

# THE CHARGER

April, 2008

450th Meeting

Vol. 29 #8

*Tonight's Program:*

## The USS *Kearsarge* vs. the CSS *Alabama*

After nearly two years of highly successful cruising at the expense of the United States' commercial shipping, CSS *Alabama* returned to European waters in



early June of 1864, arriving at Cherbourg, France on June 11. Since its commissioning, the *Alabama* had cruised for approximately 21 months over nearly 75,000 miles and had taken 64 prizes worth more than \$6.5 million. The ship never entered a Confederate port, but was replenished and refueled in such spots as Bahia in Brazil, Capetown, Singapore, and Cherbourg. Three days after the Confederate warship anchored in the French harbor, the USS *Kearsarge* took up station off the port.

Despite *Alabama's* poor condition, her commander, Captain Raphael Semmes, decided to fight the Union vessel, commanded by Captain John Winslow. On Sunday, June 19, the warships engaged each other outside the 3 mile limit, exchanging fire for just over an hour as they steamed in slowly narrowing circles. At the beginning of the eighth circle, when the ships were approximately 400 yards apart, the *Alabama* sank. The *Kearsarge* took 64 prisoners. Semmes, 14 officers, and 24 crew were rescued by the English yacht *Deerhound* and taken to England.

*Tonight's Speaker:*

## John Fazio

John Fazio has been in the Roundtable since 2000. He was President from 2006-7 and Vice President from 2005-6. He is also a member of the Lincoln Forum. He is a student of history with an emphasis on European and American history and with an even greater emphasis on the War of the Rebellion (its official name). He frequently lectures on the war and has written numerous articles on the subject. He is currently writing a full-length book, *The Puritan and the Cavalier*, the story of Francis C. Barlow and John B. Gordon and their wives. John lives with his wife, Mary, in Akron.

*Date:* **Wednesday,  
April 9, 2008**

*Place:* **The Cleveland  
Playhouse Club  
8501 Carnegie Ave.**

*Time:* **Drinks 6 PM  
Dinner 7 PM**

*Reservations:* **Please Call  
JAC Communications  
(216) 861-5588**

*Meal choice:* **Pork Rib Chop or  
Pasta Aglio e Olio**

## CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

FOUNDED 1957

*President:* **Terry Koozer** (216) 226-7527  
*Vice President:* **Jon Thompson** (440) 871-6439  
*Secretary:* **Lisa Kempfer** (440) 526-1318  
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Dave Carrino                      John Fazio  
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### Cleveland Civil War Roundtable Past Presidents

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2003 Maynard Bauer	1977 James Chapman
2002 Bill McGrath	1976 Milton Holmes
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2000 Bob Boyda	1974 Nolan Heidelbaugh
1999 Dick Crews	1973 Arthur Jordan
1998 John Moore	1972 Bernard Drews
1997 Dan Zeiser	1971 Kenneth Callahan
1996 John Sutula	1970 Frank Schuhle
1995 Norton London	1969 Donald Heckaman
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1993 Kevin Callahan	1967 William Schlesinger
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1991 Joe Tirpak	1965 Lester Swift
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1989 Neil Glaser	1963 Paul Guenther
1988 Martin Graham	1962 Edward Downer
1987 George Vourlojanis	1961 Charles Clarke
1986 Tim Beatty	1960 Howard Preston
1985 Brian Kowell	1959 John Cullen, Jr.
1984 Neil Evans	1958 George Farr, Jr.
1983 William Victory	1957 Kenneth Grant
1982 John Harkness	

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### APRIL, 2008

This April edition of the Charger is the first Charger to be sent mostly by email, with a very few by regular mail. As you read this off the internet, know that you are helping the Roundtable save funds for good Roundtable causes such as speakers and gifts.

At our March meeting, veteran Roundtable member William F. B. Vodrey presented "Raid!: The Confederacy Comes to St. Albans, Vermont." In October 1864, Lt. Bennett Young led a detachment of some twenty Confederate soldiers into St. Albans. They came into Vermont disguised as Canadian sportsmen. After casing the situation in St. Albans, the Young gang robbed three banks in the town. The Raiders stole some \$200,000, while overlooking another \$350,000 in the banks. A St. Albans man was wounded during the robbery and later died. This man, a Southern sympathizer, was the only person killed in the raid. After the bank heists, the Confederate Raiders escaped into Canada, pursued by a posse of angry Vermonters. Eventually, some of the Raiders were captured by Canadian authorities. After protracted trials in Canada, with the U.S. seeking to extradite them, the Raiders were not sent back to the U.S.

This raid put stress on the relations between the U.S. and its northern neighbor. It did not grow into a major problem. The raid had no great effect on the outcome of the war, but it was an interesting chapter in the history of the Civil War.

The Executive Committee has put together a slate of officers for the 2008-09 campaign. The slate will be presented at the April meeting and voted on at the May meeting. The slate of officers is listed on the last page of the Charger. I recommend that the slate be approved.

Sincerely,  
Terry Koozer

**CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE  
2007/2008 SCHEDULE**

September 12, 2007

**The Lincoln-Douglas Debates:  
A Reenactment**



**George  
Buss**

October 10, 2007

**Brevet Brigadier General James B.  
Barnett of the 1st Cleveland Light Ar-  
tillery and the Firing of the First Land  
Cannon Shots of the War**

**Marge Wilson**

November 14, 20067

**George Thomas at  
the Battle of  
Chickamauga**

**Dan Zeiser**



December 12, 2007



**Nathan Bedford  
Forrest:  
Napoleonic  
Cavalryman**

**Greg Biggs**

January 9, 2008

**The Dick Crews Annual  
Debate**

*The Southern Victory of 1865:  
Was the Confederacy a Viable  
State?*

**Moderator: William F. B. Vodrey**

February 13, 2008

**A Civil War Quiz**

**Presented by  
Brian Kowell**



March 12, 2008

**Raid!: The Confed-  
eracy Comes to St.  
Albans, Vermont**



**William F. B. Vodrey**

April 9, 2008

**The USS Kear-  
sarge vs. the  
CSS Alabama  
John Fazio**



May 14, 2008



**Jesse James: The  
Last Rebel**

**Mel Maurer**

# OHIO PEACE DEMOCRATS AND THE CIVIL WAR ELECTIONS

By Dennis Keating

## Introduction

As Ohioans vote in the 2008 presidential election in which the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have divided the country, it is interesting to look back to the divisions in the North over Lincoln's policies during the Civil War. Anti-war Democrats were called "Copperheads" and several Ohio politicians were prominent in their ranks. They have been labeled in the following three groups: 1) peace at any price; 2) extreme Peace Democrats; and 3) moderate Peace Democrats. Ohio Congressman Alexander Long was among the first group and was almost expelled from Congress for his views. Ohio Congressman Clement Vallandigham was a prominent advocate for the second group. Congressman George Pendleton represented the views of the third group. This article will feature the fate of the latter two Peace Democrats during the Ohio gubernatorial election of 1863 and the presidential election of 1864.



Alexander Long

## Ohio's 1863 gubernatorial election

The Ohio gubernatorial election of 1863 saw one of the most unusual campaigns in the history of the state. Peace Democrat and exiled Congressman Clement Vallandigham ran for governor from Windsor, Ontario, Canada. How did this happen? Born in New Lisbon, Vallandigham was a lawyer who became a state legislator from Dayton and then ran unsuccessfully for Congress in 1852 and 1854. In 1856, he lost by a tiny margin, appealed to Congress, and was seated with the key help of Southern Democrats, fueling his sympathy for the slaveholding South. Vallandigham was narrowly re-elected in 1858 and 1860. In the 1860 presidential election, he supported the Democratic candidate, Stephen Douglas. With the firing on Ft. Sumter and Lincoln's policy of defending the Union, Vallandigham became a leading Congressional opponent of Lincoln's policy, calling for a negotiated peace with the Confederacy. For his views, he was almost assaulted by Cleveland regiments camped outside Washington and was charged with treason by some Republicans. Vallandigham's opposition to abolition of slavery added to the movement to defeat him. The Lincoln administration recruited wounded general Robert Schenck to oppose Vallandigham, who lost his seat in the October, 1862 election despite an overall Democratic Congressional victory in Ohio. Returning to Washington to complete his term, Vallandigham made a farewell pro-peace speech in Congress on January 14, 1863, denouncing Abraham Lincoln for the Emancipation Proclamation and his war policies.

Returning to Ohio, Vallandigham decided to run for governor against pro-war Democratic governor David Tod. General Ambrose Burnside, relieved of the command of the Army of the Potomac after the Fredericksburg disaster, was now the commander of the Military District



Clement Laird Vallandigham

of Ohio, and issued General Order Number 38, which warned against “the habit of declaring sympathies for the enemy.” Vallandigham then gave a speech denouncing “King” Lincoln and claiming that the war was not being fought to save the Union, but to free blacks and enslave whites. He was arrested on May 5, 1863 and then immediately tried and convicted by a military commission, and sentenced to imprisonment for the duration of the war. His lawyer’s attempt to obtain a writ of habeas corpus was denied by a federal judge, a decision upheld in February, 1864 by the United States Supreme Court. Not wanting to make Vallandigham a Copperhead hero and martyr, President Lincoln instead decided to exile him to the Confederacy. A reluctant General Braxton Bragg took custody of the exile in Tennessee on May 25. Vallandigham and the Confederacy did not make a comfortable match. On June 17, he sailed from Wilmington, North Carolina on a blockade runner for Bermuda, and then to Halifax, Nova Scotia. From there he went to Niagara, Ontario. There, on July 15, he accepted the nomination of the Ohio Democrats, outraged by his arrest and exile, for governor. Moving to Windsor, Ontario across from Detroit in August, he proceeded to wage his gubernatorial campaign from exile. His platform included withdrawing Ohio from the Union if there were no peace with the South. His opponent was not the incumbent Tod, but rather John Brough, another pro-war Democrat. Vallandigham’s campaign was undercut by the Union victories that summer at Vicksburg and Gettysburg and the danger posed by the John Hunt Morgan raid into Ohio. At Republican rallies, the chant was:

“Hurrah for Brough and Abraham and a rope to hang Vallandigham.”

The Democratic response was:

“May every Buckeye-smooth or rough,  
Denounce the renegade Jack Brough,  
May every woman, child and man,  
Pray Heaven to bless Vallandigham.”

Vallandigham lost in a landslide by 100,000 votes (including about 40,000 Ohio soldiers serving in the Union armies).

### The 1864 Presidential Election

Undeterred by this defeat, Vallandigham returned to Ohio (in disguise), arriving in Dayton on June 15, 1864, after which he was elected a delegate to the Democratic Party presidential nominating convention in Chicago. Despite demands for his arrest, Lincoln followed the advice of Horace Greeley and decided to leave Vallandigham free. In August, he wrote a peace plank at a divided convention. To his dismay, this was rejected by the Democratic presidential nominee George McClellan (twice fired as commander of the Army of the Potomac by Abraham Lincoln). Also enter “Gentleman” George Pendleton, a moderate Peace Democratic Congressman from Cincinnati (elected in 1856, after losing in his first Congressional campaign in 1854).

As a representative of the moderate Peace Democrats, he was nominated for Vice President on the second ballot. With the fall of Atlanta and the overwhelming support of Union army soldiers, Lincoln easily won re-election, carrying all but three states and winning the electoral college vote 212-21. He carried Ohio by 60,000 votes (including 30,000 Union soldier votes).

### Post-Civil War

Vallandigham attempted a political comeback in the 1868 election, but lost the Democratic nomination for Ben Wade's United States Senate seat. He then attempted to regain his Congressional seat, but was again defeated by Schenck. Vallandigham returned to his law practice. Representing an accused murderer, he accidentally shot himself while preparing the defense and died June 17, 1871. His funeral was attended by George Pendleton and Salmon Chase (whom he had supported for president in 1868).

Pendleton also suffered more political setbacks. He was defeated when he again ran for Congress in 1866. He gained prominence with a Jacksonian currency plan to pay off the war debts. He became a candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1868, actually leading on the first ballot, but then losing to Horatio Seymour, who would lose the election to Ulysses Grant. Pendleton then ran for Ohio governor in 1869, but lost to the incumbent Republican, Civil War hero, and future President of the United States - Rutherford B. Hayes (although only by 7,500 out of 465,000 votes). Despite these three successive political setbacks, Pendleton made a comeback by winning a seat in the United States Senate in 1878. There, he is remembered as the author of the Pendleton civil service reform legislation enacted in 1882 in tribute to assassinated President James Garfield from Ohio. However, this led to the loss of his Senate seat in 1884, in part due to his own party's opposition to this reform legislation. The administration of President Grover Cleveland, the first Democrat elected since the Civil War, appointed Pendleton Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary to Germany. He held this position until 1889, following Cleveland's defeat for re-election. Shortly afterwards, he died while traveling in Belgium.



George Hunt Pendleton

### References

Frank L. Klement. 1998. *The Limits of Dissent: Clement L. Vallandigham and the Civil War*. New York: Fordham University Press.

Thomas S. Mach. 2007. "Gentleman George" Hunt Pendleton: Party Politics and Ideological Identity in Nineteenth-Century America. Kent State University Press.

Dennis Keating is the current Treasurer of the Roundtable and proposed Vice President for next year. Dennis is the Associate Dean of Urban Affairs at Cleveland State University.



## A Brief History of the USS *Kearsarge*

USS *Kearsarge*, a 1550-ton *Mohican* class steam sloop of war, was built at the Portsmouth Navy Yard, Kittery, Maine, under the 1861 Civil War emergency shipbuilding program. She was commissioned in January 1862 and almost immediately deployed to European waters, where she spent nearly three years searching for Confederate raiders. In June 1864, while under the command of Captain John Winslow, *Kearsarge* found CSS *Alabama* at Cherbourg, France, where she had gone for repairs after a devastating cruise at the expense of the United States' merchant marine. On June 19, the two ships, nearly equals in size and power, fought a battle off Cherbourg that became one of the Civil War's most memorable naval actions. In about an hour, *Kearsarge's* superior gunnery completely defeated her opponent, which soon sank.

After searching off Europe for the Confederate cruiser *Florida*, *Kearsarge* went to the Caribbean, then to Boston, where she received repairs before returning to Europe in April 1865 to try to intercept the ironclad CSS *Stonewall*. With the end of the Civil War, she remained in the area until mid-1866, when she was placed out of commission.



USS *Kearsarge*

*Kearsarge* returned to active service in January 1868 and was sent to the Pacific coast of South America. During 1869, she cruised across the ocean as far as Australia, then returned to Peru. The next year, *Kearsarge* sailed north to Hawaii, then moved on to Mare Island, California, where she decommissioned in October 1870. In 1873-78, she was back in commission, cruising in Asiatic waters until September 1877, then transiting the Suez Canal to return to the U.S. east coast, where she decommissioned in early 1878.

Two more tours of duty awaited *Kearsarge* during the next decade and a half. She operated in the North Atlantic and Caribbean areas in 1879-83, then went back to Europe and Africa until late 1886. From 1888 onwards, she was stationed in the West Indies and Central American areas. While en route from Haiti to Nicaragua on February 2, she was wrecked on Roncador Reef. An effort to salvage her proved fruitless, and USS *Kearsarge* was stricken from the Navy List later in the year.

## 3RD DISTRICT NATIONAL HISTORY WINNERS FOR BEST CIVIL WAR ENTRIES

This is the second year that the Roundtable has given awards to students' prize winning entries in the Civil War category (a new category established for our awards). This year's theme was "Conflict and Compromise in History" and our winners are:

David Wemer, Shaker Heights. High School, \$100 award for his exhibit: "A War of Civility: John Morgan's Indiana and Ohio Raid."

Katherine Cavanaugh, Oberlin High School, \$50 for her exhibit: "Striking Out: The New York Draft Riots."

We hope to have the exhibits at our May meeting and have invited David and Katherine to join us.

## **2008-9 Proposed Executive Committee**

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Historian: Mel Maurer

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Terry Koozer

Webmaster: Paul Burkholder

Editor of the Charger: Dan Zeiser

**NEXT MONTH**

**JESSIE JAMES: THE LAST REBEL**

**MEL MAURER**