

TRAVELLER

Award Winning Publication of the General Robert E. Lee
Camp, #1640

Sons of Confederate Veterans, Germantown, TN
Duty, Honor, Integrity, Chivalry
DEO VINDICE!

June 2018



CAMP MEETING

June 11, 2018

**7:00 p.m. at the at the Germantown
Regional History and Genealogy Center**

Don't miss our next meeting!

The Republican Charade: Lincoln and His Party – Part I

(This two-part series is from speech given at the Abbeville Institute conference on "Re-Thinking Lincoln," July 7–12, 2006 at Franklin, Louisiana by Dr. Clyde N. Wilson, professor of history at the University of South Carolina)

I want to take a look at this strange institution we know as the Republican party and the course of its peculiar history in the American regime. The peculiar history both precedes and continues after Lincoln, although Lincoln is central to the story. It is fairly easy to construct an ideological account of the Democratic party, what it has stood for and who it has represented, even though there has been at least one revolutionary change during its long history. I generalize broadly, because all major political parties since at least the early 19th century have most of the time sought to dilute their message to broaden their appeal and avoid ideological sharpness. But we can say of the Democratic party that through most of its history it was Jeffersonian – it stood for, at least in lip service, a limited federal government and laissez-faire economy, and it represented farmers and small businessmen, the South, the pioneer West, and to some extent the Northern working class. This identity for the most part even survived the War to Prevent Southern Independence. Clearly, the party in the 20th century came to represent a very different platform – social democracy as defined by the New Deal and the Great Society – and a considerably different constituency. In either case, onlookers have had a pretty good general impression of what the party stood for.

It is nearly impossible to construct a similar description of the Republican party. The party that elected Lincoln was pretty clear about some things, like the tariff, although it may have been less than honest about the reasons. It was obfuscatory about other things. Since Lincoln took power, it has been difficult to find a clear pattern in what the party has claimed to represent. The picture becomes even cloudier when you compare words and behaviour. This, I believe, is because its real agenda has not been such that it could be usefully acknowledged. Apparently millions continue to harbor the strange delusion that the Republican party is the party of free enterprise, and, at least since the New Deal, the party of conservatism. In fact, the party is and always has been the party of state capitalism. That, along with the powers and perks it provides its leaders, is the whole reason for its creation and continued existence. By state capitalism I mean a regime of highly concentrated private ownership, subsidized and protected by government. The Republican party has never, ever opposed any government interference in the free market or any government expenditure except those that might favour labour unions or threaten Big Business. Consider that for a long time it was the party of high tariffs – when high tariffs benefited Northern big capital and oppressed the South and most of the population. Now it is the party of so-called "free trade" – because that is the policy that benefits Northern big capital, whatever it might cost the rest of us. In succession, Republicans presented opposite policies idealistically as good for America, while carefully avoiding discussion of exactly who it was good for.

There is nothing particularly surprising that there should be a party of state capitalism in the United States. And certainly nothing surprising in the necessity for such a party to present itself as something else. Put in terms the Founding Fathers would have understood, the interests Republicans serve are merely the court party – what Jefferson referred to as the tinsel aristocracy and John Taylor as the paper aristocracy. The American Revolution was a revolt of the country against the court. Jeffersonians understood that every political system

divides between the great mass of unorganized folks who mind their own business – that, is, the country party – and the minority who hang around the court to manipulate the government finances and engineer government favours. It is much easier and quicker to get rich by finding a way into the treasury than by hard work. That is mostly what politics is about. Of course, schemes to plunder society through the government must never be seen as such. They must be powdered and perfumed to look like a public good.

Contrary to what we might hope, there was nothing in the New World to inhibit the formation of a court party. In fact, the immense riches of an undeveloped continent merely increased incentives for courtiers. The number of projects that could be imagined as worthy of government support was infinite. In America there were not even any firmly established institutions of credit and currency, control of which was always the quickest route to big riches. Neither was there anything in a democratic system to inhibit state capitalism. The great mass of the citizens could usually be circumvented by people whose fulltime job was lining their pockets by swindling the voters. Lincoln's triumph is most realistically seen as the permanent victory of the court party, a victory that had been sought ever since Alexander Hamilton. The Lincoln regime eliminated all barriers to making the federal government into a machine to transfer money to those interests the party represented (and as many others as needed to be paid off to support the operation). Hamilton had justified the government enriching his friends at no risk to themselves because "a public debt is a public blessing." The Whigs sometimes argued that the paper issued by their banks was "the people's money" and therefore morally superior as a currency to "government money." Lincoln presented himself as a candidate for the presidency with the slogan "Vote Yourself a Farm!" Once the obstructionism of those troublesome Southerners was broken, ordinary folks could get themselves a farm for free out of the public lands. Some ordinary folks did get land – but most of the free land, millions of acres, went to government-connected corporations. Saving the Union, freeing the slaves but keeping them out of the North, and giving opportunity to the common people, when filtered through Lincoln's masterful rhetoric, gave the party of Big Business a lock on the righteous vote for a long time to come.



Alexander Hamilton (January 11, 1755 or 1757 – July 12, 1804) was the first U.S. Secretary of the Treasury and Aide-de-Camp to George

The most consistent aspect of Republican party has been its role as the respectable party, without much attention to principles and policies. Its voters have been those who think of themselves as more respectable and more patriotic than the voters of the other party. What I am trying to describe is captured by the pejorative label the Republicans long used for their Democratic opponents.

The Democrats were said to be the party of "Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion," that is, of wastrels, Catholics, and Southerners. The bloody shirt was waved through decades in which the party definitely had an agenda, but one which was not described too frankly. There are plenty of good reasons for disliking liberals, but when the current Republican radio demagogues anathematize liberals they are merely appealing to the same vague feelings of superior virtue that fueled "Rum, Romanism,

and Rebellion." The one attitude that Republicans have most consistently displayed is disdain for the South, because such an attitude has been always highly respectable and was the basis of their first rise to power. In their platform of 1900 they justified the slaughter then going on in the Philippines by likening the rebels there to the Southern traitors of earlier times who deserved death for the evil deed of resisting the best government on earth. Very recently, the national chairman of the Republican party went before a civil rights group to apologize for that party's "Southern strategy." As far as I know he did not repudiate the seven out of the last ten national elections that were won by that strategy. The Republican party has had to live with a large gap between what it says and what it does. Deceit has become a habit and a fixed policy. Republican leaders always, and I mean always, act as if truth is the worst possible strategy – always opt for the gimmick instead of straight talk. Richard Nixon – like Lincoln a crackpot realist – thought only of damage control when simple truth-telling might have saved him. It might occur to some observers that the crackpot realist mode describes pretty well the way a recent war was started and carried on. What I am trying to describe here is something more than the usual elasticity of politicians who lie as a tool of the trade. When Charles Beard's *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States* was published, suggesting that theretofore unseen profit-seeking had had a major role in the creation of the U.S. Constitution, Republican President William Howard Taft is said to have commented that what Beard wrote

was true but it should not have been told to the public.

The very name of the Republican party is a lie. The name was chosen when the party formed in the 1850s to suggest a likeness to the Jeffersonian Republicans of earlier history. This had a very slender plausibility. One of the main goals of the new party was "free soil" – preventing slavery (and Negroes) from existence in any territories, that is, future states. It is quite true that in the 1780s Jefferson, and indeed most Southerners, had voted to exclude slavery from the Northwest Territory – what became the Midwest, a region to which Virginia had by far the strongest claim by both charter and conquest. However, the sentiments and reasoning that supported that restriction were very different from those of the Republican FreeSoilers of the 1850s. To detect the lie, all you have to do is look at the stance of Jefferson himself and most of his followers, Northern and Southern, in the Missouri controversy of 1819–1820. The effort to eliminate slavery from Missouri and all the territories, the first version of Lincoln's free-soil policy, was denounced by Jefferson as a threat to the future of the Union and a transparent Northern power grab. It was "the fire-bell in the night." In the 1780s the foreign slave trade was still open. In 1819 no more slaves were being imported and the black population was increasing naturally in North America at a greater rate than anywhere else in the world (as it always has). At that point, Jefferson said, the best course for the eventual elimination of slavery was not to restrict it but to disperse it as thinly as possible. The Southern Republicans who had criticized and sought to restrict slavery in the 1780s had in mind the long-term welfare of all Americans. The Northern Republicans of the 1850s who raised a truly hysterical and exaggerated campaign against what they called "the spread of slavery" were entirely different people with entirely different motives. Not even to mention, of course, that the Northern Republicans were totally committed to a mercantilist agenda, every plank of which Jeffersonians had defined themselves by being against. The Republicans of the 1850s exactly represented those parts of the country and those interests that had been the most rabid opponents of Jefferson and his Republicans. (Interestingly, the areas of the country today that are the most liberal – the northeast, upper Midwest, and west coast, are exactly the areas that from the 1850s to the 1930s were the most solidly Republican – and "respectable." (Old-fashioned Democrats used to say that the change from a small government party to a leftist one was a take-over of the Democrats by Republican

Progressives.)

In 1860 the Republicans promoted their candidate as the "rail-splitter," the poor boy who had made good, an example and representative of the "common people." This image, of course, had nothing to do with the Lincoln of 1860, with his agenda, or with the important issues of the time. This was not new. It was a mimicry of the Whig campaign of 1840. For a long time our New England-dominated history books have portrayed the election of the natural aristocrat Andrew Jackson in 1828 as beginning a vulgarization of American politics. But it was actually the Whig campaign of 1840 that successfully pioneered the transformation of national political campaigns into mindless mass celebrations. It showed how



"Rail Splitter" was a nickname for Abraham Lincoln; it originated in the Illinois State Republican Convention at Decatur on 9 May 1860.

it is done. The party did not trouble itself to adopt a platform nor to nominate for President any of its well-known leaders. It put up the elderly General Harrison of Ohio, who had been a hero in the War of 1812 and a senator and governor some time back. General Harrison entertained company but issued no position papers. His candidacy was promoted by a slogan "Tippecanoe and Tyler Too" and by mass torchlight parades and rallies featuring the log cabin in which Harrison supposedly lived, the coonskin cap he supposedly wore, and the jug of home-distilled from which he supposedly sipped. The general actually lived on quite a considerable estate near Cincinnati and was a Virginia aristocrat by birth. In fact, he and his running mate, John Tyler, had both been born in the same small county in Tidewater Virginia – Charles City County (which was a part of my rookie news reporter's beat long ago and far away in my misspent youth). As a further obfuscation, Tyler had been added to the ticket to appeal to Southerners who were opposing the controlling Van Buren Democrats for quite different reasons than were the Whigs. Harrison swept the Middle States and Midwest, though his victory probably owed as much to a bad economy and Van Buren's lack of appeal as to the Whig campaign. Immediately Henry Clay, hero and Congressional leader of the Whigs, announced that the election was a mandate for the Whig program – raising the tariff up again, re-establishing the national bank, and distributing lavishly from the treasury to companies that promised to build infrastructure. All this, although the issues had never been set forth in a platform nor mentioned in the campaign. Remind you of any more recent Presidential mandates for things that were never

discussed before the voters?

The "log cabin" gambit has been used and re-used as when the Wall Street lawyer Wendell Wilkie was promoted as a simple Hoosier country lad, and two rich Connecticut candidates were marketed as "good ole boys" from Texas. Let's look at Lincoln's party as it was born in the 1850s. In March of 1850, William H. Seward, the chief architect of the Republican party and its foremost spokesman until Lincoln maneuvered him out of the Presidential nomination, made a speech against compromise, anticipating his later famous remarks: "the irrepressible conflict" between the North and the South. This speech was not a somber warning about impending trouble as is usually assumed. It was a celebration of the coming certain triumph of the North over the South. James K. Paulding, New York man of letters and former Secretary of the Navy under Van Buren, wrote about Seward's oration: "I cannot express the contempt and disgust with which I have read the speech of our Senator Seward, though it is just what I expected from him. He is one of the most dangerous insects that ever crawled about in the political atmosphere, for he is held in such utter contempt by all honest men that no notice is taken of him till his sting is felt. He is only qualified to play the most despicable parts in the political drama, and the only possible way he can acquire distinction is by becoming the tool of greater scoundrels than himself. Some years ago, after disgracing the State of New York as Chief Magistrate, he found his level in the lowest depths of insignificance and oblivion, and was dropped by his own party. But the mud was stirred at the very bottom of the pool, and he who went down a mutilated tadpole has come up a full-grown bull frog, more noisy and impudent than ever. This is very often the case among us here, where nothing is more common than to see a swindling rogue, after his crimes have been a little rusted by time, suddenly become an object of public favour or executive patronage. The position taken and the principles asserted by this pettifogging rogue in his speech would disgrace any man – but himself."

Paulding adds: "I fear it will not be long before we of the North become the tools of the descendants of the old Puritans..." He means that the well-known and much despised New England fanaticism was encroaching upon the whole North. This is one Northern commentary on the origins of the Republican party and on the sad public conditions that made it possible. Failed politicians of both parties, like Lincoln, had seized the occasion of the acquisition of new territory from Mexico to launch themselves forward in a way destructive of the comity of the Union. The opportunity they made the most of had two parts: the discontent of major Northern economic interests over free trade and separation of the government

from control of the bankers that had been accomplished by the Democrats; and the hysterical and false claims that Southerners were conspiring to spread slavery to the North, given plausibility by three decades of vicious vituperation against the South. The Republican success depended on a Northern public that was unsettled by economic change, religious ferment, and immigration. Thus these politicians were able to form for the first time in American history a purely sectional party, something that every patriot had warned against.

(To be continued in the July issue of Traveller)

DID YOU KNOW?

by Beecher Smith

STRANGE TWISTS OF FATE

Here are some interesting vignettes of historic irony

Over more than one thousand days of fighting, Union forces saw only one commander of an army killed in battle. Maj. Gen. James B. McPherson, head of the Army of Tennessee, was felled by a bullet on July 22, 1864, during the Battle of Atlanta.

Only one Confederate army commander was also killed in battle. That was Albert Sydney Johnston, Commander of the entire Western Theatre, who sustained a bullet wound to his leg at Shiloh and bled to death before the surgeon could attend to it. Many other generals died in the war, but these were the only commanders of an entire army.

Union Brig. Gen. Edward H. Hobson considered his greatest feat to be the capture of Confederate Brig. Gen. John Hunt Morgan. Captured near New Lisbon, Ohio, on July 26, 1863, Morgan was hustled off to Ohio State Prison. His stay was brief. He escaped November 26.

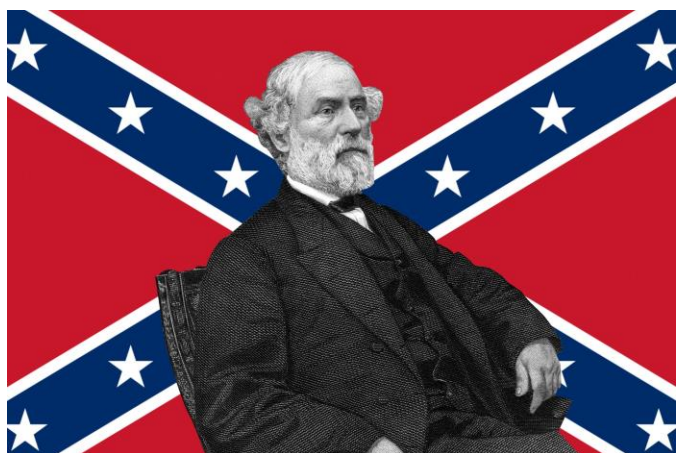
Eleven months after being taken prisoner, Morgan and his men captured a body of Federal troops at Cynthiana, Kentucky. Their commander was Edward H. Hobson.

The Confederacy ordered every available vessel into service when it became obvious that Union gunboats were going to make a concerted effort to open up the lower Mississippi River for the North. Aboard a lightly armed steam barkentine known as the *McRae*, Confederate commander Thomas B. Huger was killed by a shot from the mighty *U. S. S. Iroquois*. A few months prior to Huger's death he had served as a first lieutenant on the same Union gunship that took his life.

END

Sources:

Garrison, Web. *Civil War Curiosities*. Nashville: Rutledge Hill Press, 1994.



**The General Robert E. Lee Camp #1640
Sons of Confederate Veterans**

Go to our website:

<http://www.tennessee-scv.org/camp1640/>

Or visit our Facebook pages at:

<https://www.facebook.com/BluffCityGraysMemphis>

<http://www.facebook.com/RELeeCamp1640>

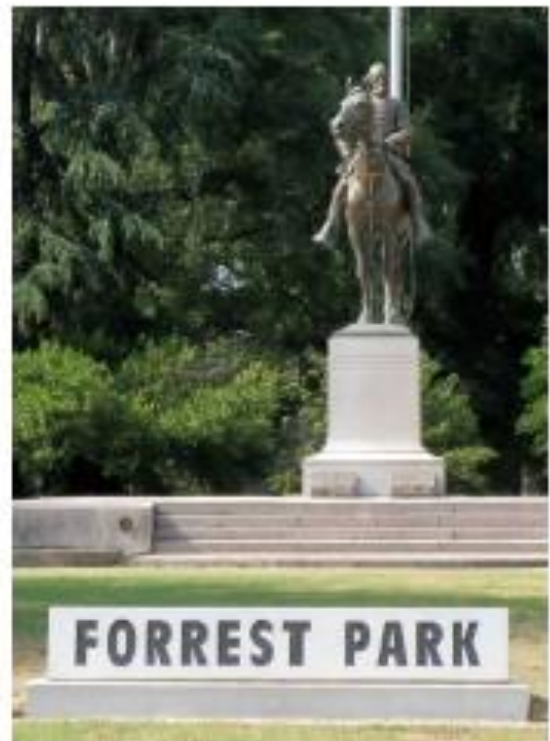
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/SCV-Memphis-Brigade-Color-Guard/268457703293353>

SCV LIFE MEMBERS ROSTER

T. Tarry Beasley II	T. Tarry Beasley III
T Tarry Beasley IV	Winston Blackley
Eugene Callaway	John Cole
W. Kent Daniel Jr.	James Anthony Davis
Hubert Dellinger Jr., MD	H. Clark Doan
Gary Douglas	Robert Freeman
Eugene Forrester	Donald Harrison
Frederick Harrison	Frank Holeman
M. Gary Hood	William P Hunter, Jr.
Bobby Lessel	Jerry C. Lunsford
C. Bruce Lynch	Frank M. McCroskey
James Lee McDowell	
Michael Christopher McDowel	
Steve McIntyre	Arthur Oliver
Charles Wendell Park	Steve Reason
Larry J. Spiller, Jr.	Larry J. Spiller, Sr.
Osborn Turner, IV	Charles L Vernon
William C. Wilson	

SONS OF CONFEDERATE VETERANS

Help Save General Forrest



The Memphis City Council has passed a resolution to remove the Forrest Equestrian Statue from Forrest Park and to dig up the graves of General Forrest and his wife MaryAnn from beneath the statue.

The SCV and the Forrest family descendants must raise money to fight the city in this second attack on General Forrest. We need your help.

Help us to save the graves and monument of General Forrest

Can you, or your camp or Division donate \$100, \$500 or \$1000 to the defense ?

Please sign me up as a supporter. No membership fee.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Contribute through PayPal at our ally at : www.citizenstosaveourparks.org

Please donate to our cause: Amount \$ _____ check number _____

Forrest Park Defense Fund

PO Box 241875, Memphis, TN 38124

COLLECTOR'S

FORREST COMMEMORATIVE COIN

Solid bronze

\$ 10 each — All proceeds go to

Parks Defense Fund

Contact: Harry Adams, Forrest Camp 215

harryadamscsa@gmail.com

\$10 each, plus \$1 each for shipping. Send your check to

Save the Parks

PO Box 241875, Memphis, TN 38124



Traveller is the monthly newsletter of:

The General Robert E. Lee Camp #1640

Sons of Confederate Veterans

and

The Mary Custis Lee Chapter,

Order of the Confederate Rose

P.O. Box 171251

Memphis, Tennessee 38187

Steve M. McIntyre, Editor

Next Camp Meeting ** June 11, 2018

Germantown Regional History and Genealogy Center, 7779 Old Poplar Pike, Germantown, TN