



THE CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

P. O. BOX 5028, CLEVELAND, OHIO 44101

FEBRUARY 1975

Vol. 18 No. 6

151st Meeting

DATE: TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 1975

SPEAKER: CHARLES CLARKE

SUBJECT: THADDEUS STEVENS

PLACE: THE HERMIT CLUB, DODGE COURT

PRELIMINARIES: 6:30 PM DINNER 7 PM

THADDEUS STEVENS

Radical Republican. 1792-1868. Vt. After graduating from Dartmouth he practiced law in Pa. and was elected a Whig legislator. He was later sent to Congress, where he became an uncompromising abolitionist and leader of the Radical Republicans, a group he had helped found. As chairman of the powerful Ways and Means Committee, he exerted a tremendous amount of influence upon the country and the war effort. He was also chairman of the Committee on Reconstruction and was the one to initiate the impeachment proceedings against Johnson, his bitter enemy.

THE CIVIL WAR DICTIONARY
Mark M. Boatner III

Scholar, wit, zealot of liberty, part fanatic, part gambler, at his worst a clubfooted wrangler possessed of endless javelins, at his best a majestic and isolated figure wandering in an ancient wilderness thick with thorns, seeking to bring justice between man and man--who could read the heart of limping, poker-faced old Thaddeus Stevens?

ABRAHAM LINCOLN, THE WAR YEARS
Carl Sandburg

Thaddeus Stevens was the dominant figure in the American Congress during this notable period. It may reasonably be claimed that no more masterful leader ever directed the politics and legislation of the House of Representatives. . . and it may be said that for a part of this decade he led both the House and the nation by the sheer force and energy of his mind and will.

THE LIFE OF THADDEUS STEVENS
James Albert Woodburn

CLEVELAND CWRT BULLETIN BOARD

DUES

1975 Dues were payable two weeks ago. For those of you who might have forgotten....please take note: Dues are \$16 (\$15 + \$1 for a name badge) Make the checks payable to CWRT of Cleveland and mail it to our treasurer, Robert Bayless 21298 Morewood Pkwy, Rocky River, Ohio 44116.

WAR WIDOWS

No soldier who fought in the Civil War (1861-65) is still alive, but 272 of their widows survive.

The average age of Civil War widows as of January 1, 1974, was 89.1 years. Twenty-six of the widows are 100 years or older. The oldest Union Army widow is 117. She is Mrs. Angela Davolos Moran of PPolancio, Mexico. She was married to Henry Moran, who was born on September 12, 1842, at Sharon Springs, New York.

Moran at age 19 joined Comapny G of the 12th New York State Militia on April 9, 1861. Two months later he was shot in the groin near Harpers Ferry, West Virginia and was invalided out of the service. Subsequently he moved to Mexico where he was married on May 9, 1888. He and his wife had six children. Moran resided in Mexico from 1874 until his death in 1925 at the age of 83. Mrs. Moran recives \$125 per month as a widow of a Civil War veteran, \$70 a month in pension payments and \$55 per month for aid-in-attendance. Until January 8, 1974, she received only \$70 a month.

The oldest Confederate Army widow is Lula Lewis, 105 of Ola, Arkansas. She too, recives \$125 a month.

In the U.S. there are now living some 29 million war veterans-- 1450 from the Spanish American Wars of 1898-1902; 1 million from World War I of 1917-1918; 13.5 million from World War II of 1940-1947; 5.9 million from the Korean conflict (1950-1955); 3.1 million from the post-Korean conflict (1955-1964); 6.9 million from the Vietnam era starting in August, 1964, and continuing with no cut-off date yet arrived at for veteran's benefits.

From the Indian Wars (1817-1898) 90 widows and 20 helpless children of Indian war veterans still survive. The last survivor of the Indian Wars was Fredrak Fraske of Chicago who died on June 18, 1973 at the age of 101. (CWRT of Decatur, Illinois)

A LOGICAL CONFEDERATE ANSWER

To Major General Early:

General: General Jackson desires to know why he saw so many of your stragglers in the rear of your division today?
(signed) A.S. Pendleton, A.A.G.

Dear General Jackson;

In answer to your note I would state that I think it is probable the the reason you saw so many of my stragglers on the march today is due to the fact that you rode in the rear of my division.

Respectfully,
Jubal Early
Major General

THE COURIER
of
THE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE OF CLEVELAND, OHIO

FOUNDED FEBRUARY 19, 1957

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LINCOLN'S SUPREME COURT APPOINTMENTS

The death of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Roger B. Taney presented President Lincoln with a complicated situation as to who his choice would be to succeed to this high post.

From LINCOLN LORE, bulletin of the Lincoln National Foundation I came across this particular bulletin (#1275-Sept 14, 1953) written by Dr. Louis A. Warren, then Editor of the bulletin. I believe you will find it fascinating and informative. Many will remember President Roosevelt trying to "pack" the court, but few realize that Lincoln had to appoint 5 justices, one of them the chief justice.

"The death of the chief justice of the Supreme Court, Fred Vincent who passed away on September 8, 1953, creates a vacancy in what many authorities have designated as the most important appointive office in the nation. The American Bar Association has often referred to the seat as "The Great Post." It will be recalled that Abraham Lincoln was confronted with the task of filling the place made vacant by the death of Chief Justice Roger Brooke Taney. The appointment of Taney's successor and others named to the supreme court by Lincoln might be of special interest just at this time.

When Abraham was inaugurated there was already one vacancy in the Supreme Court caused by the death of Associate Justice Daniels of Virginia. One month later to a day Associate Justice McLean of Ohio passed away and within another month Associate Justice Campbell of Alabama had resigned because of his sympathies with the Confederacy. Lincoln was pressed to bring the court to its full strength immediately, but the reason for his failure to comply with public demand was presented in his message to Congress in December. He explained his action in these words:

"I have been unwilling to throw all my appointments northward, thus disabling myself of doing justice to the south on the return of peace." There can be no better evidence than this, of Lincoln's anticipation that there would be an early secession of hostilities.

The President soon observed, however, by the end of the year that peace was not so near at hand as he had anticipated. In January 1862, after an interval of ten months, he made his first appointment to the bench, Associate Justice Swayne of Ohio. The following July Associate Justice Miller of Iowa was nominated and as late as October, the third appointee Associate Justice Davis of Illinois was named. Seventeen months had elapsed between Justice Campbell's resignation and the naming of his successor. There had also been created in 1862 a new seat on the Supreme Court Bench in order that the western coast might have representation. Lincoln appointed Stephen J. Field of California to fill this new post.

The incumbent members of the court when Lincoln took office were Chief Justice Taney of Maryland, Justice Wayne of Georgia and Justice Catron of Tennessee, Justice Nelson of New York, Justice Grier of Pennsylvania and Justice Clifford of Maine.

The death of Chief Justice Taney occurred at the time of the October elections in 1864. Taney was eighty-eight years old and had served in his exalted position for twenty-eight years. His predecessor, Chief Justice Marshall, had occupied the chair for thirty-four years. The task of filling the office of a chief justice appointed by Andrew Jackson now evolved upon Lincoln. His political friends advised him to make his appointment before the November elections while he was still in office, but he could not be hurried with so important a task.

The fact that Taney was eighty-four years old when Lincoln came to the Presidency caused several ambitious men to look with longing eyes on the chair that they felt would soon be vacated by the aged Chief Justice. This caused, prematurely, a considerable amount of jockeying by the prospective candidates, that they might occupy favorable positions when the race for the seat actually started.

The opening of the Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress has allowed us for the first time to thoroughly canvass the subject of Lincoln's choice of Taney's successor. The large number of candidates might be grouped as follows: provincial candidates nominated by the local press of many communities, friendship candidates proposed by those who could get the President's ear for a moment. A tabulated list gleaned from the Lincoln Papers contains the names of eighteen men recommended in letters written to the President. Of this number five were members at one time of Lincoln's cabinet and all were lawyers. Nine others were lawyers occupying judicial offices in the courts of their respective states, three were politicians and only one was an Associate Justice in the court.

A grouping of these candidates might place them in these four classifications; Cabinet members, an associate justice, judicial candidates and professional politicians. The last class would refer to those who had been inactive in their profession due to commanding political interests. One from each of these four groups seems to have come to the wire in the final heat with some promise of success. Large numbers of supporters were using every possible means to assure the victory of their favorite.

The cabinet member who received the most support but who was also most deeply despised was Montgomery Blair of Maryland. Edward Everett wrote an impressive and highly complimentary letter on his behalf. Almost the entire western bar was in favor of Associate Justice Swayne for advancement to the chief justiceship and his cause was ably championed by Associate Justice Davis of Illinois. Lincoln, however, had appointed Swayne to the court but a few months before. Members of the eastern bar lined up behind William M. Evarts of New York, one of the outstanding attorney's of the nation and thought by many to be the "ablest and best prepared man among all those mentioned for the place." The remaining member of the foursome was Samuel P. Chase, formerly a member of Lincoln's cabinet, but classified here among the professional politicians as he had practiced little or no law for many years. His candidacy was enthusiastically sponsored by Charles Sumner and a large contingent of leading New York financiers who a few months before had backed Chase for the Presidency.

A survey of the voluminous correspondence which the President received, with respect to the nomination, indicates clearly, that among all the candidates the great masses of people were for Chase, but his bitterest opponents however, were members of the bar. The contest finally simmered down to a final heat between the two Buckeye contenders, Justice Swayne having the backing of the professional men, and Chase the support of the politicians.

One who reads the letters recommending Chase, written by many of the outstanding men of the nation, can readily understand why Lincoln appointed a candidate for whom he had no personal admiration. Possibly he was in agreement with Joseph Medill who wrote to William P. Dole and forwarded by Dole to Lincoln: "Chase is too valuable a man to have lying around loose and idle during the present critical crisis in resistance to the antion." The President appointed Samuel P. Chase the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court on December 6, 1864.

LINCOLN'S ANNUAL MESSAGE TO CONGRESS
December 3, 1861

This is only the section that deals with the Supreme Court. It shows the transformation of the Court into the body we recognize today. Taken from THE COLLECTED WORKS OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN...Roy P. Basler, Ed., Rutgers University Press..1953, p. 41. Vol 5.

"There are three vacancies on the bench of the Supreme Court--two by the decease of Justices Daniel and McLean, and one by the resignation of Justice Campbell. I have so far forbore making nominations to fill these vacancies for reasons which I will no state. Two of the outgoing judges resided within the States now overrun by revolt; so that if successors were appointed in the same localities, they could not now serve upon their circuits; and many of the most competent men there, probably would not take the personal hazard of accepting to serve, even here, upon the supreme bench. I have been unwilling to throw all the appointments northward, thus disabling myself from doing justice to the south on the return of peace; although I may remark that to transfer to the north one which has heretofore been in the south, would not, with reference to territory and population, be unjust.

During the long and brilliant judicial career of Judge McLean his circuit grew into an empire--altogether too large for any one judge to give the courts therein more than a nominal attendance--rising in population from one million four hundred and seventy-thousand and eighteen, in 1830, to six million one hundred and fifty-one thousand four hundred and five, in 1860.

Besides this, the country generally has outgrown our present judicial system. If uniformity was at all intended, the system requires that all the States shall be accommodated with circuit courts, attended by supreme judges, while, in fact, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Kansas, Florida, Texas, California, and Oregon, have never had any such courts. Nor can this well be remedied without a change of the system; because the adding of judges to the Supreme Court, enough for the accomodation of all parts of the country, with circuit courts, would create a court altogether too numerous for a judicial body of any sort. And the evil, if it be ~~one~~, will increase as new States come into the Union. Circuit courts are useful, or they are not useful. If useful, no State should be denied them; if not useful, no State should have them. Let them be provided for all, or abolished as to all.

Three modifications occur to me, either of which, I think, would be an improvement upon our present system. Let the Supreme Court be of convenient number in every event. Then, first, let the whole country be divided into circuits of convenient size, the supreme judges to serve in a number of them corresponding to their own number, and independent circuit judges be provided for all the rest. Or, secondly, let the supreme judges be relieved from circuit duties, and circuit judges provided for all the circuits. Or, thirdly, dispense with circuit courts altogether, leaving the judicial functions wholly to the district court and an independent Supreme Court. (ED Note: An act approved July 15, 1862, created nine circuits including all the states except Cal & Ore and repealed all acts giving District Courts the power of circuit court Act of March 3, 1863 fixed the justices of the Supreme Court at nine plus the chief justice, and created the Tenth Circuit in Cal. & Ore.

BATTLE OF DUNKSBURG

The following amusing account of a battle that occurred in the wilds of Missouri has not yet taken its appropriate place in the history of the rebellion:

"The village of Dunksburg is situated in the north-east corner of Pettis County, Missouri and very near the stream known as the Black Water. In the south-east part of Lafayette County, and immediately in the neighborhood of Dunksburg there is a large German settlement. From the very commencement of the present troubles in Missouri, the Germans have been loyal to the Government, and as they were the first against whom the vengeance of the secessionists was directed, they were the first to take up arms in the defense of their adopted country, and a small company of some forty or fifty handed themselves together for the purposes of self-defence, making the church at Dunksburg their temporary headquarters. Late one afternoon they were notified of the approach of a considerable body of rebels from Pettis and Saline Counties, and they prudently determined to retreat from the position they held in the church, believing that they would be unable to defend it against greatly superior numbers.

"The attacking party, not aware that the Germans had retreated, advanced cautiously, under cover of night, and by a dexterous movement succeeded in surrounding the church, and at a signal agreed on, immediately commenced a heavy fire upon the building, which being only weather-boarded with thin pine or poplar plank, offered scarcely any resistance to the bullets which were rapidly discharged from rifles and shot guns, and which, passing through and through the house, killed and wounded many of the assailants. Unprepared for what they mistook for a vigorous defence on the part of the Germans, after considerable loss in killed and wounded, they retreated to their camp a short distance off; but dissatisfied with the result, and believing it entirely in their power to capture the small force which had peppered them so severely, they determined to return to the charge, and to carry the church at the point of the bayonet.

"The same precaution was used in making their advances for the second attack, and they completely surrounded the building before the word was given to fire. Greatly to their astonishment, at the first volley many of their men were killed, and being in close proximity to the building, several were seriously wounded by splinters, which were scattered in every direction by the balls passing through the house. The fire was so destructive that no time was lost in forcing the doors of the building, with the purpose of making a finish of all the Dutch inside; but greatly to their disappointment and mortification, they discovered that there was not a single Dutchman anywhere about the house, and that they had been guilty of the extreme folly of shooting each other. Thus ended the battle of Dunksburg-- an event long to be remembered by the peaceful inhabitants of that quiet village, which has thus become famous among the bloody localities of Missouri."

THE CIVIL WAR IN SONG AND STORY
Frank Moore 1889

CIVIL WAR HUMOR

Teamsters' Conundrums. -- Army teamsters are proverbial for the scientific volubility with which they swear. A teamster with the Cumberland army, not long ago got stuck in the mud and he let fly a stream of profane epithets that would have astonished "our army in Flanders," even. A chaplain passing at the time was greatly shocked.

"My friend," said the chaplain to the teamster, "do you know who died for sinners?"

"D---a your conundrums. Don't you see I'm stuck in the mud?"

ABRAHAM LINCOLN AT THE HAMPTON ROADS
PEACE CONFERENCE (1865)

The long, bloody war had lasted almost four years. Although Confederate General Robert E. Lee still held out at Petersburg, Virginia, against the assaults of Lieutenant General U.S. Grant, the advantage was clearly with the Union forces. The Confederacy was cut in two by Union Control of the Mississippi River. The state of Georgia, Confederate granary, had been ravaged by Major General William T. Sherman's "March to the Sea." The capture of Fort Fisher on January 15, 1865, by Major General Alfred H. Terry's expedition from Fort Monroe had sealed off the port of Wilmington, North Carolina, the Confederacy's last opening to the outside world. Nevertheless, there were important elements in the North who felt that the war, so costly in blood and treasure, might be shortened by a peace conference. There were also some people in the South who thought that concessions might be obtained before the Confederacy went down in utter defeat.

A persistent peace advocate in the North was the elder statesman Francis P. Blair of Missouri. In the last days of 1864 he obtained a pass from President Abraham Lincoln to go to Richmond, Virginia, capital of the Confederate States of America. From their President Jefferson Davis, Blair obtained a promise to send peace commissioners "with a view to secure peace to the two countries." Lincoln then told Blair that he would be ready to receive any agent who might be sent "with the view of securing peace to the people of our one common country." From this significant difference in wording of the commitments, it would seem that neither Lincoln nor Davis expected any result from such a conference, but each judged it would be politic to permit it to occur.

Davis appointed three peace commissioners: Alexander H. Stephens, Confederate Vice President, Robert M.T. Hunter, presiding officer of the Confederate Senate, and John A. Campbell, Assistant Secretary of War. Stephens was from Georgia, Hunter from Virginia and Campbell from Alabama. Both Stephens and Hunter had been U.S. Congressmen before the war. Campbell had been an Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court. All three had originally opposed secession of the Southern states, but when it occurred each had followed his state out of the Union.

The Confederate peace commissioners came through the lines at Petersburg and were at once conducted to the headquarters of General Grant at City Point (now Hopewell, Virginia.) On February 2 Lincoln sent the following dispatch to Lt Gen U.S. Grant: "Say to the gentlemen that I will meet them personally at Fortress Monroe as soon as I can get there." Lincoln took with him William H. Seward, Sec of State.

The conference was held on Lincoln's steamer, the RIVER QUEEN, just off Fort Monroe. The date was February 3, 1865. Lincoln watched good-humoredly as the frail Alexander H. Stephens divested himself of his many wrappings. The two men had been good friends in the U.S. Congress years before. The conference lasted four hours, with no interruptions except the comings and goings of a servant who brought refreshments. Since no notes were made during the meeting, the recollections of some of the participants constitute the sole source of what transpired.

One historian gives the following account: "For four hours there was a swift interplay of acute minds across the council table. Lincoln would make no bargain with an enemy in arms. When Hunter retorted that Charles I had negotiated with persons in arms against his government, the President replied that he was not posted on history; all that he distinctly remembered about the matter was that Charles had lost his head. Hunter said he understood that Lincoln looked upon the leaders of the Confederacy as traitors. Lincoln granted that was 'about the size of it.' There was a moment's silence. Then Hunter smiled. 'Well, Mr. Lincoln,' he observed, 'we have about concluded that we shall not be hanged as long as you are President--if we behave ourselves.'

"Lincoln let it be known that he still favored compensation to owners of emancipated slaves. It had never been his intention to interfere with slavery in the states; he had been driven to it by necessity, he explained. He believed that the people of the North and South were equally responsible for slavery, and if hostilities should cease and the states would voluntarily abolish slavery, he thought the government should indemnify the owners--to the extent, possibly, of \$400 million.

"The conference came to nothing. Two days later, however, Lincoln read his cabinet a proposal to appropriate \$400 million for reimbursement to slaveowners, provided hostilities stopped by April 1. With victory imminent, it was the ultimate in magnanimity. But the cabinet unanimously disapproved this generous gesture, and Lincoln regretfully abandoned the idea. He had hoped that it might be a means of avoiding further bloodshed and desolation and of dissolving sectional hatred. 'You are all opposed to me,' he said sadly, and it would be best to say nothing of his proposal to anyone outside the cabinet." --Benjamin P. Thomas, ABRAHAM LINCOLN (Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1952).

In a few weeks the Hampton Roads Peace Conference was forgotten except as a subject for jest. The war went on with much additional suffering and loss of life until April 9, 1865, when General Lee surrendered to General Grant at Appomattox, Virginia. Lincoln was assassinated in Ford's Theater in Washington by the half-mad actor John Wilkes Booth on April 14. That same evening Lewis Payne, an accomplice of Booth, gained admission to the home of William H. Seward, who was convalescing from an accidental injury, and stabbed him in the throat and face. He also wounded Seward's son and some other persons who attempted to subdue him. Seward recovered and lived until 1872. In 1867 he negotiated the purchase of Alaska for \$7,200,000. This achievement was derided at the time as "Seward's Folly."

In May 1865 Alexander H. Stephens was arrested at his home in Georgia and imprisoned at Fort Warren in Boston Harbor until October of that year. He was elected to the United States Senate in 1866, but was not allowed to take his seat. Later he served in Congress. He died while Governor of Georgia in 1883. Robert M.T. Hunter was held as a prisoner for several months at Fort Pulaski, Savannah, Georgia. He was Treasurer of the State of Virginia from 1874 to 1880 and at the time of his death in 1887 he was Collector for the port of Tappahannock in that state. John A. Campbell was also confined for a number of months at Fort Pulaski. After his release he began life anew at the age of fifty-four in New Orleans, Louisiana. Here he built up a large law practice and regained his prewar position as one of the leading lawyers of the country. He died in 1889.

The RIVER QUEEN, after the Civil War, ran between Nantucket and New Bedford, Massachusetts, as an excursion boat. From 1881 to 1891 she was in service around New York City. Then she went south into the Potomac River service, carrying tourists to Mount Vernon. She was destroyed by fire at Washington, D.C. on July 8, 1911. The RIVER QUEEN was a steamer of 512 tons. She was built at Key Port, New Jersey, in 1864, and went into war service at once, being chartered by her owners to the Government at the rate of \$214 per day. She was used by President Lincoln for travel between Washington, Fort Monroe and Grant's headquarters at City Point during the Siege of Petersburg. Lincoln took a final voyage on her just forty-eight hours before his assassination. In the afterwar years the RIVER QUEEN was proud of her Lincoln Room.

The Fort Monroe Casemate Museum has an exhibit on the Hampton Roads Peace Conference. The museum consists of the Jefferson Davis Casemate, the MONITOR and MERRIMACK Casemate and the Old Fort Monroe Casemate (a casemate is a chamber in the wall of a fort). The museum is open every day of the year from 8 AM to 5 PM. Admission is free, the museum being commemorative and educational. TALES OF OLD FORT