

# THE CHARGER

September, 2008

452nd Meeting

Vol. 30 #1

**Tonight's Program:**

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

Varina Howell Davis was born at her family plantation, the Briers, near Natchez, Mississippi in 1826. As a plantation owner's daughter, Davis received her education from a private tutor and later attended finishing school. She was seventeen when she met Jefferson Davis. Davis was taken with her beauty and intelligence. They were married on February 26, 1845.



Wedding photograph of Jefferson Davis and Varina Howell

Jefferson Davis had intended to live the life of a planter, but within just a few months of the wedding, he was nominated for a seat in the US House of Representatives. Long interested in politics, Varina was ideally suited for the life of a politician's wife. When Jefferson Davis was elected the President of the Confederate State of America, Varina settled comfortably into her new role as First Lady, and enjoyed much public support and adulation for the first year of the Confederacy. During the second year, however, as living conditions deteriorated and commodities became scarce, people began to speak out and criticize.

Following Jefferson Davis's arrest at the end of the Civil War, Varina Davis and the children were sent to Savannah, where she complained of being a virtual prisoner as she was forbidden to leave the city. Fearing for the children's safety, she arranged for them to go to Canada along with her mother. Varina then turned her attention to gaining her husband's release from prison. She petitioned endlessly and he was finally released in May 1867. The Davises struggled for a few years as Jefferson unsuccessfully tried to establish himself as a businessman. They retired to Beauvoir in Biloxi, Mississippi in 1879 after a friend bequeathed it to them in her will. After Jefferson died, Varina stayed at Beauvoir for a few years. She then donated it to be used as a Confederate veterans home and moved to New York, where she supported herself as a writer until her death in 1905.

**Tonight's Speaker:**

## **Dr. Joan Cashin**

A historian of the United States at Ohio State University, Dr. Cashin specializes in social history, including the antebellum, Civil War, and Reconstruction eras. Dr. Cashin published a biography, *First Lady of the Confederacy: Varina Davis's Civil War*, on October 6, 2006. She has also published a book of essays on civilians in the American Civil War with Princeton University Press, as well as many articles on social and cultural history. She has served on the Beveridge-Dunning Prize Committee for the American Historical Association, and on the editorial boards of various journals.

**Date: Wednesday,  
September 10, 2008**

**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 6 pm Tuesday before meeting**

**Meal choice: Buffet includes  
chicken marsala, vegetable, po-  
tato/rice, salad, and dessert**

## CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

FOUNDED 1957

*President:*       **Jon Thompson**       (440) 871-6439  
*Vice President:* **Dennis Keating**   (216) 397-0188  
*Secretary:*       **Marge Wilson**       (216) 932-6558  
*Treasurer:*       **Lisa Kempfer**       (440) 526-1318  
*Historian:*       **Mel Maurer**       (440) 808-1249

### Directors:

Terry Koozer                               John Fazio  
C. Ellen Connally                       Paul Burkeholder  
Hans Kuenzi                               Steve Wilson

website: [clevelandcivilwarroundtable.com](http://clevelandcivilwarroundtable.com)

email: [pburkholder@ameritech.net](mailto:pburkholder@ameritech.net)

Editor - THE CHARGER - Dan Zeiser

### Cleveland Civil War Roundtable Past Presidents

2008 Terry Koozer	1982 John Harkness
2007 John Fazio	1981 Thomas Geschke
2006 Dave Carrino	1980 Charles Spiegle
2005 Mel Maurer	1979 William Bates
2004 Warren McClelland	1978 Richard McCrae
2003 Maynard Bauer	1977 James Chapman
2002 Bill McGrath	1976 Milton Holmes
2001 William Vodrey	1975 Thomas Gretter
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
1994 Robert Battisti	1968 Frank Moran
1993 Kevin Callahan	1967 William Schlesinger
1992 Bob Baucher	1966 Donald Hamill
1991 Joe Tirpak	1965 Lester Swift
1990 Ken Callahan Jr.	1964 Guy DiCarlo, Jr.
1989 Neil Glaser	1963 Paul Guenther
1988 Martin Graham	1962 Edward Downer
1987 George Vourlojianis	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

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### SEPTEMBER, 2008

Welcome to the 2008-2009 season of the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable, the 52nd in our proud history. We are excited about this year's speakers and the topics on which they will present. Of course, CCWRT has recently changed meeting locations, and the officers and directors think you will be pleased with the classic ambience of our new home, Judson Manor. At our September meeting we will welcome Dr. Joan Cashin, winner of the 2007 Fletcher Pratt Award for Civil War nonfiction. Dr. Cashin, associate professor of history at Ohio State University, is a true American historian and author and editor of numerous books on American life and culture during the antebellum, Civil War, and Reconstruction eras. She will speak on her 2006 book about Varina Davis. We invite you to come to learn about this strong, independent, educated woman who struggled with the societal confinements of her historical time period. Copies of Dr. Cashin's book can be ordered online from Amazon.com via links on our CCWRT website; also, Dr. Cashin will bring signed copies to her presentation.

In addition to our usual monthly raffles, we will hold a special ongoing raffle this year in honor of Abraham Lincoln's 200th birthday. The prize to be raffled will be a life mask of the Great Emancipator.

From September 25-28, more than twenty-five CCWRT members will journey to the hallowed fields of Gettysburg to study that most famous of battles under the instruction of licensed battlefield guides. Additionally, their trip will coincide with the grand opening of the new Gettysburg Visitor Center and the newly restored exhibit.

Treasurer Lisa Kempfer is eagerly awaiting your 2008-2009 dues payments, which can be mailed to P.O. Box 43280 Cleveland, Ohio 44143. Whether you are a longstanding member of CCWRT or one of the hundreds who visit our award-winning website regularly, please consider joining us for an exciting, interesting, and informative year.

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**

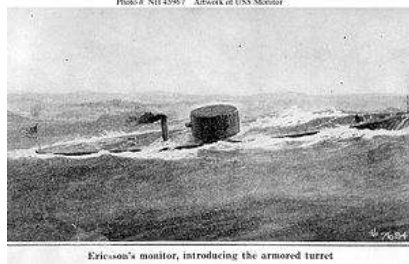
November 12, 2008

**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*

**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**

# Where is Lincoln Memorial University? Name one of A. Lincoln's biggest tactical errors of the Civil War.

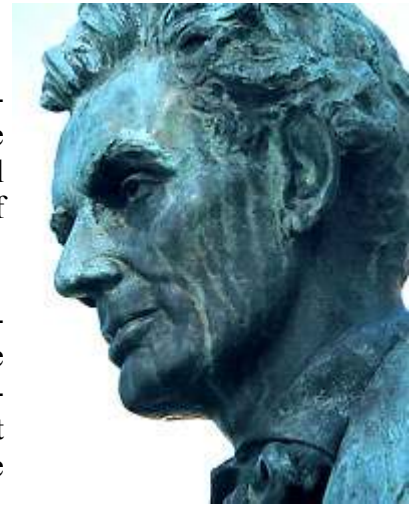
*...Good Grief, what is the connection?*

By Dick Crews

Lincoln Memorial University must be in Illinois or Washington, D.C., or Kentucky, right. No, no, and no, Lincoln Memorial University is in one of the strongest of Confederate states, Tennessee.

Ah, but located where in confederate state of Tennessee? Lincoln Memorial is in East Tennessee of course, and more specifically in the Cumberland Gap. The new \$300 million dollar highway US 25E tunnel from Tennessee to Kentucky goes within a whisker of the campus of Lincoln Memorial University.

How did a college named after the leader of the enemy, Abraham Lincoln, get started in Tennessee? Several people were involved but the most recognizable to us Civil War buffs is Union General O. O. Howard. Howard remembered his commitment to fulfill Lincoln's request in 1863 that after the war he build a great university in the gap for the people of the area.



The University received its charter from the State of Tennessee naturally on February 12, 1897. The college today prospers with about 3200 students, but Lincoln would be surprised to see his University of Illinois with over 40,000 students.

One of Lincoln's biggest tactical errors in the Civil War was that he committed thousands of men and material to take and, more important, hold the Cumberland Gap. He thought you could not win the war without controlling the Gap. At the beginning of the War, he sent telegram after telegram telling Ken-

tucky commanding general William T. Sherman to take and occupy the Gap. Sherman asked field General George Thomas to do it. Thomas said he had green troops and no supplies to do the job. After 4 months of inactivity, the Confederates made the first move. They marched 3,000 men into the gap and dug in. Lincoln was furious. He made Sherman's life so miserable that Sherman gave up his Kentucky command and went home to Ohio very depressed.

Lincoln thought he had a big break three months later when the 3,000 Confederate troops, for no apparent reason, pulled out of the Gap and returned to Knoxville. It was now a year into the war and, without Sherman blocking Lincoln's fury, Thomas had to act. He took 5,000 men into the gap and dug in. At first, Thomas was surprised that the Confederates did not attack. However, after three weeks he understood why the Confederates had left. The enemy became food and supplies. The mountain roads were but twisting ruts, not roads that could support thousands of troops. After a heavy rain, supplies might not arrive for two weeks. Thomas finally got the War Department to let his troops cover the flank of Buell's invasion of Tennessee and marched his troops off to Nashville.

In the spring of 1863, Ambrose Burnside came through the Gap with his Ninth Corps (which included Cleveland units). He did not stop but proceeded to Knoxville. Yes, this same Ninth Corps that had such a hard time taking the bridge at Antietam Creek in 1862. This would prove to be the only large troop movement through the Cumberland Gap during the Civil War.

During the balance of the War, both Confederates and Union troops occupied the Cumberland Gap for short periods. At the end of the war in 1865, a few hundred colored Union troops occupied the clearly militarily worthless Gap. By then, Lincoln and the War department had learned that new technologies, such as railroads and steam-powered ships, had made the Cumberland Gap useless.

**Dick Crews is a 17 year member of the Cleveland Roundtable. He was President in 1999.**

#### Quick Facts about LMU

**History** - Founded February 12, 1897, as a living memorial to Abraham Lincoln.

**Location** - Harrogate, Tennessee, where Tennessee, Kentucky, and Virginia merge at the Cumberland Gap, approximately 55 miles north of Knoxville, Tennessee.

**Campus** - Beautiful, historic, 1,000-acre wooded campus with 35 academic, administrative, and residential buildings.

**Enrollment (Fall 2007, on and off campus)** - 3,255 (1,482 undergraduates; 1,773 graduate students)

**Average Class Size** - 13

**Costs (2007-2008)** - Tuition: \$14,400 per year

Room/Board: \$5,380/year (based on Liles and West, Meal Plan #1)

Total cost for a full-time, residential, undergraduate student: \$19,780.

**Go, Railsplitters!**

## Gettysburg Field Trip Itinerary

### Thursday, September 25

3:30 arrive and check in at Days Inn Gettysburg

4:30 CCWRT wreath laying ceremony at 8th Ohio Monument on Steinwehr Avenue

5:00 dinner at General Pickett's Buffet, fifty yards from the 8th Ohio monument

6:00 to 7:30 **guided time at the National Cemetery, Cemetery Hill, and East Cemetery Hill**

### Friday, September 26

7:00 breakfast

8:00 to 10:00 **guided time on July 1st battlefields (McPherson's Ridge, Oak Hill, to Barlow's Knoll**

10:15 to 12:15 **guided time on Culp's Hill, studying both July 2nd and July 3rd fighting, as well as informative views of the area from the top of the Culp's Hill observation tower**

12:30 to 1:30 lunch

1:45 to 5:15 **guided time on Longstreet's line and observation tower on Warfield Ridge, Little Round Top, and lower Cemetery Ridge up to the Pennsylvania Monument, emphasizing July 2nd fighting**

6:30 to 7:30 dinner at the classic Lincoln Diner, right across the street from the train depot where Lincoln arrived

8:00 to 9:30 Mark Nesbitt Ghost Tour (Nesbitt has now written the sixth volume of his *Ghosts of Gettysburg* series.

### Saturday, September 27

7:00 breakfast

8:00 to 11:30 **guided time at Devil's Den, Wheatfield, Stony Hill, Peach Orchard, Trostle Farm, and Humphrey's Emmitsburg Road battle line, studying July 2nd fighting**

11:45 to 12:45 lunch

1:00 to 4:00 **guided time at Pickett/Pettigrew Charge, including walking across the fields from the Virginia Monument to the Angle, the Angle, and upper Cemetery Ridge area involved in July 3rd fighting**

4:30 to 5:30 **guided time at Benner's Hill and East Cavalry Fields**

6:00 to 7:00 dinner

7:00 to 8:00 shopping time on Steinwehr Avenue

9:00 to ? CCWRT self-directed Gettysburg seminar at hotel

### Sunday, September 28

7:00 breakfast

8:00 to 11:00 - Gettysburg Visitor Center, including the new 22 minute movie *A New Birth of Freedom*, viewing the newly restored *Cyclorama* painting (the movie and painting cost \$12 to view, but I have 50% coupons for everyone), touring the numerous artifact exhibits, and quality time in the bookstore.

11:00 to 12:00 lunch at the Visitor Center

12:00 noon depart for home

Contact Jon Thompson at 440-871-6439. His address is 1259 Dellwood Drive, Westlake, Ohio 44145.

## **A Season of Change**

With the September meeting and fall approaching, it will be a season of change, too, for the Roundtable. First, we will no longer be meeting at the Playhouse Club. The Club wanted to raise the meal rates again and the Executive Committee decided it was too much. So, we will be meeting not too far away at Judson Manor. For those of you who have been in Cleveland longer than I have, it used to be known as Wade Park Manor. Judson Manor is located at 1890 E. 107th Street at University Circle. It is right near the corner of Chester Avenue and E. 107. The last page of the Charger has a map and directions. For those of you who are familiar with University Circle, Judson Manor is a little west of the lagoon at the Art Museum. Parking is next to the building or directly across from the entrance canopy (which is on E. 107th St.) in the church parking lot.

Change number 2 deals with reservations. We will no longer be using JAC to make reservations. This will save us a couple hundred dollars per year. Reservations can be made by email at ccwrt@yahoo.com or by calling me, your editor, Dan Zeiser. Email is preferred, if you have it. If not, please call 440-449-9311. This is my business line and there is an answering machine if I am not in. It will say you have reached the law office of Dan Zeiser. Do not fret. Just leave a message that you will be attending, if you have a guest, and the guest's (or guests') name (or names). Judson Manor will be providing us with a buffet, so there is no need to make a meal choice. You can choose what to eat at the meeting. We do need to know the name of your guest or guests so we can make name tags.

Change No. 3. This is not so much of a change as it is a matter of sticking to a policy that has not been consistently enforced. The Roundtable will be billed for each meal that we reserve. If you make a reservation and do not show for any reason, the Roundtable will be billed for the meal. So we need to know that you can make it and that you cannot make it. Please email or call with your reservation by 6 pm on the Tuesday evening before the meeting. If you have to cancel, you also need to let me know by 6 pm on Tuesday so I can give an accurate count to Judson Manor. If you make a reservation and do not cancel by the appropriate time, you will have to pay for the meal. Sorry, but there is no way around it. We talked about doing this at the Playhouse, but were not consistent. We will have to be consistent from now on.

Last, JAC will no longer be doing the Charger. JAC has been great to us and we will miss John and Anne, but this will save us a lot of money. We have about twenty hard copies we are sending out, so I will do that on my own. It will not look as good in hard copy as it does electronically. There will be no blue banner at the top of the first page. And it may not look quite as professional. As folks who do not have email get it, please let us know. Sending the Charger electronically is much easier, cheaper, and we can do things that we could not do before, such as publishing longer articles. The Roundtable, through the Charger and at meetings, will continue to remind you of these changes.

### **Remember**

**Do Not Call JAC, call 440-449-9311 for reservations and cancellations.**

**We are no longer meeting at the Playhouse Club. The new location is Judson Manor, 1890 E. 107th Street.**

**New location: Judson Manor, 1890 E. 107th Street  
Corner of E. 107th and Chester Avenue**

**New phone # for reservation: 440-449-9311**

**Please call by 6 pm Tuesday before the meeting**

**Call if you have to cancel to avoid being charged for a meal.**

**Suggested Driving Directions to Judson.**

**FROM I-90 WESTBOUND:** Take exit 177 to Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. Turn left and proceed south for two miles to University Circle.

**FROM I-90 EASTBOUND:** Take exit 177 to Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. Turn right and proceed south for two miles to University Circle.

**FROM DOWNTOWN CLEVELAND:** Follow Chester Avenue east for four miles to University Circle.

**FROM I-77 NORTHBOUND or I-71 NORTHBOUND:** Take I-90 eastbound to exit 177 to Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. Turn right and proceed south for two miles to University Circle.

**FROM CLEVELAND-HOPKINS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT:** Take I-71 to I-90 eastbound to exit 177 to Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. Turn right and proceed south for two miles to University Circle.

**FROM I-271:** Take exit 34 to US 322/Mayfield Road West. Proceed west for 8.5 miles and turn left onto Euclid Avenue to University Circle.



Judson Manor from the Art Museum lagoon