

The recession of 1861-1862 hit Cincinnati hard as the river trade collapsed and Cincinnati businessmen felt the loss of Southern markets. Irish-Americans in the city developed strong anti-emancipation feelings and feared that the freed Negroes would release a flood of "cheap labor" on the North and the ex-slaves would steal jobs from them.

Sound and Fury: Civil War Dissent in the Cincinnati Area

by Frank L. Klement

The word “dissent” bears a negative connotation. The Oxford dictionary defines it as “difference of opinion or sentiment.”¹ Simply, a dissenter is one who disagrees with majority views and with the turn of events. Dissenters of Civil War days did not agree with majority opinion or prevailing views, and they opposed the course of events of the 1861-1865 era.

The Civil War was a complex, four-year event with widespread effects and discernible facets. Historians, looking back at the Civil War a hundred years later, discern at least four separate if related aspects: (1) The use of armed might or coercion as a means to save the Union; (2) The centralization of power in Washington as the federal union evolved into a strong national government; (3) A social revolution, featuring the emancipation of slaves and the extension of rights to the black man; (4) The forces of industrialism gaining control of the government, bringing an end to the alliance of the agricultural South and the West.

Dissenters of Civil War days, then, were citizens who opposed one or all four aspects of the war—they may have favored compromise rather than force to restore the Union; they may have feared that the central government was evolving into a despotism; they may have been racists opposing emancipation; or they may have been Western sectionalists opposing domination of the government by the lords of the looms and the masters of capital.

Most of the dissenters of Civil War days belonged to the Democratic party, following the principle that it was the duty of the “outs” to criticize the “ins.” Party leaders sought votes wherever they could be found, whether in the field of war weariness or defeatism, sectional prejudice, distrust of New England, or fear of emancipation and a central despotism.

The Democratic party of the upper Midwest had three main elements of the population within its ranks: (1) Irish-Americans, for they were generally Catholics and working men who knew that the Republican party was tainted with abolitionism, temperance, and Know-Nothingism; (2) German-American Catholics, who had the same reason to be Democrats as the Irish-Americans; and (3) upland Southerners who had crossed the Ohio River to preempt the poorer soils and hilly areas in scattered Ohio counties as well as the southern portions of Indiana and Illinois. These transplanted Southerners brought their

Democratic proclivities, their mistrust of Yankees, their antiblack prejudices, and their stills with them when they settled in the backcountry to become known as "Butternuts."²

Anti-emancipation arguments had an especially strong appeal to the Irish-Americans. They feared that emancipation would release a flood of "cheap labor" which would inundate the North and compete for the crumbs on their tables. Democratic politicians soon learned how to appeal to this latent fear.

Irish-Americans in Cincinnati had several opportunities to learn that the fear had a realistic base, as "contrabands," a term applied to ex-slaves freed by the southward advance of Union troops, displaced Irish workers in hotels, on river boats, and on the docks. In 1862, the proprietor of the Burnet House, characterized as "the finest hotel in the West," dismissed fifty Irish work-hands (mostly chambermaids) and replaced them with contrabands. The editor of the *Cincinnati Enquirer* aggravated Irish apprehensions by repeating a Philadelphia story about how the use of "colored workers" had depressed wages in Pennsylvania. Fanning the flames of racial hatred, the *Enquirer* added an editorial note:

*Like causes will produce like results here. How do our white laborers relish the prospect that the emancipation of the blacks spreads before them? What do they think of the inundation of the two or three thousand free [Negroes] into Ohio, which inundation will come if we carry out the emancipation policy of President Lincoln. How many whites will be thrown out of employment? How much will it reduce the price of labor?*³

The replacement of Irish-American dock workers and boat men by "contrabands" in June and July, 1862, brought tempers to the boiling point.⁴ On July 15, Irish workers drove newly-hired blacks off boats and docks. The rioting spread and the Irish-Americans invaded "Shantytown" or "Bucktown," terms applied to the section of the city inhabited by black residents. The riotous Irish put some homes to the torch and beat up every black man who did not flee.⁵ Blacks retaliated by burning some buildings in "Dublin," the Irish section of the city. The mayor issued a proclamation in behalf of law and order while the police chief called out a posse approximating one hundred in order to suppress the violence. Anyway, when emancipation became the official policy of the Lincoln administration, the Irish-Americans became even more disenchanted with the war and, invariably, voted the straight Democratic ticket.

German-Catholics of the Cincinnati area also formed an important voting bloc within the Democratic party. "The jealousy of the low Germans and Irish against the free negro," a touring foreign observer noted as he took a trip through the upper Midwest, "was sufficient to set them against the war which would have brought four million of their black rivals in competition for that hard and dirty work which American freedom bestowed on them."⁶

Efforts of the *Cincinnati Enquirer* to keep the German-Catholic vote in the Democratic column met the open opposition of the Catholic hierarchy in the city. Archbishop John B. Purcell encouraged his Catholic subjects to support the war, vote for Union party candidates, and reject the "false prophets" who preached "insubordination." The *Catholic Telegraph*, edited by Archbishop Purcell's brother during the war, waged a constant war of words against slavery, viewed as "a monstrous crime" by the Purcell brothers. Speaking of slavery, editor Purcell wrote, "It corrupts heart and soul, and we have no respect for the Christianity of any person who, now that the evil is dying out, would wish to see it restored."⁷ Purcell's coadjuter, Bishop Sylvester H. Rosecrans, a brother of the famous general, seconded his superior's patriotic sentiments. The two sets of famous brothers, then, did much to counter the antiwar tendencies of the German-Catholics as well as the Irish-Catholics, and to lessen the hold of Democratic leaders upon these important elements of the city's population.

Although a few of the upland Southerners who came northward settled in Cincinnati, most of them took to the countryside north of "the Queen City." Butler County, which bordered Hamilton County on the north, was filled with "Butternuts" who voted the Democratic ticket, regarded Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson as their prophets, and had a built-in antiblack prejudice.⁸ These so-called "Butternuts" carried hickory branches at party rallies, revered the "barefeet Democracy" of an earlier generation, and applauded speakers who denounced abolitionists.

Few Northerners, whether Democrats or Republicans, spoke out openly against the Civil War during the spring and summer months of 1861. The Fort Sumter affair—the firing on the U.S. flag—released a wave of patriotic fervor. War meetings whipped up emotions, flags flew on every hand, and President Lincoln's call for troops met a glorious response. The *Cincinnati Enquirer*, voice of area Democrats, gave a qualified endorsement of the war.⁹ Only the bold heart dared call for compromise or put the blame for the war upon President Lincoln and the Republican party. "I am not deceived in my faith in the North," an observer in Washington, D.C., wrote: "the excitement, the wrath is terrible. Party lines burn, dissolved by the excitement. Now the people is fusion, as bronze."¹⁰ Patriotism seemed to have triumphed over partyism as a member of Lincoln's cabinet wrote, "The Democrats generally as well as the Republicans are offering themselves to the country."¹¹

The patriotic surge, so strong during the early months of the war, ebbed as time tempered the emotions and reality made its presence felt. The economic recession of 1861-62 hit Cincinnati hard as the river trade collapsed, bank panics wiped out some paper money, commercial houses closed their doors, and farm surpluses glutted the market. The loss of the Southern market affected Cincinnati more adversely than any other Midwestern city, for packers, distillers, and other manufacturers had sold a portion of their products down

the river. A British traveler, a keen observer, visited Cincinnati during the first year of the war and wrote:

*... the trade of Cincinnati was paralyzed for a time. Many of the stores and shops were closed; in most of those open there being notices that, for the present, business could only be done for cash. The prices of the theatres and entertainments were advertised as "reduced to suit the times." There was little shipping about the wharves, and what goods were being shipped were mostly military stores. Work was scarce, and there was much poverty, I was told, among the working classes*¹²

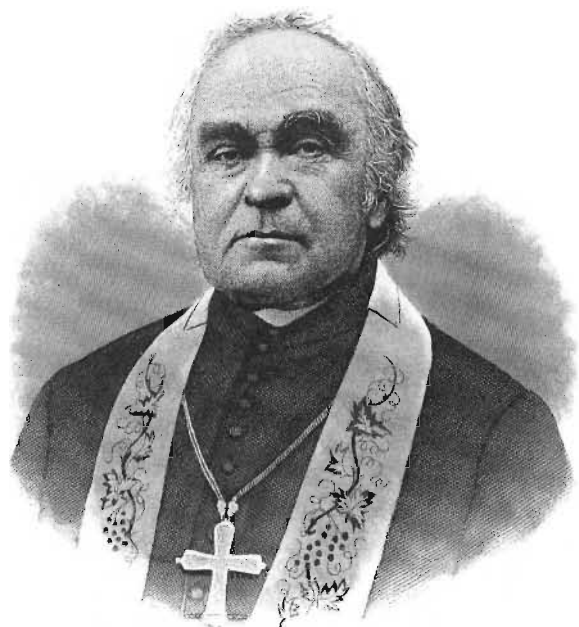
The economic situation caused some to transpose their economic grievances into political ones, and they became dissenters, disenchanted with Lincoln. "Matters look blue enough here," a Cincinnati resident wrote in late 1861; "business men have long faces and short money receipts. One Jim Brown & Co. say they have lost \$40,000 since the election by depreciation in stock. There are three of them and they each voted for Lincoln, 'God & Liberty,' and say now they 'wish Lincoln and all political parties were in hell.'" ¹³

President Lincoln's surrender to pressure from the abolitionists also contributed to the widespread dissatisfaction with the war. Democrats who supported the president when he revoked General John C. Frémont's proclamation of August 30, 1861,¹⁴ and annulled General David Hunter's directive freeing the slaves within his department, turned against him when he gave support to emancipation policy—they considered the Emancipation Proclamation of January 1, 1863, to be the last straw. The *Cincinnati Enquirer*, which had given Lincoln and the war qualified support until he issued his two proclamations of emancipation, turned upon the president like a mad dog.¹⁵ Democrats argued that emancipation was unconstitutional, impractical, and unnecessary; they argued that it violated Lincoln's inaugural pledge as well as the Congressional resolutions defining the objectives of the war. They added that emancipation would discourage enlistments, unite the South to a man, dampen support of the war in the North, and make compromise and reunion nigh impossible.¹⁶

One Ohio editor, who had many friends in Cincinnati, referred to abolitionists as "damned disunionists" and urged that they be hung "till the flesh rot off their bones and the winds of Heaven whistle Yankee Doodle through their loathsome skelitonz [*sic*]." He added, "It is a pity that there is not a more tormenting hell than that kept by Beelzebub for such abolition fiends."¹⁷

Fears that the Washington government was evolving into a central despotism also prompted some Democrats to be critics of Lincoln and the war. They knew that European civil wars had always ended in dictatorships, for Oliver Cromwell had emerged as dictator as a result of the Great Civil War (i.e., the Puritan revolution) and Napoleon Bonaparte ruled with a heavy hand after the French Revolution. "We are embarking on a course," the editor of the *Cincinnati*

Archbishop Purcell encouraged all Catholics to support the war and to vote for Union party candidates. His brother, the editor of the Catholic Telegraph, wrote that slavery corrupts the heart and soul.



Archbishop John B. Purcell



Bishop Sylvester H. Rosecrans

Bishop Sylvester H. Rosecrans endorsed Purcell's sentiments and worked with him to counter the anti-war tendencies of the German-Catholics and the Irish-Catholics.

Enquirer had told his readers, "that will certainly produce some Cromwell or Napoleon who will crush beneath his iron heel the democratic legacy we have so long enjoyed."¹⁸ Democrats, therefore, contended it was necessary to obey the Constitution more strictly in time of war than in time of peace. They reacted strongly to President Lincoln's arbitrary acts of 1861 and to the many, many summary arrests made in 1862.

The long arm of Washington reached into Ohio in 1862, and federal authorities carted off eleven Democrats, several well-known dissenters, as a means to silence some critics. These arrests affected the credibility of the Lincoln administration and gave some a chance to say that Lincoln was a military despot.¹⁹

Instead of suppressing dissent, as the federal authorities evidently hoped, the wave of arbitrary arrests aggravated it. The state's best-known Democratic editor asked for the impeachment of the President, for he blamed him for the arrests which had been made.²⁰ An Ohio congressman, with tongue in cheek, introduced a resolution to arrest and imprison the President, giving him a taste of his own medicine if he allowed any more arrests to be made within the "loyal" states.²¹ Congressional Republicans defeated a Democratic measure requiring the President and the State Department to provide the record of arrests made. The more radical, then, tried another tactic, drafting an "Address of the Democratic Members of Congress to the Democracy of the United States," strongly criticizing arbitrary arrests made, as well as the centralization of the government and the use of the doctrine of necessity. Each of the Democratic members of Congress of the Cincinnati area signed the controversial document.²² The Democratic State Convention, meeting in Columbus on July 4, 1862, also strongly condemned arbitrary arrests made, denouncing "the illegal and unconstitutional seizure of citizens."²³

Ohio Democrats viewed the election returns of October and November, 1862, as a repudiation of Lincolnian policy, especially arbitrary arrests and emancipation. The returns encouraged Democratic critics to be bolder and more vicious in condemning the president. One such critic, the editor of the *Hamilton True Telegraph* expressed his views bluntly and defiantly:

*For once in two years one can walk the streets without insult. The war of proscription is over. Political and social tyranny are about dead. Intolerant knaves are silent; it is well they are. . . . King Bomba don't reign here now, and never will again. The people have closed the flood gates of tyranny, and mean to keep them closed.*²⁴

Although arbitrary arrests, emancipation measures, and the economic recession of 1861-1862 all fed the fires of Democratic discontent, political partisanship furnished additional fuel and provided most of the smoke and sparks. Zealous Democrats, convinced that history and truth were on their side, tended to view Republicans as disunionists, more devoted to the Republican party than

to the country and the Constitution. Some Democrats, rank opportunists, sought votes wherever they could be found, and thought it their duty to win elections, maintain their party, and criticize the Lincoln administration. They appealed to racial bigotry, sought votes in the field of war weariness, and misrepresented the views of their opponents. They said that abolitionists favored "miscegenation" or "the amalgamation of the black and white races" and labeled their opponents "Black Republicans." They spoke of empty pocketbooks, "oppressive taxation," "general ruin," corruption in Washington, and the "military incompetency" of the Lincoln administration. Their favorite claim, however, was that the Union could be restored by compromise and that coercion was a false and foolish and bloody policy.²⁵ They devised the slogan, "The Constitution as it is, the Union as it was," as a political battle cry, and they gloried in the political victories which they scored in the fall elections of 1862 and the spring elections of 1863. In the fall elections the Democrats won fourteen of the state's nineteen congressional seats.²⁶ Hamilton County's two congressional districts went to Democrats, George H. Pendleton gaining re-election and Alexander Long ousting a radical Republican. In the April, 1863 election Cincinnati Democrats named Len A. Harris as the City's mayor. Success tended to make the Democrats more partisan, and they began to form their battle lines for the October 13, 1863 gubernatorial contest.

Military failures, of course, also played into the hands of the Democratic party and nurtured the spirit of defeatism. Some became convinced that the South could not be conquered and the long, long casualty lists spread a cloud of gloom over the land, even before the war had reached the halfway mark. An influential Democratic editor, whose Columbus-based newspaper had a long list of subscribers in Cincinnati, put his pessimism into words as the year 1862 came to an end: "It has been a year of blood and plunder—a year of carnage and conflagration—a year of imbecility, falsehood and corruption—a year of bastiles, persecution and tears—a year of despotism, pride and vain glory—a year of sorrow, desolation and death. . . . It closes in despondency and despair."²⁷

Democratic dissent reached high tide during the first six months of 1863, in the days between Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of January 1 and the Union victories at Gettysburg and Vicksburg early in July. This was the time when the peace movement bloomed full flower, when the battle of Chancellorsville and Grant's seven failures before Vicksburg dimmed hopes of an eventual victory, and when the popular reaction to emancipation and the summary treatment accorded to Clement L. Vallandigham spread gloom in Republican circles and in Washington.

Republicans countered the Democratic revival of early 1863 with three different political stratagems. The first, in the making since the start of the war, was to taint the dissenters with treason and to fasten the Copperhead label upon the Democratic party—the copperhead was a poisonous snake that struck with-

out warning and patriotic Republicans equated Democrats with the snake. The second was to raise the Golden Circle bogeyman—claiming that Knights of the Golden Circle existed as a pro-rebel and subversive secret society with many Democrats involved in the order's treasonable plots.²⁸ The third was to organize the Union League as the strong right arm of the Republican party. League headquarters became circulation centers for Republican political propaganda and the organization drew in marginal voters and affected the election returns. These stratagems helped turn the tide, assisted of course by Union victories at Gettysburg and Vicksburg.

Six prominent Democrats of the Cincinnati area became widely known as dissenters or Copperheads. Two of the six owned and operated the *Cincinnati Enquirer*, influential distributor of Democratic opinion. Washington McLean, informal boss of the Democratic party of Hamilton County, was "the power behind the editorial policy."²⁹ McLean owned several boiler-plate factories and had a vested interest in the river trade.³⁰ Before the war he actively endorsed compromise rather than coercion and throughout the four-year conflict he favored conciliation-and-reunion. He gave the Lincoln administration qualified support until the president bowed to abolition pressure and made emancipation official governmental policy. Then, Washington McLean became a caustic critic of the war and gained a reputation as a dissenter.³¹

While Washington McLean worked backstage in politics,³² his partner in the *Enquirer* enterprise, James J. Faran, usually held a place in the spotlight. Faran had emerged as one of Cincinnati's better known Democrats before the war, having served three terms in each house of the state legislature, two years in Congress, and a term as mayor.³³ As editor-in-chief of the *Enquirer*, he helped to shape the political opinions of his readers. After Lincoln moved toward emancipation as official policy in September of 1862, the *Enquirer* became more and more critical of the president and preached anti-black and antiwar views.

George E. Pugh, like Faran, was a well-known and highly respected Democrat even before the war. He had gained some publicity and a modicum of fame as a captain serving with U.S. troops during the Mexican War. Then he climbed up the political ladder: member of the lower house of the state legislature, 1848-1850; city solicitor in 1850; and attorney general of the state of Ohio, 1852-1854. Early in 1855 a Democratic-controlled state legislature elected Pugh to replace Salmon P. Chase in the Senate of the United States. While serving as a delegate at the Democratic national convention in Charleston in 1860, Pugh had stood up to the spokesman of the Southern ultras, William L. Yancey. The Alabama fire-eater had delivered an ultimatum to Northern Democrats, demanding that they support the Southern position on slavery. "Gentlemen of the South," Pugh had said curtly, "you mistake us—you mistake us—we will not do it."³⁴ Defeated for re-election to the U.S. Senate, with Chase put in his stead, Pugh returned to Cincinnati and to his considerable law practice.



Representing Cincinnati's First District in Congress George H. Pendleton spoke out boldly against the Civil War. He followed the Copperhead line: denouncing arbitrary arrests, opposing emancipation, and seeking reunion through compromise.

George E. Pugh opposed many of the measures of the Lincoln administration and in 1863 the Ohio Democrats chose him as a running mate with the exiled Clement L. Vallandigham, their gubernatorial candidate.



George E. Pugh



MARVELOUS EQUESTRIAN PERFORMANCE ON TWO ANIMALS,

By the celebrated Artist, PROFESSOR GEORGE B. MAC, assisted by the noted Bare-back Rider, GEORGE H. PENDLETON, on his Wonderful Disunion Steed, PEACEATANYPRICE.

N.B. The beautiful creature, PEACEATANYPRICE, recently imported from Europe, was sired by JOHN BULL, and dam'd by AMERICA.

After the start of the war he opposed many of the measures of the Lincoln administration, always a very popular speaker at Democratic rallies. He established a state-wide reputation as dissenter and Copperhead, usually occupying a spot in the limelight. He served as Clement L. Vallandigham's lawyer when the Dayton Copperhead was being tried by a military commission in Cincinnati. Then, in June of 1863, when Ohio Democrats named Vallandigham as their gubernatorial candidate, they drafted Pugh to serve as his running mate. With Vallandigham in exile, Pugh carried the burden of the campaign upon his shoulders, and he criss-crossed the State depicting the contest as one of civil rights versus despotism. Defeat nearly broke his spirit and caused him to take a respite from politics.

George H. Pendleton, another Cincinnati resident, also stood in the front rank of Civil War dissenters. He represented the First District in Congress throughout the war, speaking out boldly yet earning the nickname "Gentleman George."³⁵ He followed the Copperhead line: denouncing arbitrary arrests, opposing emancipation, and seeking reunion through compromise. In 1864, when the Democratic party delegates at Chicago named General George B. McClellan as their presidential candidate, they selected George H. Pendleton as his running mate.

While Pendleton always presented his antiwar views with tact and discretion, Alexander Long gained notoriety for his bluntness and rashness. Elected to Congress during the Democratic revival of 1862, Long became the self-appointed spokesman for the peace-at-any-price faction. On February 29, 1864—before General U. S. Grant crossed the Rapidan to begin his bloody assaults against General Robert E. Lee's lines above Richmond—Long introduced a resolution calling upon the President to appoint commissioners to meet with Southern representatives as a step to compromising the issues and reuniting the country.³⁶ Republicans voted as a solid block and defeated Long's resolution.³⁷

After some soul-searching and, five weeks later, Long shocked the countryside with a speech which made headlines. Evidently believing that the sword should be sheathed and the olive branch substituted, Long bluntly stated that the country was evolving into a despotism and that civil rights would be saved only if hostilities ceased. "If there ever was a time when the Union could have been restored by war (which I do not believe), it has long since been dispelled by emancipation, confiscation, amnesty, and like proclamations. . . . It is the object of the sword to cut and cleave asunder, but never to unite . . . the Union is lost, never to be restored . . . and I now believe that there are but two alternatives, and they are either an acknowledgment of the independence of the South as an independent nation, or their complete subjugation and extermination as a people; and of these alternatives I prefer the former."³⁸

Republican congressmen promptly accused Long of uttering treasonable sentiments. The next day the Speaker of the House, Schuyler Colfax of Indiana,

left his elevated chair to go down on the floor and introduce a resolution to expel the congressman from Cincinnati.³⁹ During the next five days the House transacted no business, debating the expulsion resolution heatedly, with treason charges hurled frequently at Long and Democrats who defended his right to speak his mind on the floor of Congress. When Speaker Colfax realized that his motion to expel Long would not get the necessary two-thirds vote, he withdrew it and substituted one of censure, i.e., that the Cincinnati was "an unworthy member of the House of Representatives."⁴⁰ The censure resolution passed by an 80 to 69 vote.⁴¹

Long's role as a peace-at-any-price man embarrassed conservative Democrats who supported the war but wanted it conducted along constitutional lines. He attended the Democratic national convention of 1864 as a delegate from the Second District, but refused to accept the platform it adopted or the presidential candidate it selected. The peace plank, which proclaimed reunion as the condition of peace was not radical enough for Long and a handful of other peace-at-any-price men. Nor was General George B. McClellan, who ran as a War Democrat, satisfactory to the carping Copperhead from Cincinnati.⁴²

A splinter group, headed by Long and William M. Corry of Cincinnati, met in a rump session in the Queen City and drafted resolutions which repudiated the candidacy of McClellan, defended slavery as an institution, and declared the war to be "wholly unconstitutional." These bolters declared themselves the true-blue Democrats and wanted to name a presidential candidate of their own, namely Alexander Long. He declined the honor. In the end the bolters made no nominations and the affair ended in thick smoke. Most of the bolters, including Long, sat out the election and refused to vote for either McClellan or Lincoln.⁴³

McClellan lost his bid for the presidency and Long lost his bid for a second term in Congress. Events proved Long a false prophet—the Northern armies conquered the South and the government did not become a despotism.

Since Dayton revolved in Cincinnati's orbit, Clement L. Vallandigham belonged to the dissenters of the Cincinnati area. A three-term congressman, Vallandigham gradually became the Number one Copperhead and dissenter in the upper Midwest. He believed that the war could have been avoided and the issues compromised. He spoke out boldly against Lincoln's emancipation measures, expressing racist views. His pro-peace speech of January 14, 1863, made on the floor of congress,⁴⁴ put him in the front rank of the antiwar men. In the days which followed he spoke in New York City, again sounding a clarion call for peace. He became the leader and the symbol of the peace movement which gathered so much momentum during the first six months of 1863. Vallandigham's loyalty to his section increased his fear that Northeastern industrial and financial interests would dominate the West. He pictured himself as the champion of civil rights against Washington despotism and the military edicts of power-hungry generals ("Lincoln's satraps").

After General Ambrose E. Burnside, commander of the Department of the Ohio (headquartered in Cincinnati), issued a military edict forbidding criticism of the government by editors or orators, Vallandigham rose to the challenge. He denounced Burnside's military proclamation so scornfully and defiantly, that the rash and righteous general had no choice but to arrest his critic.⁴⁵

General Burnside, aware that no jury would find Vallandigham guilty of treason—as the general defined it—ordered his prisoner tried by a military commission, convened in Cincinnati on May 6, 1863. Although Vallandigham denied that he, as a civilian, could be tried by a military commission in an area where the civil courts were open, Burnside's judge advocate ordered the trial to proceed. The military commission found Vallandigham guilty of the listed charges, and, after some discussion of alternate sentences, decreed that he be “placed in close confinement in some fortress of the United States, to be designated by the commanding officer of the Department, there to be kept during the continuance of the war.”⁴⁶

President Lincoln, fearing that imprisonment might make Vallandigham a martyr, changed the sentence to banishment “beyond the [Confederate] lines,” implying that the exile would then be among friends.⁴⁷

While Vallandigham was an exile in Dixie, a wave of reaction to the summary treatment accorded a civilian swept the country. Despite the wishes of the party's hierarchy, the Democratic state convention which met on June 11, 1863 nominated the exile as the party's gubernatorial candidate.⁴⁸ Subsequently, Vallandigham ran the blockade and made his way to Canada, where he campaigned via “addresses” and letters for the governorship against “Honest Johnny” Brough. Vallandigham, in exile in Windsor, lost the election of October 13, 1863.

After the halo of the self-styled martyr lost some of its glow, Vallandigham quietly, and in disguise, returned to Ohio. He appeared publicly at a party rally being held in Hamilton. “He came unheralded from his exile,” a loyal supporter of Vallandigham wrote at a later date, “and his sudden appearance was like an apparition from the clouds.”⁴⁹ Vallandigham gave a moderate and carefully prepared speech, and the assembled delegates of the Third District Democracy elected him a delegate to the national convention, scheduled to meet in Chicago on August 29.⁵⁰

Federal authorities did not arrest the onetime exile, and he returned to his home in Dayton and his law practice. At the Democratic national convention he gave shape to the peace plank in the party platform. This resolution declared that the Lincoln administration had failed to restore the Union by “the experiment of war” and that “justice, humanity, liberty, and public welfare” necessitated making “immediate efforts . . . for a cessation of hostilities, with a view to an ultimate convention of the States.”⁵¹

The peace plank which Vallandigham framed pleased neither the War Democrats who secured McClellan's nomination nor the peace-at-any-price

men like Alexander Long. Several of the radical Democrats, including Long, spoke against the peace plank, considering it too vague and too compromising.

Anyway, the Democratic ticket, made up of McClellan and George H. Pendleton, lost the election to Lincoln. In the days which followed, the Confederate armies surrendered, an assassin shot the president during the performance of "Our American Cousin" at Ford's Theatre, and the nation turned to the question of reconstruction.

Republicans, controlling congress, not only carried out a haphazard program of reconstruction, but they wrote their views into history as the true views. The word "Copperhead," devised as a smear term, gained a place in history, and the six most prominent Civil War dissenters of the Civil War era in the Cincinnati area, emerged with their reputations tarnished and their wartime views discredited.

Vallandigham always believed that time would vindicate him, and other wartime dissenters, convinced they were right, expressed their faith in the future as a judge. Little did they realize that nationalism, directing the mind and hand of the historian, would help darken the reputations of the dissenters. History generally justifies that which has happened and those who swim against the current seldom win the plaudits of posterity.

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(1) *Oxford Universal Dictionary*, 3rd edition (London, England, 1955), 535.

(2) Since the poorer backwoodsman wore jeans and linseys dyed with "the humble butternut," they became known as "the great unwashed, unterrified Democracy" or "Butternuts." One observer wrote in derision: "I went out and saw the Copperhead [i.e., antiwar Democrats] demonstration today. It was large. There were a number of women in the procession on horseback. Many of their riding skirts were so old, rusty, ragged & dirty, they might have belonged to their grandmothers. It was the unterrified, unwashed Democracy."—Samuel P. Heintzelman, "Journal," entry of October 20, 1864, Samuel P. Heintzelman Papers, Library of Congress.

(3) *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer*, July 15, 1862. The editor-in-chief of the *Enquirer*,

James J. Faran, had Irish blood in his veins.

(4) Employers justified the hiring of contraband labor on two counts: (1) black boatmen received \$30. per month compared to \$40. per month paid to Irish boathands on the lower Ohio River, and (2) many Irish boatmen left the Ohio River boats for the higher wages paid on Mississippi River boats, up to \$75. per month for the St. Louis-to-Memphis run. When a Cincinnati boat reached St. Louis, it sometimes returned with half a crew as the boathands took jobs on St. Louis-based boats.

(5) *Cincinnati Gazette*, July 16, 17, 1862; *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer*, July 16, 17, 1862. Williston H. Lofton, "Northern Labor and the Negro during the Civil War," *Journal of Negro History*, 34 (July, 1949): 251-273 throws light upon the problems "contraband" labor posed.

- (6) *London Times*, December 1, 1863. The traveling correspondent, William H. Russell, put his observations together into a work entitled *My Diary North and South* (2 vols., London, 1863). The subject of emancipation and dissent is linked in my article "Midwestern Opposition to Lincoln's Emancipation Policy," *Journal of Negro History*, 49 (July, 1964): 169-183.
- (7) *Catholic Telegraph*, n.d., quoted in *Bucyrus Weekly Journal*, August 14, September 18, 1863. Archbishop Purcell's support of the war is treated in scholarly fashion in Anthony Deye, "Archbishop John Baptist Purcell and the Civil War" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 1944).
- (8) John L. Stipp, "Economic and Political Aspects of Western Copperheadism" (Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1944) recognizes that the Democratic-populated counties of Ohio were characterized by poorer soils, smaller homesteads, and more widespread illiteracy.
- (9) Editorial opinion of James J. Faran is frequently cited in Charles R. Wilson, "The Cincinnati *Daily Enquirer* and Civil War Politics" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1934).
- (10) Adam Gurowski, *Diary. . . from March 4, 1861, to November 2, 1862* (Boston, 1862), 23.
- (11) Gideon Welles, *Diary of Gideon Welles, Secretary of the Navy under Lincoln and Johnson*, edited by John T. Morse (3 vols.; Boston, 1911), 1: 89-90.
- (12) Edward Dicey, *Six Months in the Federal States* (2 vols.; London, 1863), 2: 53-54. The economic impact of the war upon Cincinnati is treated admirably by Charles R. Wilson in two oft-quoted articles: (a) "Cincinnati, a Southern Outpost in 1861?" *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 24 (March, 1938): 473-482, and (b) "Cincinnati's Reputation during the Civil War," *Journal of Southern History*, 2 (April, 1933): 268-279.
- (13) Matt Martin to Samuel S. Cox, December 3, 1861, Samuel S. Cox Papers, Brown University Library (microfilm, Hayes Memorial Library, Fremont, O.).
- (14) When Lincoln revoked Fremont's proclamation, one Democratic editor wrote: "Lincoln is sound on the nigger question."—*LaCrosse Weekly Democrat*, December 13, 1861.
- (15) Cincinnati *Daily Enquirer*, September 23, 1862, January 2, 3, 1863.
- (16) *Congressional Globe*, 37th Congress, 2 session, 51-59, 76-77, 9, 130, 112.
- (17) John W. Kees to Samuel S. Cox, April 12, 1862, Cox Papers; Circleville *Watchman*, n.d., quoted in Indianapolis *State Sentinel*, April 28, 1862.
- (18) Cincinnati *Daily Enquirer*, January 22, 1861.
- (19) The list included such notable critics of the government as John W. Kees of the Circleville *Watchman*, Archibald McGregor of the Stark County *Democrat* (Canton), and Dr. Edson B. Olds of the Ohio *Eagle* (Lancaster). Olds turned to a friendly judge to get a measure of revenge against Governor David Tod, who had recommended Olds' arrest. A Fairfield County judge (court of common pleas) issued a warrant for the arrest of Tod in March, 1863, on a charge of being involved in the "kidnapping" of a citizen of Ohio. In turn, Judge William Y. Gholson of the State Supreme Court quickly ordered the release of the governor, who gave bond for his appearance in the county court on June 1. On that day Tod's attorney secured the deferment of the case and Olds responded by instituting a suit for \$100,000 damages. Tod's counsel sought to have the case transferred to a United States court but the judge denied the petition. An act dated March 17, 1864, made such transfer mandatory and authorized the State Supreme Court to compel such transfer. The case, thus, eventually reached a federal court but it never came up for trial. Olds' aggressive action, as retaliation for his arrest, prompted Governor Tod to be most hesitant about recommending arrests during the last two years of the war. The study of arbitrary arrests in Ohio awaits a scholar interested in historical detective work. Elden R. Young, "Arbitrary Arrests during the War" (M.A. thesis, Ohio State University, 1924) is badly outdated and woefully

inadequate.

(20) Samuel Medary, in *The Crisis* (Columbus), December 12, 1861.

(21) Clement L. Vallandigham, in *Cong. Globe*, 37 Cong., 2 sess., 67.

(22) The address was published in most Democratic newspapers, including *The Crisis*, May 14, 1863.

(23) The resolutions adopted at Columbus were published in the Cincinnati *Daily Enquirer*, July 5, 1862, and *The Crisis*, July 9, 1865.

(24) Hamilton *True Telegraph*, November 13, 1862.

(25) [Appleton's] *American Annual Cyclo-pedia and Register of Important Events* . . . 1861 (New York, 1862), 559; "Address of the Democratic Members of Congress to the Democracy of the United States," in *The Crisis*, July 9, 1862.

(26) Clement L. Vallandigham, seeking reelection in the Third District, lost his congressional seat to Robert C. Schenck only because a Republican-controlled state legislature had changed the boundary lines.

(27) *The Crisis*, December 31, 1862.

(28) I have debunked this supposedly subversive order in a series of articles. See, for example, "Ohio and the Knights of the Golden Circle: the Evolution of a Civil War Myth," *Cincinnati Historical Society Bulletin*, XXXII (Spring-Summer, 1974), 7-27.

(29) Eugene H. Roseboom, *The Civil War Era, 1850-1873*, Vol. 4, *The History of the State of Ohio* series, edited by Carl Wittke (Columbus, 1944), 202.

(30) One of McLean's boiler works was located in Cincinnati. Charles Cist, *Sketches and Statistics of Cincinnati in 1851* (Cincinnati, 1851), 174-175, says: "Washington McLean, on Congress, east of Ludlow street, employs sixteen hands; and manufactures boilers to the value of fifty-two thousand dollars."

(31) Washington McLean's son, John R. McLean, became an important Cincinnati in his own right, both as a newspaperman and political figure. He was the Democratic gubernatorial nominee in 1899 and he increased the reputation of the *Enquirer*. Daniel J. Ryan, *History of Ohio: The Rise*

and Progress of an American State (5 vols.; New York, 1912), 4: 438, says that during the postwar years the *Enquirer* became "the most powerful and extensively read newspaper of Ohio and one of the very foremost in the United States."

(32) McLean's backstage work is revealed in a telegram which he sent to a political ally even before the Democratic national convention met in Chicago in 1864. The telegram read: "Your friend [General McClellan] will be nominated on the first ballot. The platform will be right for my kind." See, Washington McLean to Samuel L. M. Barlow, August 29, 1864, Samuel L. M. Barlow Papers, Huntington Library.

(33) Born in Cincinnati (of parents who had come over from Ireland), young Faran graduated from Miami College in 1832, read law, and moved into the related fields of journalism and politics. President James Buchanan appointed him postmaster of Cincinnati but later removed him because he supported Stephen A. Douglas in the controversy over Kansas and a pro-slavery constitution.

(34) Murat Halstead, *Caucuses of 1860* (Columbus, O., 1860), 49-50.

(35) He was the grandson of Maj. Nathaniel Pendleton, a Virginian who was an aide of Gen. Nathaniel Greene during the Revolutionary War. Major Pendleton was a close friend of Alexander Hamilton and his second in the unfortunate duel with Aaron Burr. Young George H. Pendleton attended the University of Heidelberg and, soon after, returned to Cincinnati to study law and gain admittance to the bar. He married a daughter of Francis Scott Key, author of "The Star Spangled Banner."

(36) *Cong. Globe*, 38 Cong., 1 sess., 878. Pendleton voted for Long's resolution as did most Democratic congressmen from Ohio.

(37) The vote was 96 to 22.

(38) *Cong. Globe*, 38 Cong., 1 sess., 1501-1503.

(39) *Ibid.*, 1505-1506.

(40) *Ibid.*, 1593. The censure resolution was offered by John M. Broomall (of Pennsylvania) for Colfax.

(41) *Ibid.*, 1634; *The Crisis*, 20 April 1864.

(42) The Alexander Long Papers, in the archives of the Cincinnati Historical Society, are essential for anyone doing a study of Long or the peace crusade of Civil War days.

(43) *The Crisis*, September 9, October 28, 1864; Lambdin P. Milligan to Charles B. Lasselle, September 8, 1864, Charles B. Lasselle Papers, Indiana Division, Indiana State Library; *Cincinnati Convention*, October 18, 1864, for the Organization of a Peace Party upon States Rights. . . . (n.p., n.d.).

(44) *Cong. Globe*, 37 Cong., 2 sess., Appendix, 52-60.

(45) Vallandigham's role as Copperhead and dissenter is treated at length in my *The Limits of Dissent: Clement L. Vallandigham and the Civil War* (Lexington, Ky., 1970).

(46) "Proceedings of a Military Commission,

Convened in Cincinnati, May 6, 1863," Citizen's File, 1861-1865, War Department Collection of Confederate Records, National Archives.

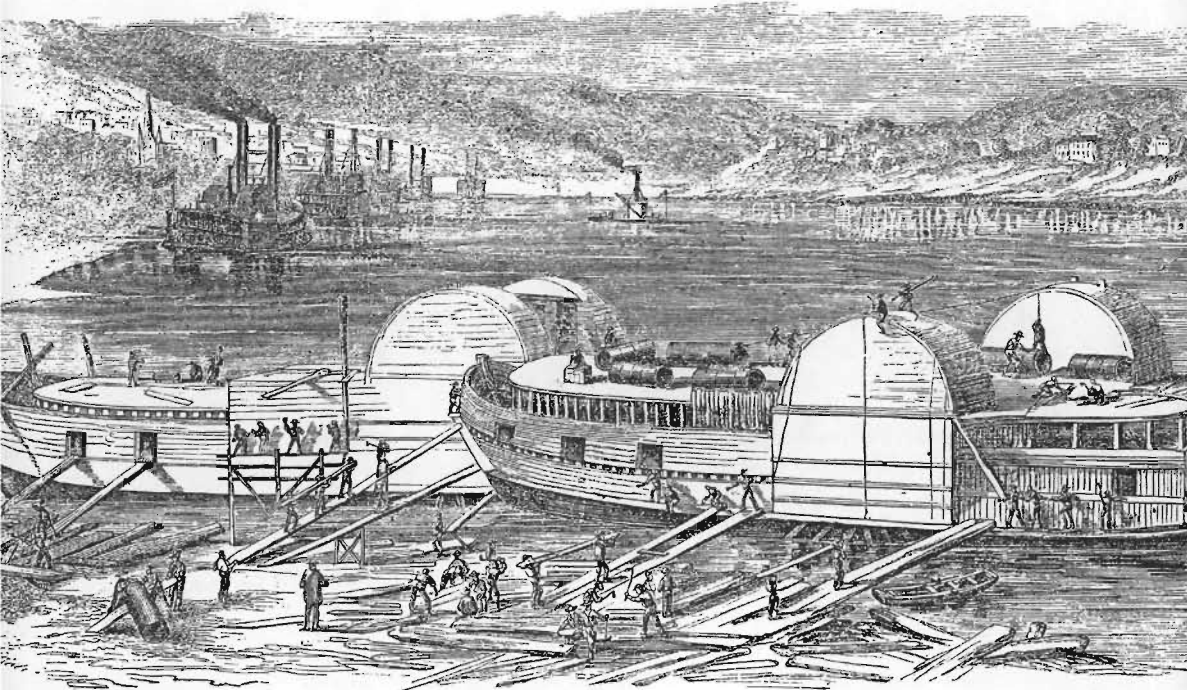
(47) Telegram (in cypher), President Lincoln to General Burnside, May 29, 1863, Special Collections Division, Brown University Library, Providence; *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (128 vols.; Washington, D.C., 1880-1901), series 2, 5: 656-657.

(48) William W. Armstrong, "Personal Recollections," published in *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer*, March 20, 1886; *Daily Ohio State Journal*, June 12, 1863.

(49) Stephen D. Cone, *Biographical and Historical Sketches: A Narrative of Hamilton and Its Residents from 1792 to 1896* (2 vols.; Hamilton, O., 1896), 1: 198.

(50) *Dayton Daily Empire*, June 16, 1864.

(51) *Chicago Times*, August 30, 31, 1864.



The patriotic surge felt at the outbreak of the war ebbed as the war caused manufacturers and businessmen to lose their markets and trade.