinced that this was the next closest thing to it!

In June of 1861 on the Potomac River a daring band of Confederate "pirates" concocted a plan to capture a Northern ship. Adventurers Captain George Hollins, CSN and Lieutenant Colonel Richard Thomas Zarrona with the help of a lady known as Madame La Force managed to gain boarding, overcome the crew and commandeer the ship - and voyage on to capture three additional northern merchant vessels! Come and hear this fascinating and little known story which unfolded quite early in the Civil War.

This is my final article in "The Charger" as your President. *I am sincerely honored to have served our members in this capacity and look forward to continuing to help build our organization in any way possible during the future! I have thoroughly enjoyed being your President!!!*

Lastly, Vice President Ellen Connally has worked diligently to put together a unique first time Cleveland Civil War Round Table field trip to "The Land of Lincoln" this September 19-21st, in Springfield, Illinois. Look for a flyer with further details at our May 8th meeting. She also has put together an impressive list of engaging speakers for 2019/20. Mark your calendars now for our October 9th meeting which will be held at the Western Reserve Historical Society and include a special look at some of their more rarely accessible collection of Civil War Memorabilia.

But more immediately, I look forward to being with you at our May 8th meeting, for John V. Quarstein, Director Emeritus, USS Monitor Center & Mariner's Museum in Newport News, Virginia when he presents: "The Capture of the St. Nicolas"!

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel J. Ursu

President

THE CHARGER



CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

MAY, 2019

VOL. 40 #9.

The Story of Washington's Mt. Vernon and the Women Who Saved It.

Paul Siedel

In deference to Mother's Day I would like to bring to everyone's attention a story I've had in my files for many years concerning Washington's Mt. Vernon, and how it was saved by a group of forward thinking women who went into action and preserved one of our nation's most prominent historic landmarks for us to enjoy today.

Our story begins back in 1854 when a group of tourists were taking a sightseeing steamer down the Potomac River to see the sights around Washington. In doing so they passed Washington's Mt. Vernon high up on the bluff overlooking the Potomac River. Among them was the



mother of Miss Ann Pamela Cunningham from Greenwood, South Carolina. She wrote a letter back to her daughter describing their boat trip and mentioning the fact that in her opinion Mt. Vernon had gone into such disrepair that the porch roof was visibly sagging and the property had grown up in weeds so badly that one could barely see the old mansion from the river. Mrs. Cunningham wondered how things could have gotten so bad, and shouldn't future generations be able to see the estate of our first president and visit his grave? It so happened that upon Washington's death back in 1799 Martha was given title to the property, but upon her death the property went to Washington's nephew Bushrod Washington. By 1854 the nephew had passed away and his son John Washington had inherited the estate, he and his family were living in just four rooms of the old mansion. Meanwhile back in South Carolina Miss Cunningham who was recovering from a horseback riding accident read her mother's letters and decided to do something about it. It was with much effort that she formed what ultimately became known as The Mount Vernon Ladies Association. She was named Regent and each state elected a Vice Regent to serve on the committee. In 1857 John Washington decided to sell the mansion and 202 adjoining acres to the Association for \$200,000. So on February 22, 1860 John Washington moved out of Mt. Vernon and the Mount Vernon Ladies Association took possession of the mansion and the 202 acres. (John Washington was the last Washington to actually live in the house and he was ultimately killed while serving on the staff of Robert E. Lee at Cheat Mt. Virginia one year later.) Throughout the Civil War thousands of soldiers took the boat down from Washington to walk through Washington's estate, among them were Mary Lincoln, and Prince Napoleon visiting from France. An admittance price of twenty five cents was charged and this made it possible to pay a small staff and make the much needed repairs. Later on bouquets of flowers and photographs were sold. Throughout the war Mt. Vernon was maintained in a neutral position and had the protection of the U.S. Army. Miss Sarah Tracy, Secretary to Miss Cunningham lived on the property and along with U.C. Herbert, the first resident superintendent, they steered the house and grounds through the war and well into 1869. The two ultimately married and resided in Fairfax Co. Virginia afterwards.

Presently, although the National Park System manages Mt. Vernon, the estate is still owned by the Mount Vernon Ladies Association, they meet once every year to make decisions and chart the future course of Washington's home. Each state is entitled to one Vice Regent and so ultimately the organization has grown to around fifty two voting members. Today as we visit Mt. Vernon and walk the grounds that Washington knew so well, stop and think that if it were not for the tireless efforts of a group of forward thinking women back in the 1850s we may be walking through just another shopping center

THE CHARGER



CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

MAY, 2019

VOL. 40 #9.

Abraham Lincoln's Little-Known Important Legacy by David A. Carrino

This history brief was presented at the April 2019 meeting of the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable. The following longer version of the history brief contains some additional information that was not included in the version that was presented at the meeting..

One stereotypical expression that is associated with a life-threatening experience is to say that his life flashed before his eyes. I cannot say for sure if that actually happens, but something similar that often happens after a person dies is that other people reflect on the dead person's life and legacies. April is the month in which Abraham Lincoln died, so it is appropriate during the month of April to look at Lincoln's legacies. Among Lincoln's legacies are two that are very well known and rank among the greatest legacies in U.S. history: preserving the Union and ending slavery. It is difficult if not impossible to choose which of these legacies is more significant, so perhaps it is best to just quote the Black Knight from the movie *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* and simply say, "Alright, we'll call it a draw." But Abraham Lincoln has a little-known legacy that has had and continues to have an essential role in our country. While this legacy is by no means as significant as Lincoln's two great legacies, this legacy is something for which Lincoln really should be more widely remembered. This underappreciated legacy has nothing to do with civil rights, the Constitution, or great oratory. This underappreciated legacy involves science.

On March 3, 1863, exactly four months before the day on which George Pickett led a futile attack on the Union position at Gettysburg, [the Senate began discussion of a bill, then that bill was passed by the Senate, then it was passed by the House of Representatives, and then it was signed into law by President Abraham Lincoln, all in the span of several hours.](#) This is the kind of legislative swiftness that the U.S. government characteristically avoids. The legislation that Lincoln signed into law that day created the National Academy of Sciences. Senator Henry Wilson, who later served as vice president under Ulysses Grant, introduced the bill and indicated that the objective of the National Academy of Sciences was to "whenever called upon by any department of the Government, investigate, examine, experiment, and report upon any subject of science or art." The mission of the National Academy of Sciences, as indicated on its web site, remains the same today, although the wording is somewhat different and reads that the Academy "is charged with providing independent, objective advice to the nation on matters related to science and technology" and that the goal of providing this advice is to "inform public policy decisions."

Abraham Lincoln's interest in creating the National Academy of Sciences came from his realization that science and technology were playing a significant role in the Civil War and his understanding that a thorough grasp of science would contribute to victory. The Academy was modeled after similar groups in Europe and originally consisted of 50 distinguished scientists, who served as a readily available source of scientific insight whenever the government asked for

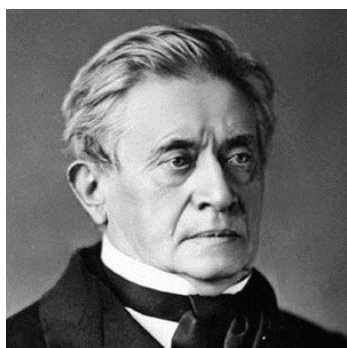
THE CHARGER



CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

MAY. 2019

VOL. 40 #9.



Joseph Henry

advice on some problem related to science and technology. Since the time of its creation, the Academy has grown to become an organization of over 2,000 scientists, which gives the Academy a wide range of scientific knowledge. The Academy acts as something of a standing army of scientific expertise that can be rapidly mobilized to study and give advice on a science-related issue whenever the government asks for it. The Academy is non-profit and non-governmental, and its members receive no compensation for the work that they do for the Academy. One of the first problems to be addressed by the Academy was the operation of compasses on ironclad warships, because the iron of the ships interfered with the functioning of the compasses. After a few different possibilities were tested, the solution that was implemented in response to the Academy's recommendation was based on studies performed by British astronomer George Biddell Airy, who carried out multiple detailed investigations of the operation of compasses on iron ships. With Airy's results as a guide, members of the Academy supervised the positioning of bar magnets in suitable locations around the compass to counteract the local attraction due to the iron of the ironclad vessels.

Over the years, the Academy has advised the U.S. government on matters such as chemical and biological weapons, space exploration, the effects of atomic radiation on humans, computing and information, science education, and climate change. As an example of a policy that grew out of a National Academy of Sciences recommendation, the Academy proposed in 1986 that cigarette smoking be banned on airlines. In 1916, during World War I, President Woodrow Wilson requested that the Academy establish a group of specialists to advise the government. This led to the creation of the National Research Council, which has remained in existence as the operational arm of the Academy. In 1964 and 1970, respectively, the National Academy of Engineering and the National Academy of Medicine were established as companion organizations to the National Academy of Sciences in order to provide separate, independent advisory organizations in the areas of engineering and medicine. The three organizations (the National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Engineering, and the National Academy of Medicine) co-exist as the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine and continue to play an advisory role for the U.S. government in policy decisions involving science, technology, and medicine.

The need for credible scientific advice in shaping governmental policy was expressed by an eminent U.S. scientist in 1837, 26 years before the creation of the National Academy of Sciences. This comment was in a letter from Joseph Henry to Alexander Dallas Bache, who later became, respectively, the second and first presidents of the Academy. Henry had just returned from Europe and wrote in a letter to Bache, "The charlatanism of our country struck me much more disagreeably when I first returned than before or even now. I often thought of the remark you were in the habit of making that we must put down quackery or quackery will put down science." Regrettably, the problem of scientific charlatanism still exists in our country almost 200 years later, and a sentiment similar to that in Joseph Henry's letter was recently expressed by noted astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson. In a more jocular comment than Joseph Henry's grim statement, said, "I

THE CHARGER

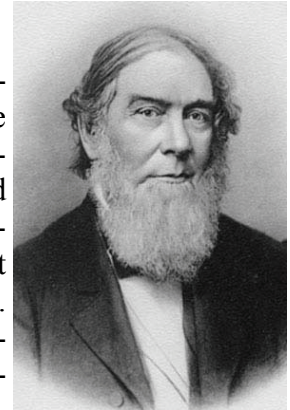


CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

MAY. 2019

VOL. 40 #9.

said, "I have to chuckle a little bit when I'm approached by anybody, but in particular journalists, and say 'Are scientists worried that the public is in denial of science or is cherrypicking?' And I chuckle not because it's funny, but because they're coming to me, as a scientist, when they should be going to everyone. Everyone should be concerned by this!" John F. Kennedy made a similar statement in the commencement address to Yale University on June 11, 1962, and Kennedy's statement is remarkably predictive of the aversion to facts that permeates our society today. Regarding the practice of consciously clinging to erroneous and factually unsupported assertions, Kennedy said, "We subject all facts to a prefabricated set of interpretations. We enjoy the comfort of opinion without the discomfort of thought."



Alexander Bache

Some of the issues on which the Academy has provided advice are controversial, such as climate change and the teaching of evolution in schools, and there certainly are people who disagree with the Academy's advice. Because the U.S. is facing a number of very complex science-related issues, there currently exists a clear need for objective scientific expertise. In a video about the National Academy of Sciences, Neil deGrasse Tyson indicated the critical importance of the Academy's advisory role in contemporary America when he noted, "The role of informed scientific policy is greater than ever before." Tyson also expressed very well the non-partisan nature of science when he said, "Science has no political party....When you establish an objective truth with the methods and tools of science, it is true no matter what political party you are." In an article that appeared on the Forbes Magazine web site, Paul M. Sutter, who, like Neil deGrasse Tyson is an astrophysicist, expressed a similar opinion in an incisive and clever way, and Sutter's comments in this article about the proper role of science should serve as a message to people along the entire spectrum of political ideology. Sutter wrote, "The process of science simply doesn't care what the answer is. Sure, individual scientists may and will have their individual biases and preferences and hopes for a result. But in science the ultimate arbiter is the universe itself. The data we collect decide the outcomes, despite our individual preferences....Instead of forming a belief and then searching for a result or study to back you up, let the studies and results guide you. Remember that the world is a very complex place, and in many cases fundamental understanding is only found buried deep under layer after slippery layer of confused searching. Science is a tool, yes, but not a tool for backing you up. It's not a weapon to wield. It's a framework for understanding nature, no more, no less." While it is stereotypical to associate science denial with the political right, this is not a left-right, liberal-conservative issue, because a sizable number of people on the political left reject certain elements of mainstream science, such as genetically modified foods and childhood vaccinations. Because some science-related issues are controversial, it is important to have, as stated in the mission of the National Academy of Sciences, "independent, objective advice...on matters related to science and technology." Thanks to Abraham Lincoln, an organization exists to provide that advice.

THE CHARGER

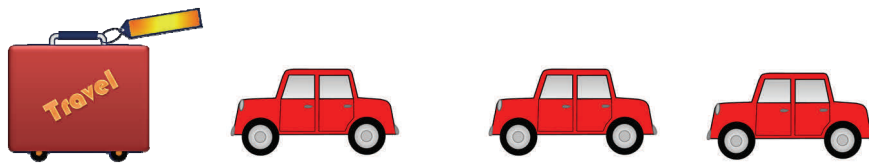


CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

MAY. 2019

VOL. 40 # 9

Abraham Lincoln has some notable nicknames, such as Honest Abe and the Great Emancipator. But in the pantheon of nicknames, the nickname Bill Nye the Science Guy will never be supplanted by the nickname Abraham the Science Man. Nevertheless, on March 3, 1863, in the pivotal year of the greatest crisis in our nation's history, Abraham Lincoln signed one of the most important pieces of science-related legislation ever signed by any president and in so doing added the National Academy of Sciences to his legacies. It is appropriate that Lincoln has a legacy that involves science, because he is the only U.S. president to hold a patent. Lincoln was granted patent number 6,469 on May 22, 1849 for an inflatable bellows to lift boats over shallow water. Although Lincoln's device was never put into use, the National Academy of Sciences, which Lincoln was instrumental in creating, has been available for over 150 years for guidance on a wide range of issues that involve science. As our nation faces increasingly complex science-related issues, the Academy continues to provide authoritative, evidence-based, politically untainted advice about issues which sometimes are politically charged. Abraham Lincoln had no way of knowing the complexity and contentiousness of the science-related issues that would be faced by the organization that he helped create. But fortunately for contemporary America, one of Abraham Lincoln's legacies is a scientific organization which is tasked with fostering governance that is of the facts, by the facts, and for the facts.



SAVE THE DATE - SEPTEMBER 19 - 22, 2019 Visit the Land of Lincoln - Springfield Illinois.

The annual Cleveland Civil War Round Table Field Trip is set for September 19 – 21, 2019 in historic Springfield, Illinois. The trip will include a visit to the Abraham Lincoln Museum and Library - one of the most visited presidential libraries - which combines history with modern age technology. Our group will be hosted for lunch on the premises with a speaker from the museum. The itinerary will include a visit to President Lincoln's home and tomb and the State Capital Building, where he served. Springfield is also the home of the Illinois State Military Museum, which includes artifacts from all of America's conflicts with many Civil War items and the Grand Army of the Republic Civil War Museum. For those wanting a unique experience, there will be an opportunity to go on a Lincoln's Ghost Walking Tour on Friday evening. Our group will be welcomed to Springfield Thursday evening by none other than Ward Hill Lamon, Lincoln's long-time friend and body guard (portrayed by local historian and guide Garrett Moffett) and the President (portrayed by a local Lincoln impersonator) will join us for dinner Saturday evening at our hotel.

Please mark your calendars to that you can experience this unique opportunity to experience the Land of Lincoln!

THE CHARGER



CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

MAY. 2019

VOL. 40 #9.

Program: John V. Quarstein, Director Emeritus, USS Monitor Center & Mariner's Museum in Newport News, Virginia, "The Capture of the St. Nicolas". May 8th, 2019

Reservations: You must make a dinner reservation for any meeting you plan to attend no later than the day prior to that meeting (so we can give a headcount to the caterer). Make your reservation by sending an email to ccwrt1956@yahoo.com.

When you arrive at the meeting on May 8th, look for signs that will direct you either to the "Rooftop" or the "Second Floor Terrace" where the check in table will be located. As usual, after the social hour we will return from the roof to our normal space for dinner, the meeting, our speaker, etc. Then afterwards, back up to the roof for those interested

JUDSON MANOR Drinks 6pm Dinner 6:30

Drinks @ 6 pm, Dinner @ 6:6.0

Judson Manor , East 109th St. & Chester

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