

# THE CHARGER

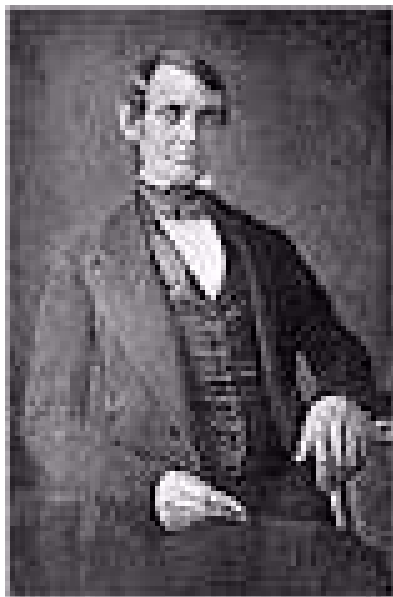
February, 2009

457th Meeting

Vol. 30 #6

*Tonight's Program:*

## The Great Emancipator as Lawyer



Abraham Lincoln practiced law for nearly twenty-five years in the Illinois courts. Other than part-time service in the Illinois legislature and the United States Congress, law was his full-time occupation. Lincoln handled cases in almost all court levels: justice of the peace, county, circuit, appellate, and federal. He had three successive formal partnerships: junior partner to John Todd Stuart (1837-1841), junior partner to Stephen T. Logan (1841-1844), and senior partner to William H. Herndon (1844-1861). Like many of his colleagues at the bar, Lincoln was a general practice attorney and represented clients in a variety of civil and criminal actions including debt, slander, divorce, dower and partition, mortgage foreclosure, and murder.

*Tonight's Speaker:*

## Dr. Paul Finkelman

Dr. Paul Finkelman is a historian and legal scholar. He is the President William McKinley Distinguished Professor of Law and Public Policy and Senior Fellow in the Government Law Center at Albany Law School, Albany, New York. He has published over twenty books and more than one hundred scholarly articles. Dr. Finkelman has several foci, including slavery, race, civil rights, civil liberties, the Constitution, Constitutional Law, and baseball. He is considered one of the world's leading experts on baseball and the law.

*Date:* **Wednesday,  
February 11, 2009**

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

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

*Reservations:* **Please Call NEW!  
Dan Zeiser (440) 449-9311  
Or email [ccwrt1956@yahoo.com](mailto:ccwrt1956@yahoo.com)  
By 8 pm Tuesday before meeting**

*Meal choice:* **Buffet includes  
entree, vegetable, potato/rice,  
salad, and dessert**

**CLEVELAND  
CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE**  
FOUNDED 1957

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*website:* clevelandcivilwarroundtable.com

*email:* pburkholder@ameritech.net

**Editor - THE CHARGER - Dan Zeiser**

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**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**  
**FEBRUARY 2009**

Greetings,

Growing up in small town Cambridge, Ohio in the 1950s made for a rather narrow and provincial viewpoint of the world. I remember my Grandmother Lucille had a flag-draped, framed picture of Abraham Lincoln on her living room wall. As a youth I could conceive of Lincoln as only an American hero. Not until I read Alan Paton's in my early twenties and learned that one South African's idol and hero was Abraham Lincoln did I finally realize that Lincoln is beloved throughout the world and, indeed, is an icon for freedom-lovers everywhere.

Upon Lincoln's death, Edward Stanton supposedly said, "Now he belongs to the ages." And indeed he does! Because of who he was, how he lived, and what he did, he will be honored as long as people value freedom. It is not surprising then that the newly inaugurated 44th President of the United States frequently expresses his admiration for Lincoln. Would that all our leaders could emulate the timeless strengths that have endeared Lincoln "to the ages": intelligence, diligence, compassion, patience, determination, dignity, moral and spiritual fortitude, humor, and wisdom. And most of those saintly virtues are indirectly manifested in this delightful anecdote from our friend James Bissland's Political attacks coming from both left and right, the death in February, 1862 of his playful and precocious ten-year old son, Willie, and the stresses of war all weighed heavily on the President. He needed to laugh now and then. Among Lincoln's two favorite humorists were two Ohioans: Charles Farrar Browne, creator of a character named Artemus Ward, and David Ross Locke, creator of Petroleum Vesuvius Nasby. Both Browne and Locke had been writers for the and the

At a Cabinet meeting in the White House on September 22, 1862, President Lincoln is said to have read aloud a chapter of "Artemus Ward," finishing with a hearty laugh. While a stony-faced Cabinet sat in silence and Secretary of War Stanton seethed at the "buffoonery," Lincoln read another chapter. Finally, the President sighed and said, "Gentlemen, why don't you laugh? With the fearful strain that is upon me night and day, if I did not laugh I should die, and you need this medicine as much as I do."

Then Lincoln pulled from his pocket a draft of the Emancipation Proclamation. It declared that on January 1, 1863, all slaves in Confederate territory "shall be henceforth and forever free." Stanton, an ardent opponent of slavery, spoke up: "Mr. President, if reading chapters of Artemus Ward is a prelude to such a deed as this, the book should be filed among the archives of the nation and the author should be canonized." The Cabinet chorused, "Amen." (End of anecdote).

No, he was not a saint. But he was a good, good man. He held a great country together in times of unimaginable crisis. And he pushed open a door that would lead to "a new birth of freedom" for all Americans. So, as we gather on February 11th to celebrate the bicentennial of his birthday, we need only ask the question: what might be this country's history without his service?

Please join us at our February meeting of the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable as we celebrate Abraham Lincoln's 200th birthday. Our presenter will be Dr. Paul Finkelman, who will speak on The Great Emancipator as Lawyer.

Respectfully,       Jon Thompson

**CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE  
2008/2009 SCHEDULE**

September 10, 2008

**Varina Davis:  
First Lady of the  
Confederacy**

**Dr. Joan Cashin**



October 8, 2008



**The Supreme Court  
During the  
Civil War**

**Chris Fortunato**

November 12, 2008

**Blood, Tears, and Glory:  
How Ohioans Won the  
Civil War**

**Dr. James Bissland**

December 10, 2008

**Restoring  
the  
USS  
Monitor**



**Dr. Sean Brossia**

January 14, 2009

**The Dick Crews Annual  
Debate**

*The Hitherto Unknown Meeting  
Of Abraham Lincoln and  
Jefferson Davis at Hampton Roads in January, 1865  
Lincoln will be portrayed by Mel Maurer  
Jefferson Davis will be portrayed by John C. Fazio*

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

February 11, 2009

**The Great  
Emancipator  
As Lawyer  
Dr. Paul Finkelman**



March 11, 2009

**Meet Me at the Fair: The Northern  
Ohio Sanitary Fair of the Cleveland  
Chapter of the United States Sani-  
tary Commission  
Tim Daley**

April 8, 2009

**The Fight for Money:  
The Income Tax Laws  
Of the Civil War**

**Donald Korb**

May 13, 2009

**The Fighting McCooks**



**Barbara  
Whalen**

## Taking “*The Gettysburg Test*”

If, as William Faulkner postulated, at least once in the life of every Southern boy, it is 3 p.m. on a warm July afternoon in the shallow valley that separates Seminary Ridge from Cemetery Ridge, it is also so for every student of the Civil War. However, in the student’s imagination he is a Licensed Battlefield Guide, leading a group of spellbound battlefield visitors on the short walk from Seminary Ridge to the fields that witnessed the glory, and the horror, of Pickett’s Charge.

Like most Civil War students, I pride myself on a more than passing acquaintance with the Battle of Gettysburg. Over the course of a lifetime—quickly approaching sixty years—I have been to the battlefield at least eight times and have read many books and dozens and dozens of magazine articles. I had often wondered how my knowledge measured up against what I considered the gold standard: a Licensed Battlefield Guide.

In March, 2008, I decided to find out. I did some quick research about the process of becoming an Official Licensed Battlefield Guide. It is not an easy thing. No surprise here, and I would have been disappointed if it had been otherwise. Applicants must score in the top 20% of a written test administered usually every two years, then get through a series of interviews and training. Then the final test: giving a personalized battlefield tour to two current guides.

But first things first: the written test. It is usually administered the first Saturday in December, every two years, in a location in or around Gettysburg. It involves about two hundred questions and takes three hours. The test is administered by the Association of Licensed Battlefield Guides (ALBG).

In March, I made the personal commitment to take the test, and I began my preparation. My motives were basically two. Although my wife and I live in Sandusky, Ohio, and I am still a few years shy of retirement, the idea of moving to the Gettysburg area in retirement and becoming a LBG has considerable appeal. In my career I have worked with the public on a regular basis and have actually given many extensive tours (in my case of Cedar Point Amusement Park). The other motivation was simply to test my knowledge of Gettysburg. I wanted some objective validation that I was a Gettysburg “expert.”

I decided to start by re-reading what I consider the three major comprehensive studies of the battle: *The Gettysburg Campaign, a Study in Command* by Edward Coddington; *Gettysburg* by Stephen Sears; and *Gettysburg, a Testing of Courage*, by Noah Trudeau. I had read all three books previously, Coddington’s perhaps ten years ago. I decided to re-read them simultaneously. I read the prelude to the battle in each book, then the First Day in each book, then the Second Day, then the Third Day. It is an interesting exercise. I recommend it. At the same time, I re-read as many magazine articles on Gettysburg as I could. The supply is virtually endless, as any Civil War enthusiast knows. Over the years, I had kept most issues of *Blue and Gray*, *America’s Civil War*, *Civil War Times Illustrated*, and *North and South* that included Gettysburg articles. I also made a commitment to physically get to the battlefield at least once before the test in December.

I work full time as general manager of Cedar Point, a large amusement park and resort facility in Sandusky, Ohio, on the shore of Lake Erie. The park draws more than three million visitors annually and is actually located less than a mile from Johnson’s Island, site of a Civil War prison for Confederate officers. My busy season is April through October, including every weekend. My study would have to take place at home, and mostly after 8 p.m. I knew the earliest I could get to the battlefield would be October.

In my previous reading of Coddington, et al, I was reading purely for pleasure. Now, they were textbooks. I underlined passages. I made notes in the margins. I noted inconsistencies, biases, and what I considered significant insights. I also read *High Tide at Gettysburg* by Glenn Tucker (a Southern perspective, in my opinion, but his sidebar stories are quite good). I re-read the Gettysburg section, “*Stars in Their Courses*” in Shelby Foote’s *The Civil War: a Narrative*, and the Gettysburg chapter in David Eicher’s *The Longest Night: a Military History*



of the Civil War. I also read extensively—though, I admit selectively—in Harry W. Pfanz’s masterful series: *Gettysburg – The First Day*; *Gettysburg – Culp’s Hill and Cemetery Hill*; and *Gettysburg - The Second Day*. I also dipped into a number of other books on Gettysburg, from Jeffrey D. Wert’s *Gettysburg: Day Three* to *The U.S. Army War College Guide to the Battle of Gettysburg*, from *35 Days to Gettysburg* by Mark Nesbitt to James McPherson’s *Hallowed Ground*.

According to the ALBG website, the written test measures specific knowledge of the battle as well as general knowledge of the Civil War and Reconstruction, including the political, diplomatic, and social history of the period. In this area, I trusted a lifetime of reading and museum-visiting and battlefield-visiting. I did no specific preparation. The website also recommended not going overboard studying tactical minutiae. The purpose of the test was to measure your overall understanding of the battle, the ebb and flow, the big picture. I took its advice.

From March through November, my nightstand was piled with Gettysburg books. The same with the desk in my home office. My wife, who has endured my Civil War fascination for nearly thirty-four years (we visited Antietam on our honeymoon), was very supportive, though she would occasionally roll her eyes when I started comparing Coddington and Sears and their differing perspectives on this or that general. Going into my preparation, I thought my strengths would be my understanding and knowledge of the war in general, and the quality and quantity of my reading. I thought my major weakness would be my lack of intimate knowledge of the field itself, including monuments, geography, etc.

My wife and I did get to Gettysburg for two days the first week of October. We spent time in the new Visitor Center and the Cyclorama (worth the trip by itself). We also signed up for a tour by a Licensed Battlefield Guide. I played dumb, not letting on I was on a scouting mission. I asked him to give us a tour of the battlefield from an artillery perspective. He seemed very pleased at my request, and he did a fine job. I saw Benner’s Hill for the first time and a seldom-visited spot where Jubal Early’s artillery raked the Union XI Corps on July 1. I observed our guide closely and peppered him with questions. I asked him if he had given any tours to the rich and famous. He laughed and said no, but one of his colleagues had given a tour to a very nice man and had ended the tour by saying: “And what line of work are you in, Mr. Springsteen?”

I had forgotten how many memorials and monuments there are at Gettysburg. In preparation for a past trip, I had researched the location of all the Ohio monuments on the field. On that trip, I had visited each monument and taken a picture of it. I knew if the test included a question about Ohio monuments, I would be in good shape. (It did not, however). I also visited East Cavalry Field for the first time. I think my wife and I were the only visitors that day. Over Thanksgiving, I began studying the Order of Battle for both the Army of the Potomac and the Army of Northern Virginia. My goal was to memorize the commanders down to at least the brigade level. In retrospect, I started on this way too late. And there are a lot of names.

The test was given at Harrisburg Community College on Saturday, December 6. The College is located on U.S. 15 on the northwest side of the city, the road Jubal Early’s Division marched down in its approach to Gettysburg on July 1. Unfortunately, due to work requirements, I was not able to do any reading or studying the week prior to the test. Marie and I flew into Harrisburg on Friday night, rented a car, and drove down to Gettysburg. We stayed at the Gettysburg Hotel on the Square, which was lit beautifully for Christmas. It was cold and windy, even a bit of snow, definitely a winter weekend.

It costs \$50 to take the test. The registration process is simple enough. Call or write the Chief of the LBG Service. There is a lot of information available on the Association of Licensed Battlefield Guides website: [www.gettysburgtourguides.org](http://www.gettysburgtourguides.org). Return the registration. You are then sent a more detailed application (lots of government-type questions, but it also asks for your experience in guiding tours, any other relevant experience, etc.) and specific instructions for reporting to the test site.

The test started at 9 a.m., but test takers were told to report by 8:15 a.m. I had guessed the size of the group would be around one hundred. I was low. One of the LBG’s told me there were one hundred thirty-five people scheduled to take the test. Thus, there would be less than thirty people who would qualify to go to the next round. The group was overwhelmingly male, easily 90%, but not as old as I had



expected. There were a number of people who looked to be in their thirties and forties. Quite a few seemed to know each other. I also got the impression that a number were taking the test for a second or third time.

When I picked up my test packet, the LBG noted I was from Sandusky, Ohio, the location of Johnson's Island Confederate Prison. The group was divided up into several classrooms. There were two LBGs, one female and one male, assigned to each room. Our male proctor was a bit of a comedian (and, I am sure, a very good guide) and tried to break the pre-test tension in the room. He made fun of the LBG uniforms, the

“silly sport coats that make us look like condo salesmen” and the “ridiculous ties.” He claimed to have never worn either.

Per the website, the test consists of a “fill in the blanks” section, a multiple choice section, and a true/false section, then a section that tests your knowledge of monuments, geography, and people (including identifying photographs). The test concludes with four essay questions. You must answer three of four questions. The essay questions are basically used as tiebreakers. Just before 9:00 a.m., the proctor tells you to open your packet. You are provided with three government-issue pencils. You are allowed to have bottled water at your desk. If you must use the restroom during the test period, you are accompanied to and then into the restroom by an LBG.

I admit to considerable nervousness. The test was a culmination of nearly nine months of preparation. I had not taken a test like this since the GMAT to go to graduate school, more than thirty-five years ago. At precisely 9:00 a.m., we got the green light. It is a hard test. Very hard. No, *extremely hard*.

The first and biggest section is “fill in the blank.” No guesswork here. You pretty much either know the answer or you do not. My strategy was to go through this section and answer only those I knew, and then double back to those I needed to think about. There were a number where I was absolutely clueless. I did best where I thought I would: general Civil War questions. A few were what I would term “easy,” e.g., what other name is used to refer to the Battle of Stones River? (Battle of Murfreesboro). There were a large number where I realized I should know the answer, but just could not remember the name or fact, though I had read it numerous times, e.g., name the four brigade commanders in Lafayette McClaw's Division? (Semmes, Barksdale, Kershaw, and Wofford). I had three of four, but drew a blank on Brigadier General W.T. Wofford.

Most students of the battle are aware of the story of the Union soldier who was killed in the retreat through Gettysburg on July 1 and was found holding a picture of his three children. A nationwide search took place to identify the soldier and locate his children. I knew the story. I knew the soldier was a German, a member of the XI Corps. I knew it was a long, unpronounceable German name. But could I remember it? No. I still cannot. Another was: Name General Buford's two brigade commanders present for the fight on July 1? I knew one, Colonel Devin, but not the other, Colonel Gamble. However, I think I did fairly well in the true/false and multiple choice questions.

The test is mainly focused on the recall of very specific factual information. Despite what the ALBG website leads you to believe, it does not test your knowledge of the big picture, the ebb and flow of battle, the major strategic and tactical issues, the choices faced by various commanders. I guess that is my one gripe, a bit of false advertising here, in my opinion. In defense of the ALBG, I think it would counter that testing understanding vs. knowledge comes in the next phase of the licensing process. And one must start somewhere. Evaluating understanding vs. knowledge is a much more difficult task. I do not know who is responsible for creating the test, but my working assumption is that a group of LBGs are charged with developing the questions and format. I also assume it changes considerably each time it

is offered.

The monument section was my downfall. You are asked to match approximately a dozen monuments and memorials with specific military units. I am sure I missed most of them. The list of units was multiple choice, so you could guess, and that is what I was reduced to doing. Guessing is never a good thing on a test. In the next section, you are asked to identify about a dozen photographs of Union and Confederate officers. It is fill in the blank, not multiple choice, so much harder to guess. I think I did pretty well here. Some were quite obvious to a Civil War enthusiast, e.g. Winfield Hancock, Jubal Early, and Jeb Stuart. The next section was identifying geographic locations on a map of the Gettysburg field. I thought this was perhaps the easiest section of the test. A careful process of elimination and common sense gets you to the right answers.

The final section of the test was the four essay questions. The first asked the objectives General Robert E. Lee had in mind for his summer 1863 invasion of the North. The second was to present the rationale, from General Richard Ewell's perspective, why it was "not practical" to assault Culp's Hill on the late afternoon/early evening of July 1. The third asked you to address why Lincoln was invited to attend and provide "appropriate remarks" at the dedication of the Soldiers Cemetery at Gettysburg in November, 1863. The fourth involved a discussion of the three phases of Reconstruction. I answered the first three questions.

I went into the test thinking three hours seemed a bit long. I ended up using all three hours. So did the vast majority of test takers. When it was done, I was drained.

I received my results on January 2. I did not do very well, scoring in the bottom half of those who took the test. It is embarrassing to admit this, in part because I have always thought I knew a lot about the Battle of Gettysburg. Also, throughout my life, I have always done well on tests. Disappointed? You bet. But I do not regret the time I spent in preparation. I really enjoyed the whole process. And in my heart I know I could give a terrific tour of the Gettysburg Battlefield.

I have great respect for those who qualified for the next round of the licensing process. Here are some tips for anyone contemplating taking the test:

1. Know the Order of Battle, especially infantry and artillery units, certainly down to the brigade level.
2. Know the placement of units on the battlefield by day and time of day.
3. Know the monuments and memorials. There are over a thousand of them, so you cannot know them all. However, try to identify the top twenty or thirty and know something of their history, especially the unit or units they were erected to honor. To do this right, you have to spend time on the field. Know who designed the state memorials.
4. Be able to identify the regiments of the more famous brigades, e.g. Irish Brigade, Iron Brigade, Texas Brigade. And their commanders.
5. Know the insignia of all the Union corps.
6. Be familiar with Reconstruction. Many Civil War enthusiasts have no interest in anything that happened after April, 1865. However, a lot did.
7. There is a big difference between reading for pleasure and studying. Most of us read Civil War books for pleasure. You must read them a though it is high school or college again and your graduation depends upon how much you can recall.
8. Know the difference between a Napoleon and a Parrot. Expect questions that test basic knowledge of Civil War weaponry.
9. Know the geography of the Gettysburg region, the area outside the immediate battlefield but part of it: Taneytown, Carlisle, Cashtown, Mummasburg, et al.
10. Visit the battlefield as often as you can. There is always something to learn.

The next test date is tentatively scheduled for the first weekend in December, 2010. I plan to be there.

John Hildebrandt

John Hildebrandt is the General Manager of Cedar Point. He has been a Roundtable member since 2005. His interests in the Civil War include Gettysburg, Antietam, the role of Ohio in the war, and Lincoln.

## MR. LINCOLN AT 200

By William F.B. Vodrey

This month we honor all those who have served as President of the United States. By coincidence, the birthdays of two of the republic's great early leaders, George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, both fall in February. Unfortunately, what were once distinct holidays are now one, the rather generic "Presidents' Day."



Not surprisingly, though, of all the presidents, it's Lincoln who's captured the imagination of many of us in the Roundtable. Now, during the long-awaited bicentennial year of his birth, he's once again in the national spotlight – not that he ever really left it. What can one write about Lincoln that hasn't already been written somewhere among the millions of words already set down about him? Nobody could have predicted the greatness that lay ahead for this tall, ungainly man, born to a poor frontier family in the wilderness of Kentucky on February 12, 1809. No one could have foreseen that he would guide the nation through perhaps its most difficult and perilous time, bringing two warring regions back into a republic that would not only survive but prevail in the years to come. Lincoln's enduring legacy is a nation at peace, prosperous and strong, united from sea to sea and from north to south.

I've always liked the Thomas Nast illustration which appears above. I first saw it, in a book belonging to my grandfather, when I was very young. Drawn just days before Lincoln's assassination, the sketch shows the President in repose, thoughtful and calm, wielding the pen which was always his greatest weapon against injustice and rebellion. His makeshift table is a military drum, stilled for the moment as he writes words of unequaled power and durability. Lincoln was a man of peace, yet he led in a time of unparalleled bloodshed, and it's all there in that picture.

Today we may remember Lincoln as a leader, a patriot, a father, a lawyer, a warrior, an emancipator, a writer, an orator, and so many other things as well. Lincoln was greater than the sum of his parts, neither the martyr-saint of early hagiography, nor the passive politician of more recent scholarship. As we celebrate his 200th birthday, and as we study the conflict that defined and ennobled his presidency, we can remember Lincoln however we wish to.

Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton said at the moment of Lincoln's death, "Now he belongs to the ages." To the ages, and to every one of us.

*Vodrey is a former president of the Roundtable. This is an adaptation of his president's message from the February 2001 issue of The Charger.*

**NEXT MONTH  
MEET ME AT THE FAIR:  
THE NORTHERN OHIO SANITARY FAIR OF THE CLEVELAND CHAPTER  
OF THE UNITED STATES SANITARY COMMISSION  
TIM DALEY**