

Why a Civil War?

Much has been written about the American Civil War and the causes that unleashed the largest loss of lives in U.S. history. During the next four years, you will be hearing more about the commemoration of the Civil War as the Ohio Historical Society presents its “Civil War 150 Ohio” Project, which can be followed on the web at www.OhioCivilWar150.org This website has a calendar of events that presents historic and contemporary happenings.

Our aim today is to present a few facts that may help us to remember important aspects of this War and its conflicts. Our goal for this event is to honor the “memory” itself or the history of people and events. The arguments may go on until the end of time, but what is more important is that we learn from this confrontation and that we honor those who gave their lives by remembering their sacrifices.

The Issue of States’ Rights

From the birth of this young nation and throughout the first half of the 19th Century, there existed a tension among the states over states’ rights and the issue of slavery, which produced constitutional, economic and political conflicts that threatened to splinter the new United States of America into North and South.

After the Revolutionary War, distinctly divergent economies evolved in the North and the South. The South developed an agrarian economy based on the plantation system, with its attendant dependency on slave labor. The North had nearly abolished slavery and depended more on free labor to drive its burgeoning industrialized economy.

Most of the southern income was derived from large cash crops, such as rice, tobacco and

especially cotton. It wanted free trade to sell its goods and obtain the manufacturing goods it needed to satisfy its wants.

As the northern economy was shifting during this period from agriculture to manufacturing, it wanted protective tariffs placed on incoming goods competing with its nascent industries. Of course, the South opposed these tariffs, since the South purchased many goods from Europe, thus competing with the North.

The Slave Issue

New states forming from the Northwest Territory established in 1800 by the U. S. Congress were banned from having slaves. Ohio, formed in 1803 as the 17th state of the Union, was the first to be carved from the Northwest Territory and the first state to be formed where owning slaves was forbidden.

By the middle of the 19th Century, the southern states were booming economically and resented being told that they had to do away with slavery, which would affect their growth and prosperity. They threatened secession from the Union, just as they had threatened to do during the Constitutional Convention in 1787 over the same issue of slavery. Now, however, this threat had developed into a groundswell throughout the South and was reaching a fever-pitch for action.

Underground Railroad and Trumbull County

In the meantime, the Abolition Movement, advocating for the freedom of slaves, was forming throughout the North and the South, fueled in part by the fiery speeches and actions of John Brown, who died for this cause. This phenomenon produced the Underground Railroad, a network of sympathizers who set up safe havens to

help escaped slaves. More than 40 buildings in Trumbull County are known to have been underground stations. The Sutliff Family declared for abolition as early as 1817.

When many Ohioans believed that freed Negroes should return to their home states in the South after the War, Warren’s radical abolitionist Leicester King led the thinking that Negroes should be free to stay and be citizens in Ohio. He also was instrumental in getting Ohio’s “Black Laws” repealed in the 1840s. These had prohibited Negroes from voting, suing a white man, serving jury duty or receiving public education.

The Election of Lincoln in 1860

The best indication of the temperament of the country in that pre-war period was the 1860 presidential election. There were four candidates who reflected the wide array of sentiment: **Stephen A. Douglas**, who was an advocate of Popular Sovereignty and campaigned to let the people of each state vote on the slavery issue. He received 12 electoral votes. **John C. Breckinridge**, who wanted the ownership of slaves in all states and territories to be safeguarded, received 72 electoral votes. **John Bell**, who believed that the slavery issue could be settled by reason and compromise, received 39 electoral votes. **Abraham Lincoln**, who was most passionate about saving the Union, advocated keeping slavery in those states where it was not outlawed but denying any extension of it in new states. Lincoln, the clear choice of the country, won with 180 electoral votes.

The South believed that with anything short of the election of Breckinridge or secession, southern society could not be protected from the vicious agitators of the North. **Hence, upon the election of Lincoln, they chose secession.**

Secession

On December 20, 1860, South Carolina was the first state to break away from the Union, followed by Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas. Four more states (Virginia, Arkansas, North Carolina and Tennessee) continued the abandonment of the Union through June 8, 1861.

War Begins

Major Robert Anderson, Union Commander of Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor, SC had not received supplies for over three months because rebel forces from the South had blocked supply ships. As a result, the garrison lacked ammunition and food. Tensions were mounting on both sides.

Then, on **April 12, 1861**, at 4:30 a.m., General P.T. Beauregard ordered his cannons to fire on Fort Sumter; to conserve ammunition, the Union forces did not return fire until they could see their targets at 7:00 a.m. By the afternoon, the fires had consumed all the wood structures and the Fort was forced to surrender.

On April 14, a boat ferried the men to Union ships outside the harbor. Major Anderson carried the United States flag that was taken down while a confederate flag was hoisted over the Fort. This event marked the beginning of the American Civil War. Ironically, not one soldier was injured or killed during the battle.

Ohio's Soldiers

The first armies of the Civil War were all volunteers until 1863, when the draft went into effect. Ohio provided many soldiers, among them a good number from Trumbull County.

Shortly after the outbreak of the War, the United States War Department commissioned Ohio Senator B. F. Wade of Jefferson and our local congressman, John Hutchins of Warren, to supervise the recruiting service in northeastern Ohio. The first unit, a cavalry regiment organized during the summer of 1861, trained in Cleveland at Camp Wade. The regiment was officially named the 2nd Ohio Volunteer Cavalry.

Warren's Camp Hutchins

Recruitment rolls were then filled for another cavalry regiment to be trained in Warren during the fall. The Oak Grove Fairgrounds, home of the Trumbull County Agricultural Society and the site of the current Harding High School, was selected for the camp, which was named Camp Hutchins in our Congressman's honor. John Hutchins was an ardent anti-slavery advocate. With the official designation as the 6th Ohio Volunteer Cavalry, more than 800 men were encamped and trained in Warren during October, November and December. They departed for active duty at the end of 1861.



Today's event launching the Trumbull County Commemoration of the 150th Anniversary of the Civil War has been planned and produced by members of the CW150 Committee of the Sutliff Museum with cooperation of many reenactors, students of the Civil War and history organizations. For further information or to help with future events during the next four years, please contact your local Historical Society or the Sutliff Museum at info@sutliffmuseum.org or 330-399-8807, ext. 121.



Conflicts That Sparked The American Civil War (1861-1865)



A Public Commemoration

April 12, 2011

2:00-6:00 PM

**Eastwood Mall, Main Concourse
Niles, Ohio 44446**

Presented by:
The Trumbull County
Civil War 150 Committee
Of the Sutliff Museum



The 33-Star Flag became the Official United States Flag on July 4, 1859. This is the flag that flew over Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861.