

CHAPTER III

CANDON'S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS AND NATIONAL AFFAIRS, 1840-1955

When settlers first came to the site of Candon and its vicinity they were so concerned with clearing the land, building homes, and getting the necessities of life that they had little time to devote to politics, especially national and state. The first national election in which they took a vital and absorbing interest was in 1840 when William Henry Harrison was candidate for President.¹ The United States had been in the grip of a depression since 1837.² Serious as the situation was for western debtors, there were some people who viewed the plight of the newer states with delight. Whig politicians saw that opportunities knocked at their party's door. Ohio, one of the states in the worst financial difficulty, was normally Democratic. If the Whigs could find a formula to ease the debt burdens of the westerners, grateful voters would support the party's candidate in the coming election. The Whigs made their stand clear on January 1, 1840, by introducing a new Distribution Bill into the Senate. Although it was defeated by the Democratic majority, the nation now knew that a Whig

¹ History of Preble County, Ohio, (Cleveland, Ohio: H. Z. Williams and Bro., 1881), p. 121.

² Francis P. Weisenburger, The Passing of the Frontier, 1825-1850, Carl Witke (ed.), The History of the State of Ohio, 6 Vols. (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, 1911), III, 335-355.

victory in 1840 would assure the distribution of funds from land sales to the states.³ The Democratic candidate, Martin Van Buren, was so linked with the depression that any change was for the better.⁴ The Whigs staged an effective campaign. They painted their candidate, Harrison, as "a rough and ready man of the people, in contrast with the snobbish Van Buren, who scented his whiskers with cologne water, played billiards, and ate imported delicacies from gold plates."⁵ The idea took hold at once. It was the most spectacular political campaign ever waged in the country. The whole country was alive with enthusiasm and wild with excitement. Such slogans as "Van, Van, Van, - Van's a used-up man" and "Tippecanoe and Tyler too"⁶ were popular among the Whigs. Thomas Corwin, an eloquent orator from Lebanon, headed Ohio's ticket and added much to the Whig's enthusiasm in this state.⁷

Immense mass meetings were held in the towns and villages in the state. Towns in Preble County were no exception. Eaton, the county seat, was chosen to be the headquarters for the Whigs' campaign. Many peculiar expedients were resorted to for the purpose of expressing and arousing feeling. Some of the most conspicuous and unique methods were used to keep before the minds of the people their candidate's success as a soldier in the War of 1812 and his services as a pioneer. A Democratic paper had made the sneering comment

³ Ray Allen Billington, Westward Expansion, A History of the American Frontier, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1949), p. 378.

⁴ The World Book, H. V. O'Shea, (Ed.) 12 Vol. (Chicago, Illinois: W. F. Garrie and Company, 1929), V. 3062.

⁵ Billington, op. cit., p. 378.

⁶ William Henry Harrison was the hero in the battle of Tippecanoe in 1811. John Tyler, of Virginia, was running for Vice-President on the Whig ticket. Charles B. Gilbreath, History of Ohio, 5 Vol. (Chicago and New York: The American Historical Society, Inc., 1925), I, 564.

⁷ Weisenburger, op. cit., p. 393.

that Harrison would be happy for life if given a pension, a log cabin, and a barrel of hard cider. The Whigs cleverly converted this snoot to proclaim the simple tastes of their candidate in contrast⁷ to the aristocratic Van Buren. Canoes, log cabins, and barrels of cider appeared everywhere as emblems of the idea which formed the foundation of Harrison's popularity.⁸ The field of music was exploited, too, with the publication of The Log Cabin Song Book, which contained such songs as "General Harrison's Quick Step," "The Whig Waltz", and the "Harrison Song".⁹ In Eaton was built a "Harrison log cabin" at the corner of Main and Barron Streets. The original hand bill advertising the raising read as follows:

Log Cabin Raising

In accordance with a resolution of a public meeting of the Whig citizens of the different townships in the county of Preble, there will be a log cabin raised in Eaton, Saturday, the sixteenth. Dimensions of the cabin, twenty by twenty-four feet—eight feet story—timber to consist of buckeye.

This is, therefore, to invite all the Harrison Democrats in the counties of Preble, Butler, and Darke to attend the Tippecanoe Raising on Saturday next, at nine o'clock, a.m., at Eaton.

Log Cabin Committee

N.B. North End refreshments, to wit. Hard cider will be provided for the occasion, and we promise all who may give us a lift, that they shall not find the barrel beyond their reach or the vent plug driven in. May 13, 1840.¹⁰

The "Cabin raising" took place and quite a large crowd was in attendance. In the latter part of May the Congressional Convention, for the district composed of Preble, Butler, and Darke Counties, was held in front of the cabin. A great crowd congregated, and the utmost enthusiasm prevailed.

⁷ History of Preble County, Ohio, op. cit., p. 83. The World Book, op. cit., p. 3062. Billington, op. cit., p. 378.

⁹ Weisenburger, op. cit., pp. 393-394.

¹⁰ History of Preble County, Ohio, op. cit., p. 121.

Nearly all of the people of Preble County who were of the Whig party went to Eaton. In various localities the people clubbed together and went into town with four and six horse teams, taking huge canoes and even log cabins on wagons. From Camden a ball, twelve or fifteen feet in diameter, was rolled along the road to Eaton and was received with a great deal of applause. The expression "keep the ball rolling" was then in vogue, and was one of the slogans of the Whigs. The huge ball symbolized the majorities that would be rolled up for Harrison. George D. Hendricks, a resident of Camden, was one of those who had started and kept the ball rolling. The Pottengers and Bennetts of Camden were two more families who were also interested in this unique way of giving their support to the Whigs' candidate, William Harrison. The mass meeting on the day of the convention was one of unbounded enthusiasm, and even a hard rain was not sufficient to put a damper on the ardor of the speakers or audience.¹¹

All through the season the excitement was unabated. On Saturday, September 8, General Harrison spoke in Eaton to an immense audience. He remained in Eaton over Sunday, and on Monday he proceeded to Greenville where he attended a meeting held in his honor. General Harrison was accompanied by hundreds of people from all over the county. The road was filled for three miles with carriages and horsemen. A detachment of men rode ahead of the general, at some distance, and burned the effigies, clothed in red flannel petticoats, which had set up in derision of the hero of Tippecanoe by individuals of the opposing party.¹²

In the fall, Preble County gave a majority of seven or eight hundred for the "Tip-Ty-Tom" ticket.¹³ Not only did the Whigs win the national

¹¹ Ibid., p. 122.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Tip-Ty-Tom stood for Tippecanoe-Tyler-Thomas Corwin.

election, but Thomas Corwin became Governor of Ohio, and several Whigs were brought into office on the county ticket. George B. Hendricks of Camden was elected Preble County Sheriff.¹⁴

Again in 1860 Camden became vitally interested in the political situation and the approaching presidential election. The differences of opinion which arose between the North and the South caused a reshuffling of party lines. The Democrats split into two factions, and two new parties sprang up. Southern Whigs drifted into Democratic ranks, the pro-slavery party. Northern Whigs joined the newly-formed Republican party. Because of the disagreement among the Democrats two presidential candidates were nominated for their party. The regulars or Northern Democrats nominated Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois, while the other faction chose John C. Breckinridge of Kentucky.¹⁵ A few sectional party originated in the West where irate farmers gathered in indignation meetings and talked of forming a new party that would keep slaves out of the territories. They decided to call themselves Republicans. This group nominated the relatively obscure Abraham Lincoln. The party's platform showed the wisdom of its manager in not only pledging to keep slavery from the territory, but they promised higher tariffs for the Northeast, a liberal naturalization policy that would attract migration of cheap labor from Europe, a homestead law that would give one hundred-sixty acres to each settler, and government aid for a Pacific Railroad for the Northwest.¹⁶ There was a fourth party, made up of the remnants of the Southern Whigs and the "Know-Nothing" party,¹⁷ who called

¹⁴ History of Preble County, Ohio, op. cit., p. 122.

¹⁵ Galbreath, op. cit., II, 567.

¹⁶ R. A. Billington, B. J. Loewenberg, S. H. Brockway, The United States, American Democracy in World Perspective, (New York and Toronto; Macmillan and Company, Inc.), p. 241.

¹⁷ This party came into existence in 1854. They advocated death to all foreign influences. Galbreath, op. cit., II, 552.

themselves Constitutional-Unionists.¹⁸ They nominated John Bell of Tennessee. In Ohio, only two candidates received any considerable attention--Lincoln and Douglas.¹⁹

While the Douglas faction of the Democrats and the Republicans were both very active during the campaign of 1860 in Camden, the latter party was especially strong in the village and vicinity. The Republicans had an organization called "Wide Awakes", which sprang up wherever the party was active. The people of Camden wanted to help promote the Republican platform so on August 27, 1860 they organized their "Wide Awake" club. They stated their purpose in forming a club was "to unite our strength in the support of the principles of Republicanism, and in securing good order in promoting the election of Abe Lincoln to the Presidency."²⁰ To attract more attention and to make their organization a little more colorful they chose a uniform which consisted of black cap, blue waistcoat, black pants, and red sash.²¹ The following is an account of one of the meetings the "Wide Awakes" had:

The "Wide Awakes" held a very spirited Republican demonstration at Camden. In spite of a rainy evening, there were from thirteen hundred to fifteen hundred people present at the meeting. "Wide Awakes" from Hamilton, Oxford, Eaton, and Winchester, numbering between 300 and 400, arrived in due time. They made a very handsome display with lighted lamps, as they marched through the streets of the village, accompanied by four bands of music. During their movement, the Camden Gun Squad gave a slight foretaste of the Republican thunder which will soon be heard to reverberate over the victories in October and November. The masses finally assembled in front of the Hotel of our sterling Republican Friend, Sam Payne, where a stand was erected for the occasion, and was very tastefully arranged. It was handsomely decorated with wreaths of flowers, the work of a bevy of young ladies of the place.

After the presentation of a handsome banner to the Camden Wide Awake Club by the ladies of Camden through Miss Payne, an appropriate response in behalf of the club was given by Mr. J. W. King.

¹⁸ Millington, op. cit., p. 603.

¹⁹ Galbreath, op. cit., II, 567.

²⁰ Eaton Weekly Register, (Court House, Eaton, Ohio), August 27, 1860.

²¹ Ibid.

Mr. Craighoad²² entertained the audience with one of his best speeches, which occupied over an hour in the delivery. At the conclusion of which, three cheers were given the speaker. The Macedonia²³ and Camden Glee Clubs sang several appropriate songs.²⁴

The Democrats, too, were quite active in Camden in 1860. Democratic Clubs were formed and mass meetings were held. A very rousing and exciting meeting was sponsored by the Douglas Faction in August. Clement L. Vallandigham was present as the speaker. An extra large pole had been erected on which to display their banners, but it fell before the ceremonies started. The Democrats felt the Republican blacksmith who had welded the iron bands together had purposely been careless. The following is an account of the Democratic rally in Camden in the month of August:

Clement L. Vallandigham, Democratic candidate for Congress from the Third District, was met at the depot by a large crowd. The Cosmerville band furnished music. The "Little Giant's Chariot" in which were seated the members of the Glee Club led the way to the Methodist Church, where large numbers who were unable to get into the building were waiting to get a glimpse of Vallandigham. The reporter of the meeting made particular mention that a hundred or more ladies were present. After Vallandigham's speech, music was furnished by the Glee Club.²⁵

In September the Democrats of Camden assembled with others of their party at Bruce's Grove about a mile south of Eaton. It was estimated that from 8,000 to 10,000 people attended the rally to hear Mr. C. L. Vallandigham deal blows on "the degrading and disgusting doctrines of Negro equality". All parts of Preble County were represented at the meeting and much enthusiasm was exhibited.

The horseback companies from the north and northeastern portion of the county took the rag off the bush in that line. The Gratis Township thirty horse team was superior in its line. For tall poles,

²² Mr. Craighoad was running for Congressman in opposition to Mr. Vallandigham.

²³ Macedonia was a small Methodist Church about three miles east of Camden.

²⁴ Eaton Weekly Register, op. cit., September 27, 1860.

²⁵ Genevieve White, "Preble County During the Civil War" (Master's Thesis, Covington Room, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, 1940), p. 8. Miss White's material was found in the Democratic Press, August 30, 1860.

Buzzard Rocket took the premium. The Twin Township delegates had the most powder and fired the oftenest. Boston and Camden beat anything we ever saw for fine wagons. We can't decide between the two, which beat. They were both as fine as need be.²⁶

A short time later another very stirring Democratic meeting was held in Camden. A tall hickory pole, two hundred feet in height, was erected, and this time it stayed. The following paragraph is an account of the second Democratic rally at Camden:

A streamer sixty-five feet long, bearing the motto, "Douglas, Johnson, Vallandigham, and Victory", and a flag forty-five feet long were outstanding features. The Gratis wagon drawn by twenty-eight horses was surpassed by one from Butler County drawn by forty-five horses with a voter on each horse. In the afternoon, there were speeches, singing by the Glee Club, and music by the band. One hundred and fifty "Never Sleeps"²⁷ from Hamilton arrived on the eight o'clock train. After their arrival, there was a torch light parade, drills by various groups, and more speeches.²⁸

When the presidential election was over and Lincoln elected, Preble County showed a majority for the Republican candidate. Only two townships in Preble County, Lanier and Twin, gave a majority for the Democrats.²⁹ Obviously the Republicans in Camden felt that their time, effort, and money spent in meetings and rallies had helped to forward a good cause.

Camden again in 1861 had an opportunity to rally to Lincoln's cause after his election. After Fort Sumter was fired upon, Lincoln's first call for men was issued April 15, 1861. The response of the North was instantaneous. By the end of April, two companies of the Twentieth Ohio Volunteer Infantry enlisted for three months. These companies were made up mostly of Preble County men.³⁰ A meeting was held in Camden on August 26 to raise a

²⁶ The Democratic Press, (Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society at the Ohio State Museum, Columbus, Ohio), September 20, 1860.

²⁷ Democrats belonging to the Douglas faction were known as "Never Sleeps."

²⁸ White, op. cit., pp. 10-11. Democratic Press, op. cit., October 11, 1860.

²⁹ Eaton Weekly Register, op. cit., November 15, 1860.

³⁰ Ibid., August 16, 1861.

a volunteer company from this part of the county. Boys seemed determined to go, so it was thought advisable that boys of Canton and Sonners Township should go together in a company composed of friends and acquaintances.³¹

Near the outbreak of the rebellion Robert Williams from Canton enlisted for three months. After he returned he organized in Canton, September, 1862, Company B which was mustered in the 54th Ohio Regiment at Cincinnati. Corwin Rees, a Canton boy who was later in the thick of the fray in the great naval battle in Manila Bay with Admiral Dewey, was not quite sixteen at this time; but he enlisted in the company as a drummer boy. He went to the front along with Miles and John Elliot, Tom Bennett, Henry Marshall, James and John Kingler, William Runyon, P. J. Bohn, George Phillips, Henry Williams, William Morency, William Becker, Wesley, Henry, and Clark Hoff. David Rees, a brother of Corwin, was an adjutant with this regiment. While on horseback in the thick of the fight the young adjutant fell on June 27, 1864 at Fenesaw Mountain. Amos Shaeffer, of the same company, made a coffin out of a cracker box to give Rees a decent burial. The death of his brother was a terrible shock to Corwin to whom he was much attached. This 54th Ohio Regiment was under fire one hundred days during the Atlanta campaign and it served with distinction.³²

Canton, as well as all Preble County, was always ready and willing to assume its share of the burden. The following article helps to show more of the spirit that prevailed in Preble County in 1862 and all during the war:

On Tuesday morning, 31 young men from Eaton vicinity left for Camp Chase to answer the Governor's call for three months men. Several were to go from New Paris and Canton, making nearly a full company. The boys deserve great credit for the promptness with which they have acted. Old Preble is on hand whenever service is to be rendered. She is one of Uncle Sam's best props.³³

³¹ Ibid., August 30, 1861.

³² Preble County News (Preble County News Office, Canton, Ohio), July 3, 1903.

³³ Eaton Weekly Register, op. cit., June 12, 1862.

In 1862 men from Camden joined the group of soldiers called "Squirrel Hunters"³⁴ who went to Cincinnati to protect the city from the rebel, General Kirby Smith. Smith conceived the idea of gathering a strong force and making a dash at Cincinnati and capturing the city. He was but a few day's march from Cincinnati when his plan was discovered. Since there weren't enough Union soldiers within reach to check him, Governor Todd issued his proclamation calling on all Ohio men with rifles to report with arms and ammunition to General Lew Wallace at Cincinnati. Men arrived in the city and kept coming until there were nearly 1600 men with squirrel rifles and deer guns. Of that number, 373 came from Preble County and among them were several from Camden. In about ten days, Smith, seeing the Union forces were too strong for him, withdrew from the Cincinnati area and the "Squirrel Hunters" were sent home. The men had been away from their homes between twelve and fifteen days.³⁵ At a meeting of the Ohio Legislature on March 11, 1863, an act was passed ordering the issuance of formal discharge certificates "for the patriotic men of the state, who responded to the call of the governor, and went to the southern border to repel the invader, and who will be known in history as the "Squirrel Hunters."³⁶ Daniel Pottenger of Camden was one of the several "Squirrel Hunters" from this area. His grandson, Dean Pottenger of Camden, still has Mr. Pottenger's discharge.

War again came to Ohio in July, 1863 with startling suddenness. John Morgan, the Kentucky cavalry leader, darted northward with about 3000 horsemen

³⁴ The "Squirrel Hunters" were the untrained men who answered the Governor's call for men to protect Cincinnati. Each man took along his own hunting gun. Among the men from Camden were: Henry Greenfield, Daniel Pottenger, William Danner, and George Phillips. Preble County News, op. cit., February 12, 1914.

³⁵ R. E. Lowry, History of Preble County, Ohio, (Indianapolis, Indiana, B. F. Rowen and Company, Inc., 1915), p. 223.

³⁶ History of Preble County, Ohio, op. cit., p. 54.

toward Cincinnati.³⁷ Governor Todd issued a call for men from counties close to Cincinnati, which included Preble County. Immediately, Preble County rallied to the cause. Between six and seven hundred men left Eaton the next morning in response to Governor Todd's call of the previous day. The town of Camden sent 100 men to Cincinnati to help check Morgan's raid. More men had volunteered than they needed and more than they could arm so the Preble County men were thanked for their prompt response and returned to their homes. It was quite certain, before the dismissal of those men, that Morgan would be captured within a few hours, and he was.³⁸

Each time that the Souars Township and Camden received notice of their quota, it was filled without drafting. Perhaps men were well aware that if they didn't volunteer, they would eventually be drafted. They knew a volunteer received a full bounty of twenty-seven dollars in advance, one month's pay of thirteen dollars in advance, and seventy-five dollars at the end of his service. In addition, his family would receive assistance during his absence. The drafted men received no advance bounty and only eleven dollars per month. Too, they felt the drafted soldier might have to serve during the entire war instead of the three months for which most men were called.³⁹ In the two-hundred thirty-one regiments, twenty-six independent batteries of artillery, and five independent companies of cavalry which entered the field from Ohio, there were but 3750 drafted men. No doubt some volunteers were stimulated by the payment of liberal bounties, but many of the others were just desirous of helping the Union's case.⁴⁰

³⁷ Eugene H. Roseboom, The Civil War Era, 1850-1873, Carl Wittke (ed.), The History of the State of Ohio, 6 Vols. (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, 1944), IV, 423. Callbreath, II, 571-572.

³⁸ Eaton Weekly Register, op. cit., July 16, 1863.

³⁹ Eaton Weekly Register, July 24, 1863.

⁴⁰ Henry Howe, Historical Collections of Ohio, 2 Vol. (Columbus: Henry Howe and Son, 1889), I, 151.

Not only did men in Camden leave their homes to fight for the Union but the people at home did all they could to help. Articles needed by soldiers were collected and sent by people from Camden. As early as November, 1861, a long list of articles, and the names of the contributors appeared in an Eaton paper. Such things as gloves, socks, drawers, vests, undershirts, mittens, blankets, straw beds, and comforts were mentioned.⁴¹ In addition, money was raised at public affairs to help soldiers. A patriotic concert at Camden was given on April 15, 1862, by three young ladies of the town. Ella Guild, Sally Rober, and Emma Yost were the young ladies who prepared a musical entertainment and presented it in the Camden Methodist Church. The program was well attended and they made \$12.73, which was sent to the Sanitary Commission at Cincinnati to buy supplies for Ohio soldiers.⁴²

The women were urged by the Governor of Ohio to help win the war. Governor Tolt sent an appeal on August, 1862 to the ladies of Ohio telling how they could minister to the wants of the soldiers. His appeal, in part, contained the following:

"As some of you may be ignorant of the fact that our troops are suffering for want of vegetable diet, I beg to recommend that you cause to be put up large quantities of pickles, cabbage, cucumbers, and onions, and that you also see to it that an abundance of fruit, particularly apples and peaches, be dried and put away for the soldiers. God has blessed us with a plentiful supply of all these articles this season."⁴³

The women had an organization in Camden, as well as in other parts of the county, called the Ladies' Soldiers' Aid society. Their purpose was to collect supplies and to raise money to buy articles to send the soldiers on the battlefield and in hospitals. This society had various ways of raising money. A raspberry festival was held on June 7, 1863 at the depot in

⁴¹ Eaton Weekly Register, on. cit., August 16, 1861.

⁴² Eaton Weekly Register, on. cit., May 1, 1862.

⁴³ Eaton Weekly Register, on. cit., August 14, 1862.

Canton. Twenty-five cents was charged for the supper. A large crowd attended, and they realized \$80.60 for their effort.⁴⁴ Much credit must be given to these women who worked unceasingly without praise or glory to help win the war.

There was wide spread interest in 1863 in the contest for the election of the Governor of Ohio. One Democratic faction, commonly called "Copperheads" by the Unionists, chose Clement L. Vallandigham for its candidate, who was uncompromisingly against the war. By this time the name "Republican" had nearly disappeared when they referred to their party. The Union party, which had been so named after the firing upon Fort Sumter, pledged to stand for the Union without condition and to preserve it at any cost. This party nominated John Brough for governor.⁴⁵

Meetings of both parties—Unionists and Democrats—drew large crowds. Parades, banners, and partisan songs added to the excitement. Rallying to Vallandigham's candidacy were the poorly educated, the narrow minded, and those who were resentful toward the draft, taxes, and the Negro. They thronged to Democratic meetings on horseback, in wagons, and on foot to shout defiance at President Lincoln and Governor Todd.⁴⁶

In the Union party were the more educated and more prosperous, both in the city and county. The Protestant clergy were so strongly Unionist that many of them prayed for a Brough victory. The "Western Christian Advocate" of the Methodist Episcopal Church became practically a Union party organ. All over the state people were never before so aroused, so wide awake, so sensitive of the great issues, and so aware of the disgrace that would fall upon Ohio should the friends of the South prevail.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Eaton Weekly Register, op. cit., July 16, 1863.

⁴⁵ Roseboom, op. cit., p. 391. Galbreath, op. cit., II, 572.

⁴⁶ Roseboom, op. cit., p. 420.

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 420-421.

Even though the Union feeling was far the stronger and their meetings were better attended in Camden, there were several "Copperheads" in the village and in other parts of the county. The feeling between the two groups was not a pleasant one, and sometimes they came to blows. One such incident happened September, 1863 on Main Street in Camden. A group of sixty or seventy Vallandigham supporters from Butler County were riding through Camden on horseback to a mass meeting in Eaton. On Main Street just north of Hendrix Street this procession met Joseph Howard and William Patterson⁴⁸ with a two horse team hauling a saw log down the street. The procession, being three or four abreast, split its rank, some going to the west side and others to the east side of the street. One of the marshals of the day from the procession attempted to ride across the street in front of the team. The marshal rode so close to the horses' heads that the tongue of the wagon ran between the hind legs of his horse. This caused quite a disturbance between the Vallandigham men and Mr. Patterson, who was a Unionist. Stone-throwing, fist-fighting, tongue-lashings, cursing, and a general brawl followed. Mr. Patterson was assisted in warding off his assailants by Mr. Howard and his wagon whip. A lady finally helped to get Mr. Patterson into a nearby house to protect him from blows and the stones which were hurled at him. In the evening when the Vallandigham men returned from Eaton, T. C. Achey, the Constable of Somers Township, met them above town and demanded a surrender of the three men who had seemed to be the outstanding ruffians. The men who were accused promised to stop at the Magistrate's office when they entered town, but asked permission to ride in with the procession. When the parade

⁴⁸ Joseph Howard and William Patterson were Union men who lived in Camden.

stopped at the designated place, the three men were missing. It was reported that Jonas Randall, a Justice of the Peace of Somerville,⁴⁹ and Joseph Lane of Somerville helped two of the men escape by letting them get into their wagon, and the Somerville men rode on the horses.

Benjamin Kennedy, who lived on a farm adjoining Camden, was accused by Dan Payne⁵⁰ of helping the third Vallandigham man to escape by piloting him through one of the back alleys of Camden. In an article written to one of the papers Mr. Payne condemned Mr. Kennedy for his part in helping the escape. He ended his tirade by saying, "How can a man vote for Vallandigham and be an honest, law-abiding, order-loving citizen?" Mr. Kennedy denied knowing anything about the disturbance, and therefore he declared he could not have been able to help the man escape. Mr. Kennedy also emphatically stated that he was a law-abiding and order-loving citizen, and he intended to vote for Mr. Vallandigham.⁵¹ No doubt he voted that way because he and his family were very active Democrats.

The results of the election for the Governor of Ohio astonished both sides. Brough had a majority of one hundred thousand eight hundred and eighty-two. The overwhelming Union victory was a ringing indorsement of the war. There were rejoicings all over the North, and Lincoln sent this message to Brough early the next morning: "Glory to God in the highest, Ohio has saved the Union."⁵² In Preble County Brough had a majority of nine hundred fifty-nine.⁵³ The Unionists were jubilant over their great victory of truth and

⁴⁹ Somerville is a village three miles south of Camden.

⁵⁰ Dan Payne was a very strong Republican or Unionist who lived in Camden.

⁵¹ Eaton Weekly Register, op. cit., September 30, 1863.

⁵² Roseboom, op. cit., p. 420-21.

⁵³ Eaton Weekly Register, op. cit., September 27, 1866.

right. They held their big celebration at Eaton. People from Camden and all the surrounding towns were there. More than two thousand attended the celebration. The streets were avenues of glittering lights. Candles were in the windows, in the doorways, in the shrubbery, and on the fences. Every Union house had a light in it.⁵⁴

Lincoln was renominated in 1864 at Baltimore. In national politics the name "Union Party" was also substituted for "Republican" in order to win the votes of the Democrats in favor of the war. The Democrats, meeting at Chicago, nominated Samuel McClellan on a platform containing a plank written by the "Copperhead" Vallandigham.⁵⁵ Lincoln was re-elected in November by an electoral vote of two hundred and twelve to twenty-one, but his popular vote was only 400,000 more than McClellan's in a total of 4,000,000. Camden and Preble County were loyal to Lincoln in the election of 1864 in spite of the many reverses that had been suffered by the Union forces during the war. Lincoln received a majority of 1,013 votes in Preble County.⁵⁶

The news of the surrender of General Lee at Appomattox on April 9, 1865 was flashed over the country. Villages everywhere held celebrations. As soon as the news reached them,⁵⁷ Camden, and most all other towns, held jubilees similar to the one held at Eaton. The glorious news didn't reach Eaton until about ten a.m., April tenth. In less than a quarter of an hour thereafter the church bells pealed out; people from all over the town gathered and formed a procession. Headed by a cornet band the townspeople paraded all over town. Later speeches were made by prominent men of the village. In the evening the young people gathered store boxes, salt barrels, hogheads, crates,

⁵⁴ Ibid., October 22, 1863.

⁵⁵ Galbreath, op. cit., II, 574.

⁵⁶ Eaton Weekly Register, op. cit., September 27, 1866.

⁵⁷ Roseboom, op. cit., p. 435. Galbreath, op. cit., II, 577.

and any other available material to make a bonfire. This illuminated the public square while an enthusiastic crowd gathered round to witness the firing of cannons.⁵⁸

The celebration had scarcely ended before word came of the mad act of John Wilkes Booth. Cities and states were plunged into gloom. Camden, like other towns, was thrust into mourning. The proceedings at Camden after the the assassination were described in the following article:

"The day, according to previous arrangements, was observed by firing of cannons, the closing of public places, and business houses. Every person and residence was draped in mourning. The citizens assembled in the M. E. Church and were addressed by Rev. G. H. Webster in an able manner, to the entire satisfaction of the large audience said to be the largest ever assembled in Camden.

As it moved and carried unanimously that Mr. Webster be requested to furnish a copy for publication, further comment is unnecessary.

At a previous meeting a committee of three were appointed to draft resolutions expressive of the great calamity and report to the meeting. The committee reported the following preamble and resolution which were adopted and ordered to be published in the Eaton Register.

RESOLUTION

Whereas, in the midst of national rejoicing over the glimmering of peace, which began to peer through the gloom so long hanging like a pall over our beloved country; the same red hand of treason which has exhausted every means in attempts—but thank God futile attempts to destroy this wisest and best of human governments, has, as if to add infamy to crime, struck down our Chief Magistrate.

RESOLVED, That in the death of President Lincoln, we are called to mourn the loss not only of a great and good man, but one of the purest patriots and wisest Chief Magistrates ever called in the Providence of God to administer the affairs of a free people.

RESOLVED, That we deeply sympathize with his stricken family in this hour of their inexpressible sorrow.

RESOLVED, That to Andrew Johnson, the constitutional successor, your lamented President, we extend the same material and moral aid given his predecessor.

B. F. Vanausdal, Secretary⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Eaton Weekly Register, op. cit., April 13, 1865.

⁵⁹ Ibid., April 27, 1865.

Lincoln's amazing popularity with the common man was made evident by his death. The crowd that gathered at the religious service in the State House yard on the next Sunday afternoon was larger than the group that had fought to shake hands with him less than four years before. The passage of the Lincoln Funeral train through Ohio was a memorable event in the history of Ohio. More than fifty thousand, passing in a procession for six and a half hours, gazed at Lincoln's body in the rotunda of the State House. More than that number viewed the body of Cleveland. Huge bonfires were burning at every station, and crowds waited for hours during the night to catch a glimpse of the funeral train as it traveled toward the Indiana line. Depots were draped in mourning, and at one place an arch of evergreen had been erected over the track. Thus, the people of Ohio showed their deep and genuine grief for their beloved leader, Abraham Lincoln.⁶⁰

Lincoln was mourned by all—even by his political enemies. The following tribute was written by the editor of a Probosc County paper who had always supported Lincoln's political opponents:

"A great and good man has fallen. The announcement of the death of the President of the United States, by the hand of an assassin, has produced a pause in the current thoughts of the most heedless amongst us. It has spread a gloom everywhere, and expressions of sorrow and deep sympathy flow from the heart of every friend of his country. In connection with this sad event, we adopt the very appropriate remarks of a contemporary.

'Probably no event in the calendar of time, certainly no event in the history of this country, forebodes so much of evil or was so charged with calamity to the human race as this. The deed itself lacked no element of horror or atrocity.

'The time at which the deed was done was most fatal and deplorable. At no season during his administration had President Lincoln been in so commanding a position of usefulness to his fellowmen.

'In a moment like the present, in the midst of a calamity so astounding and crushing, human judgment of itself so powerless to divine or control the immediate future, it becomes a Christian people to fervently and sincerely invoke, and calmly rely upon the assistance and guidance of God.'⁶¹

⁶⁰ Roseboom, op. cit., p. 437.

⁶¹ Democratic Press, op. cit., April 20, 1865.

The 1896 Presidential election created more interest in the country than any since the Civil War. During the depression which followed the Panic of 1893 hard times, low prices, and much unemployment caused silver supporters to advocate an increase in the volume of currency as the logical method of relief. With a wave of silver sentiment spreading over the Democratic Party in the West, in 1896 William J. Bryan and William Seward were nominated for President and Vice-President. The party adopted a platform endorsing the free coinage of silver at the ratio of sixteen to one. William McKinley and Garrett A. Hobart were nominated by the Republicans. This group emphasized the tariff and the prosperity that was sure to come if McKinley were elected. To give as little offense to silver Republicans as possible, the party resolved to accept bimetallism by international agreement, but in the meantime to retain the gold standard. Mark Hanna, with the business and financial interests backing him, conducted a campaign of propaganda for McKinley and the tariff on a scale unheard of at that time.⁶²

During this campaign much enthusiasm was shown in Camden, especially among the Republicans which was the predominantly strong party in Camden as well as in Preble County. In October a Republican Club was organized in town with more than three hundred names enrolled. The local club, with J. P. Douglas as its president, kept its doors open night and day so the members and their friends would be at liberty to use the rooms.⁶³ Everyone who believed in sound money and protection were urged to display a McKinley picture in a conspicuous place. Camden, as well as other Preble County towns, held

⁶² Roseboom, Eugene H. and Weisenburger, Francis, P., A History of Ohio, James W. Rodabaugh, (ed.), (Columbus: The Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, 1953), pp. 250-251.

⁶³ Camden Gazette, (Preble County News Office, Camden, Ohio), October 15, 1896.

several Republican rallies. Large crowds turned out to hear popular speakers such as Stephen A. Douglas⁶⁴, Judge Harper of Cincinnati, and H. L. Morey of Hamilton.⁶⁵ Often something spectacular besides the speaker was used to attract a crowd. On one occasions the Republicans assembled at Gratis where they raised a McKinley and Hobart Pole before they heard an address by Charles Finch of Dayton.⁶⁶ Other times a parade headed by a band or two aroused enthusiasm.⁶⁷ The speakers were no different from political speakers before and since. They cleverly criticized McKinley's opponent on points, points that would influence a large number of votes. The gold standard advocates accused the Democratic candidate of saying that old soldiers had not earned their pensions by patriotism or heroic service. Bryan was supposed to have said that "he wondered how long it would take to exhaust the generation which feels itself injured by war." One Republican paper stated that "Mr. Bryan is curious to know how long the old soldiers are going to live in order that their pensions may stop. He has no more love for an old veteran than the devil has for holy water."⁶⁸ The outcome was a clear-cut Republican victory. McKinley was elected by a large plurality. The real basis for the success was the marshalling of the masters of capital for the party that upheld the gold standard and high tariff. Many of the industrial centers turned in large majorities for McKinley.⁶⁹ Camden, although a rural area, gave the Republican candidate one hundred twenty-two more votes than Bryan. After the election, on Saturday night Camden held a jollification for all Republicans of Somers Township. All homes of those who were celebrating were illuminated, a parade was held, cannons boomed, and brass bands played.⁷⁰

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- ⁶⁴ Ibid.,
⁶⁵ Ibid., November 5, 1896; October 15, 1896.
⁶⁶ Ibid., October 15, 1896.
⁶⁷ Ibid., November 5, 1896.
⁶⁸ Ibid., October 15, 1896.
⁶⁹ Roseboom and Weisenburger, op. cit., p. 252.
⁷⁰ Camden Gazette, op. cit., November 5, 1896.

Local questions of all kinds were overshadowed in 1914 by the outbreak of World War I in Europe. When the war began, Ohio's attitude was essentially neutral. After United States entered the war against Germany on April 6, 1917 all activities in Ohio for over a year and a half were largely subordinated to efforts to win the war.⁷¹ During those eighteen months the citizens of Camden, like all other Americans, lived a life filled with fear and dread. Those families who weren't worried over loved ones already drafted were deeply concerned over the anticipation of some dear one who might be called to his country's service at any time. Forty-seven stars appeared by May, 1918 in Camden's Service Flag which was presented to the local schools by the Camp Fire Girls⁷² but before the Armistice was signed several other stars were added. Nearly six hundred stars appeared by November, 1918 on Preble County's Service Flag which represented the soldiers, sailors, aviators, marines, nurses, and men in training schools.⁷³ When Camden's and Preble County's draftees left they traveled by train from their local town to Cincinnati and from there to Camp Sherman at Chillicothe.⁷⁴ Just before the war ended local men were stationed at Oxford, Ohio where they were receiving their training. Of the 100,000 American boys who lost their lives in the war for world freedom, Camden's human loss was two, Albert C. Justice and Phalus Harn.⁷⁵

Citizens in the community helped in whatever way they could. Many of the local ladies gave their time each Friday afternoon to help sew for the Red Cross. The meetings were held in the Masonic Temple where bandages

⁷¹ Roschoon and Weisenburger, op. cit., pp. 334-337.

⁷² Preble County News, op. cit., May 2, 1918.

⁷³ Ibid., November 11, 1918.

⁷⁴ Ibid., May 2, 1918.

⁷⁵ Ibid., May 1, 1919; December 19, 1918.

and badly needed garments for the hospitals were made.⁷⁶ Other citizens helped to make the four Liberty Loan drives and the Victory Loan campaign successful. School children, in particular, were urged and encouraged to sell War Savings Stamps. The local school with an enrollment of three hundred fifty exceeded the quota of twenty dollars per pupil expected from Preble County. The total sales in the Camden Schools were greater than any other school in the county, but two others exceeded the average sale per pupil enrolled. By the middle of December, 1918 Superintendent G. S. Harrison announced that the average sales per pupil in the school reached approximately forty dollars. The Seventh and Eighth Grades were leaders in the sales with an average of eighty dollars, per pupil. Other people who participated in "heatless", "meatless", "wheatless", and even "smokeless" days were doing their bit toward helping win the war. Men were asked to buy Saving Stamps with the money saved by abstinence from tobacco on Smokeless Days.⁷⁷

The most outstanding event in Camden connected with World War I was the Red Cross White Elephant Sale. The auction was scheduled for October 23, but the influenza epidemic in the community compelled the committee to cancel the date. In the meantime peace was declared but plans for the sale were continued. After the quarantine was lifted on November 23 was set for the sale. On that particular day the weather became very cold and disagreeable. It was a task for the auctioneers to hold the crowd, but the people present had the proper spirit combined with the willingness to spend their money.

⁷⁶ This information came from Mrs. Eva Duskey who helped with Red Cross sewing during World War I.

⁷⁷ Preble County News, op. cit., May 2, 1918; December 19, 1918.

The total receipts of the sale were sufficient proof of these qualities. The community was generous not only in its buying but also in its giving. Among the donations were nine head of horses, ten head of cattle, twenty-two head of hogs, several chickens, many bushels of grain and potatoes, food of all kinds, and various other articles. Horses and ponies sold from three to forty dollars. A pumpkin which had been beautifully marked by nature was resold many times until it finally netted the committee over twenty dollars. Another item, a glass shepherd's staff, created much bidding. Pat Gathygan gave the highest bid and received the cane. A large cake probably attracted more attention than any other item at the sale. Because of a little political scrap, it created much bidding and was finally sold for a nice sum. A group of local Democrats concluded that the fine large cake should be bought and sent to Governor Cox. The Republicans soon heard about their plan and remembering their party's defeat at the last general election, they were determined that the cake would not go to the governor. When the cake was put up at auction late in the evening it created considerable interest as the two factions ran the price up beyond all expectation. The Republicans finally bought the cake for fifty dollars and later sent it to Senator Warren G. Harding. Ohio's chief executive received a smaller cake which the Democrats bought for twenty-five dollars.⁷⁸

The ladies of the local Red Cross served dinner and supper to several hundred people in the Opera House. At the close of the sale the young people arranged a dance in the same building. These receipts added considerable to the day's proceeds.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Ibid., November 28, 1918.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

J. H. Lackey, manager of the Red Cross Sale, very systematically organized and arranged all the details. Previous to the starting of the auction the Eldorado Band gave a fine concert. Another interesting feature which helped the success of the sale was the engaging of several very popular auctioneers. Incessant work from 11:00 a.m. until 9:30 p.m. required several good sale criers. Another attraction of this day was when an airplane from Wright Field at Dayton flew over town just before the noon hour and gave a splendid exhibition. It was impossible for the aviator to land anywhere near but the appearance of the plane added to the spirit of the day.⁸⁰

When the sale was over the committee was able to announce receipts of \$4,350.00. Over \$4,000.00 was clear which was handed over to the Camden Branch of the Preble County Chapter of the Red Cross. Since the war was over the local Red Cross Chapter felt it not advisable to give the money to the county organization.⁸¹ Ever since, that money has been kept in Camden in the White Elephant Fund entrusted to a committee of three. Occasionally this fund has been tapped for local emergencies but only in rare and pressing cases.

The turning point of the war started March 18, 1918 when the great drive of the Allies began, but the most glorious news came Monday morning, November 11, at 2:10 when Associated Press operators called "flash" to the telegraph editors over the country. Three minutes later the larger cities knew that Germany had surrendered and the demonstrations began. Not until 3:00 a.m. was the first word received over the wires in Camden which announced the signing of the articles calling for the cessation of hostilities

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

between Germany and the Allies.⁸² Willie Craig, a local boy who always met the early train to get the mail, carried the wonderful news up town. He hurriedly notified two other town musicians. Cal Taylor with his fife, Bill Wilson with a tenor drum, and Willie Craig with his bass drum marched up and down the streets, arousing the people and informing them of the end of the war. At this early hour Camden started the greatest and most joyous jollification ever witnessed in town. Just as the villagers were awakening, a local stock dealer, Charles Benson, came into town with a load of hogs enroute to the Cincinnati stock yards. When he heard the reason for all the commotion he throw the lantern he was carrying high into the air. When it landed in the middle of the main square the globe broke, the kerosene ran out and soon was burning. Spectators at the scene rushed to Charles White's store, picked up wooden packing boxes from along the building, and threw the wood on the fire. Soon a huge bonfire was flaming high in the sky. This was kept burning most of the day.⁸³

Mayor Edward Slover issued a proclamation early in the morning asking that the stores be closed for the day. The local schools followed the example of the business houses and closed their doors, too. On the band stand at the corner of Main and Central Avenue a number of old school bells were placed. The young Camdenites kept them ringing from early morning until late that night.⁸⁴

Words were inadequate to describe the feelings of people everywhere. The local editor stated that one might as well try with a tin whistle to imitate the roar of Niagara Falls as to attempt to convey in printed words an

⁸² Ibid., November 14, 1918.

⁸³ This information came from Harry E. Neff, Camden, Ohio, who at that time lived above "That Restaurant" on North Main Street, which was very close to all the activity.

⁸⁴ Preble County News, op. cit., November 14, 1918.

impression of the national jubilation. There never was before nor since in Camden another demonstration like the one which took place on that particular Monday. The streets were filled with a shouting, good-natured jollifying throng of men, women, and children. None was too old or too young to join in the demonstration. Adults whose dignity was unshaken under ordinary conditions forgot themselves under the stress of the occasion and threw reserve to the winds. By afternoon a really wonderful parade was staged considering the short time in which it was organized. The procession was headed by members of the K. of P. Lodge dressed in their uniform regalia. They were followed by a hundred or more decorated automobiles and trucks and many on horseback. The machines were all patriotically decorated. One car in particular drew attention by dragging an effigy of the Kaiser in the street. Great was the celebrating because people truly believed that the "war to end wars" had really ended.⁸⁵

World War I had not been ended long before the country was racked by a depression. Camden was in the grip of the depression in the late 1920's and early 1930's as other parts of the country were. Since the community was a rural region suffering was not as acute here as it was in the cities. Nevertheless Camden had its hardships. Many people who had gone to the cities to work had to return to their families after shops and factories closed. Those who were fortunate enough to keep their jobs had their salaries slashed.⁸⁶ Some people worked for as little as five to nine dollars per week. Farm wages in 1933 were the lowest they had been in thirty-four years. Some farm hands received forty cents a day, while others worked for their room and board.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Ibid.
⁸⁶ Ibid., January 26, 1933.
⁸⁷ Ibid.

Prices of farm products were extremely low. Eggs retailed in Camden for eleven cents a dozen, and ninety cents per bushel was received for wheat.⁸⁸ To show people that prices could be worse, Edward Slover found some old papers of his father-in-law's which revealed prices in 1899. During that year corn sold for \$.15 per bushel; wheat \$.60; oats \$.25; and hay \$5.00 per ton.⁸⁹

During the depression many changes were experienced in the lives of the citizens of Camden. Many people were forced to sell their houses and farms at Sheriff Sales. It was quite common to have a house which was appraised as low as \$1,100.00 to be put up for sale the third time before a bid was placed on the property.⁹⁰ Because of financial conditions Camden schools were not able to operate for a full term and closed one month early in 1933,⁹¹ the town tried to economize by reducing the number of street lights from sixty-two to thirty-one.⁹² So many protests were received by the council that after one year of poorly lighted streets, the lights were again connected.⁹³

Several families in and around Camden had to be furnished food. Most of them were quite deserving, but there were a few who were always ready to take advantage of every situation. Government foods were distributed by welfare agencies to every county in each state. Camden received its share. Flour and other products made from the government's surplus grain were greatly appreciated by hungry people.⁹⁴

The new Roosevelt administration in the early 1930's commanded attention by its efforts to find a way to salvage the economic structure of American

⁸⁸ Ibid., March 10, 1932.

⁸⁹ Ibid., November 26, 1931.

⁹⁰ Ibid., March 9, 1933; July 6, 1933.

⁹¹ Ibid., April 13, 1933.

⁹² Ibid., March 31, 1932.

⁹³ Ibid., February 2, 1933.

⁹⁴ Ibid., June 23, 1932.

life. The pension proposal in November, 1933 received a majority which established a system of aid to impoverished persons who had reached the age of sixty-five and had resided in Ohio for fifteen years. Several in Camden took advantage of the new pension law.⁹⁵ The same year that the pension plan went into effect, Camden joined the nation in cooperation with the National Industrial Recovery Act. At least forty-six business places in the town displayed the eagle bearing the letters, N. R. A., which was a sign they cooperated in supporting the N. R. A. Code. The code meant a shorter working week, made employment possible for more individuals, and relieved the strain that had been on the community for three years. The Neff and Fry Company, Camden's main industry at that time, started operation in August, 1933 under the N. R. A. Instead of the men working fifty-one hours each week, the plant operated on two shifts of six hours daily, or a total of thirty-six hours per week for each employee. Under this arrangement the company found it necessary to add six additional men to their pay roll. This plan which was followed by other businesses was of great benefit to Camden and to the whole country.⁹⁶ Some men in this community worked on public construction such as road building which the government had instituted as a substitute for the "dole" which was destructive to self respect.⁹⁷ Many of the local unemployed were furnished work for several months on the two federal projects in Camden, the waterworks and the sewage systems which were both under P. W. A.⁹⁸ Some found work in smaller federal projects such as recreational programs, while others continued to accept relief.

⁹⁵ Roseboom and Weisenburger, op. cit., p. 366.

⁹⁶ Preble County News, op. cit., August 31, 1933.

⁹⁷ Ibid., August 11, 1933.

⁹⁸ Ibid., September 20, 1934.

Camden, as all parts of the country, slowly emerged from the depression, but it was soon faced with other problems. It soon realized it must shoulder its burden against totalitarianism. The Nazi "blitzkrieg" of 1940 and the stunning tragedy of Pearl Harbor in 1941 brought overwhelming evidence that all Ohio citizens, along with the rest of the United States, could not escape being involved in the political and military problems of Europe and Asia. The first realization that war was an actuality came to Camden on October 16, 1940 when all its young men from twenty-one through thirty-five registered in Laton. It became a sadder reality in the latter part of 1940 when the boys under the Selective Service Act were drafted and left their homes and loved ones.⁹⁹ Just one year after the first contingent left Preble County the thirtieth group of men had been called from that area and in each were some men from the Camden community.¹⁰⁰ As the months rolled by each call was larger. Forty-seven Preble boys left in October, 1942 which was the largest group accepted since selective service started nearly two years before.¹⁰¹ All the boys drafted previous to February, 1943 were taken into the army, but in that month ninety-three men from Preble were accepted and assigned to the army, navy, marines, or coast guard. At this time all men over thirty-eight who had[^] yet been drafted were placed in 4-F classification.¹⁰² By December of the same year fathers were taken from the Camden community. Out of the sixty-six men who left in December, fourteen were fathers. It was necessary to take fathers to fill the quotas. By the time the Albert J. Justice Post erected and dedicated the Honor Roll in Camden on May 28, 1944

⁹⁹ Ibid., May 29, 1941.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., October 23, 1941.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., October 1, 1942.

¹⁰² Ibid., February 1, 1943.

two-hundred seventy-five boys and girls with Canton addresses appeared on the list.¹⁰³ One year later the Ohio Selection Service Headquarters announced that up to June 1, 1945, 1575 men and women had been inducted or had enlisted from Preble County. That number from a population of about 23,000 men, women, and children was a sizable contribution for one area to make to the fighting forces.¹⁰⁴

Before V. J. Day arrived many families received messages that started, "We regret to inform you." The letter bore the news that a son, brother, or husband had been killed, wounded, missing, or interned. At least ten of those who left this small community never returned; others were crippled for life. That was the price of triumph.¹⁰⁵

In addition to the heart breaks caused by the loss of life, crippling, and long separations all citizens felt the effects of the war through their neighbors' sorrows, and many inconveniences caused by federal regulations. The year 1942 saw the beginning of much rationing for the folks at home. The rationing of sugar,¹⁰⁶ tires,¹⁰⁷ gasoline,¹⁰⁸ shoes, coffee, liquor, meat, and canned goods was all part of the program for civilians to help win the war. Ration books were printed and distributed four times. Books No. 5 for meats, canned food, and sugar and a new A Gasoline Book were ready to be printed in August, 1945 when V. J. Day¹⁰⁹ arrived. O. P. A.¹¹⁰ called a halt on the printing of the books. The stamps in Book 4 were sufficient until rationing was discontinued a few weeks later.¹¹¹ Ration books, ration stamps, no tires, little gasoline were all inconveniences, but they really caused no

103 Ibid., May 25, 1944.

104 Ibid., June 21, 1945.

105 Ibid., January 4, 1945.

106 Ibid., March 26, 1942.

107 Ibid., January 17, 1942.

108 Ibid., November 19, 1942.

109 V. J. Day stands for Victory Over Japan.

110 O. P. A. was Office of Price Administration.

111 Preble County News, op. cit., August 16, 1945.

suffering or hardships in comparison to that experienced by boys who faced the enemy. The rationing of food, gasoline, and tires was responsible for the closing of Camden's theaters for about a year,¹¹² for cancelling the Lincoln Banquet one year,¹¹³ and likewise cancelling the ninety-three year old Preble County Fair in 1942 to conform with the request of the national defense transportation director.¹¹⁴

There was a serious shortage by 1942 of various materials vital in the war industries. One factor that threatened national defense was the shortage of scrap iron. Steel was the backbone of defense. Many blast furnaces and open hearths, for lack of scrap metal, were in danger of being blacked out when they were badly needed to pour out molten metal to make weapons with which our boys could "avenge Pearl Harbor." The American Legion conducted the first scrap metal drive on January, 1942 in Camden.¹¹⁵ The need for metal continued to be urgent. Locally, August 22 was named Junk Rally Day which proved to be a complete success. All metal, rubber, and burlap were delivered to Connell's junk yard if it were sold, or if it were donated it was taken to the Town Hall. The local chairman, George Pheanis, reported five tons of scrap iron were collected, one ton of wire fence, one hundred-fifty pounds of burlap, and over two hundred pounds of rubber.¹¹⁶ The biggest drive for scrap metal was made during October of the same year. Preble County had a quota of nine hundred tons which it more than filled. Around two hundred leaders besides school children made every effort possible to locate scrap on farms and in villages. An individual in the county collected

112 Ibid., July 22, 1943.

113 Ibid., January 22, 1942.

114 Ibid., July 2, 1942.

115 Ibid., January 22, 1942.

116 Ibid., August 27, 1942.

54,900 pounds of wire fence. A ravine on one farm yielded ten tons of fence and 5000 pounds of other scrap metal. In an abandoned stone quarry near New Paris, Ohio, rails used by an old traction company were located. Cannon and decorative pieces from cemeteries were collected. Two Civil War cannons from Camden's cemetery were donated. An eleven ton safe and vault used in the county's old courthouse were given to the drive. Every house and institution contributed anything that could be discarded. When the drive ended the county had over a thousand tons of scrap metal.¹¹⁷

War is costly and it has to be financed. The Treasury Department financed part of the war by selling War Bonds and Savings Stamps which matured in ten years and were purchased at seventy-five per cent of their maturity value. The first War Bond and Stamp Drive came on May 2, 1942. Every home was called on by local citizens known as Minute Men which in Camden were ten women. Each wage earner was asked to assume his proper share in the responsibility of financing the war by making a voluntary pledge to purchase bonds or stamps on a weekly or monthly basis. This plan was used to refrain from demanding compulsory bond buying or making too drastic tax measures.¹¹⁸ At the end of the first drive, Camden's and the entire county's quota was more than filled.¹¹⁹ When the second War Loan Campaign came in April, 1943 the country was asked for a loan of \$13,000,000,000.00. Everyone was urged to buy extra bonds even though they were participating in the payroll savings plan. Preble County's quota was \$1,065,000.00, but in spite of the large figure it went over the top by \$50,000.00.¹²⁰ Only a few months later came

117 Ibid., October 8, 1942; November 12, 1942.

118 Ibid., April 30, 1942.

119 Ibid., July 9, 1942.

120 Ibid., April 15, 1943; May 6, 1943.

the Third War Bond Drive with a larger quota than the previous one for Camden. The slogan "How Good An American Are You?" was used to arouse patriotism.¹²¹ During another drive the letters I. A. D. U. Y. were displayed everywhere to arouse curiosity. It was revealed later that the committee had adopted the slogan "It All Depends Upon You."¹²² Before V. J. Day arrived eight War Loan Drives had been staged. Each time Camden reached its quota and usually went over the top. People in the community were ready and anxious to back the boys in service.¹²³

Another drive which touched the purses of home folks was a house to house canvas to raise funds for United Service Organizations (U.S.O.) The money was used to provide adequate, wholesome recreation for men and women in the armed service. Preble County's goal was four thousand. Each town and community contributed generously and the drive went over the top by a substantial amount.¹²⁴

Camden was located in a vulnerable spot if the United States had been attacked because of the proximity to both Cincinnati and Dayton. These two localities would have been chief targets since they were both key cities in the production of war material. The town officials felt an ounce of prevention was worth more than a pound of cure so civilian defense preparations were made in Camden. Fire watchers, air raid wardens, and messenger boys were all appointed and instructed. Camden's first air raid drill in August, 1942 was followed a few months later by another one held in conjunction with a nation wide test. December 7 at 12:25, the exact hour that Japan made their attack on Pearl Harbor, the whole nation was alerted. Camden's air raid drill

¹²¹ Ibid., August 19, 1943.

¹²² Ibid., January 13, 1943.

¹²³ Ibid., July 5, 1945.

¹²⁴ Ibid., September 3, 1942; October 1, 1942.

was very successful. Eighty-eight civilian defense volunteers took their posts when the warning sounded with three short blasts on a special whistle installed in the Town Hall. Civilians all remained in doors during the ten minute alert.¹²⁵ At other times the drills in Camden were staged at night when blackouts were necessary. When the signal sounded local defense workers immediately went to their watch towers and other assigned posts. Street lights were turned off, homes were darkened, and traffic was halted. During the war these drills continued to keep people prepared and trained in case of an emergency.¹²⁶

During the early months of 1943 a tin can salvage program was outlined and stressed by the State War Production Board. There was a critical need of tin and the country's greatest source of this metal could come from "detinning". Everyone was asked to save and prepare tin cans by having them washed, cutting both ends out, and then pressing them flat. Camden's Mayor, Lloyd Townsley, issued a proclamation stating that tin can salvage was one of the "musts" for winning the war. Cans were collected by school children and taken to the school house where they were stored until a truck load had been gathered.¹²⁷ Children continued to collect cans until victory was assured.¹²⁸

Another very acute shortage appeared during 1943 in paper and paper products. After so many boys had been sent overseas there developed a critical need for paper to supply shipping cartons for food and other supplies. To help alleviate the shortage, Preble County schools cooperated with the National Salvage Campaign to secure scrap paper. During the week of November 8-15, 1943 school boys and girls made a special effort to get paper from their

¹²⁵ Ibid., December 3, 1942; December 10, 1942.

¹²⁶ Ibid., March 11, 1943.

¹²⁷ Ibid., January 7, 1943; January 21, 1943.

¹²⁸ Ibid., April 3, 1944.

homes and neighbors. Superintendent E. W. Schwing reported 12,735 pounds of paper collected at Camden during the drive. In the county, Lanier collected the most, more than ten tons. For the duration of World War II schools continued their paper drives. At the local school the younger children were very enthusiastic and dependable collectors, but they were unable to continue their patriotic work after most of the available express wagons broke down by the weight of the paper. When conveyances for the younger group were no longer accessible the Junior Class took over the collecting of scrap paper as a class project and they have continued ever since.¹²⁹

A very fine patriotic project was the Camden Victory Community Sale which was held April 3, 1943 in front of the Town Hall. Many people didn't wait to be solicited but brought baled hay, pigs, timothy seed, house paint, household goods, and every conceivable article. Chairman Tom Donahoe and his committee had the support of the entire community. An example of the patriotic spirit was shown when a dollar bill, donated by Rhodes Puckett who then had four sons in the service, was auctioned off. Charles Smith bought the bill for five dollars. The sale was a grand success. The receipts were in the neighborhood of fifteen hundred dollars. The purpose of this sale was to establish a fund for the committee that had charge of the column "Camden Behind the Men Behind the Guns" that appeared each week in the Proble County News after July 9, 1942 until the end of the war. The committee not only printed news of each boy or girl in service that had a Camden address, but each one received a copy of the local paper each week. The hometown paper was a very welcome gift and to receive it was almost like getting a letter from home. The Victory Sale made it possible for each person in service from the

¹²⁹ Ibid., January 10, 1944; February 10, 1944; March 30, 1944; April 13, 1944; September 14, 1944; May 3, 1945.

Camden community to get his Proble County News regularly besides a package at Christmas time.¹³⁰

Joy knew no bounds when news was received May 8, 1945 that Germany had surrendered unconditionally to the Western Allies and Russia after five years, eight months, and six days of bloodshed and destruction. Hilariousness at the news that V. E. Day had arrived was tempered by the realization that the war against Japan remained to be finished and many casualties were still ahead. From the immediate vicinity there were approximately two hundred in the armed forces through out the European theatre of war. President Truman asked that victory not be made the occasion for unrestrained celebration. The following Sunday was set aside as a day of prayer. Quite a few of the business houses in Camden closed on May 8 or part of the day. "Comments of local people upon word that Germany had surrendered ranged from spontaneous thanksgiving and determination that the nation's efforts should go forward unceasingly until the Jap War was completed."¹³¹

Just three months later Japan accepted the Allied peace terms. World War II ended Tuesday, August 14, 1945 with Japan's unconditional surrender. The solemn ceremony took place on the mighty battleship U. S. S. Missouri. The horrible war that lasted for three years and nine months for the United States was officially ended with complete victory for the Allies.¹³²

Locally the President's announcement of V. J. Day was followed by the ringing of church bells and the blowing of the fire siren besides various other noise making devices were placed in operation. Even the weather chimed in with several claps of thunder as a rain storm approached. Joy spread

130 Ibid., July 9, 1942; March 18, 1943; April 8, 1943.

131 Ibid., May 10, 1945.

132 Ibid., September 6, 1945.

everywhere and many Camdenites journeyed to near-by cities to participate in celebration. People had anticipated the surrender announcement for several days and this checked the outburst of excitement which followed the news of the Armistice at the close of World War I.¹³³

The citizens of Camden, like those in Preble County, have been predominantly Republican ever since the party was formed. The town, though, has been stronger in the Republican faith than the county because there are a few instances in the history of Preble when the majority of the votes went to a large number of the local, state, or national Democratic office seekers. Never in the history of Camden has this been true, not even when the county went Democratic.

The first time was in November, 1910 that the Democrats ever had a majority of the county offices. In that year their Representative to the General Assembly, their County Treasurer, County Surveyor, Prosecuting Attorney, and two County Commissioners were all elected. It was quite unusual for Preble County to choose so many Democratic officers, but it really wasn't too surprising either. There was a trend in every state toward Democratic candidates. Voters everywhere, after a long period of unrest, expressed their disapproval of the Republican party and caused a landslide. In Ohio, Governor Harmon was elected by seventy thousand. James M. Cox, Congressman for the Third District, carried all counties in the district and had a 10,000 majority. In Camden, not a single county officer was chosen among the Democrats except one commissioner who received a small majority. Democratic Governor Harmon received but 104 votes from Camden while Warren Harding received one hundred fifty two. James Cox received a majority of only one vote over Congressman

¹³³ Ibid., August 16, 1945.

Young even though Camden was the home of Gilbert Cox who was the father of the candidate and a well respected citizen.¹³⁴

Again in 1912 it was quite unusual that Preble County voted a majority for most of the local and national Democratic officers. In the county, Democrats were victorious in all offices except Recorder and one Commissioner; Ed B. Verts, who was elected Sheriff, was the first Democrat to hold that office since 1876 when John Townsend had served. It had been thirty-six years that the Republicans had had unbroken sway in that department of the county government.¹³⁵ On the National and State ticket Preble voted a majority for Woodrow Wilson, President; James Cox, Governor; Warren Gard, Congressman; and Michael Cahill, Senator. Regardless of Preble's vote the majority of Camden people remained true to the Republican party. Every Republican county-office-seeker, except Probate Judge, received a majority of votes in Camden.¹³⁶ There were a few Democrats in Camden. At least there were enough to cause one loyal party man to enter into an election bet which later furnished an abundance of amusement to the townspeople. Al Dearth, the local jeweler, and Mr. Harve Bader, an implement dealer, agreed that in case Theodore Roosevelt was elected the latter was to wheel in a wheelbarrow the former from Bader's Implement Store¹³⁷ to the south end of town and return. In the event of the election of Woodrow Wilson, the situation would be reversed. Mr. Dearth was obliged to push the one-wheeled conveyance which was decorated in grand style. Oscar Pocock¹³⁸ acted as marshall of the parade. A large crowd witnessed the affair and enjoyed the fun to a greater extent than the participants. Mr. Dearth wasn't at all delighted with

¹³⁴ Ibid., November 10, 1910.

¹³⁵ Ibid., November 7, 1912.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ The Bader Implement Store was located on North Main Street just two buildings north of the present Mobil Gas Station.

¹³⁸ Oscar Pocock was one time an implement dealer in Camden and later became postmaster.

his task after traveling a few blocks, and naturally selected the roughest section of the street in his journey.¹³⁹

Four years later when President Wilson was re-elected the Democrats carried Preble County by practically a clean sweep with the exception of governor and three county offices. Because of the unusual victory the greatest jollification in the county's political history was held in Eaton under the direction of the party's County Executive Committee. Democrats from all parts of the county journeyed to the celebration. A grand parade, headed by Eaton's Band and other bands, passed through the streets amid loud shouts and cheers while cannon salutes were fired at regular twenty minute intervals. Despite the fact that Preble had voted Democratic Camden remained practically Republican. On the county ticket only three Democrats received a small majority, and not one national or state candidate of that party was given a majority in Camden.¹⁴⁰

In 1932 Camden recorded more Democratic votes than any time in history. That year the Democrats swept the nation, the state, and the county. The election resulted in a landslide vote unparalleled in the history of the party. Preble County was included in the Democratic landslide. With one exception, all the candidates of the county Democratic ticket were swept into office. In Camden, the Democratic candidate for governor, Congressman, and Representative received a majority, and the county Coroner and Treasurer on the Democratic ticket each had a plurality.¹⁴¹ In spite of the fact that Franklin Roosevelt was very popular everywhere the Republican presidential candidate, Herbert

¹³⁹ Preble County News, op. cit., November 7, 1912.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., November 9, 1916; November 16, 1916.

¹⁴¹ The following Democratic officers were given a majority in Camden: White, Governor; Harlan, Congressman; Eikenberry, Representative; Alford, Treasurer; Treffinger, Coroner.

Hoover, received three more votes in Camden than his opponent.¹⁴² On another occasion when the Democrats swept the state and elected Martin L. Davey as Governor, neither Preble County or Camden gave a majority of their votes for the Democrats. Republicans elected all but three of the county officers and piled up over a thousand majority for the defeated Republican candidate, Clarence J. Brown. Camden chose every Republican state and county official except County Sheriff Fahrenholz.¹⁴³ This example of voting in 1934 has been typical of Camden's politics during the years.

To cite examples from the last three presidential elections is further proof that Camden has remained predominantly Republican. Two hundred forty votes were cast in Camden in 1944 for Franklin Roosevelt while 309 were received by the defeated Republican candidate, Thomas Dewey. At the next election, 1948, Harry S. Truman was given 223 votes and again the defeated Republican candidate, Dewey, received the majority, 317. When the Republicans came back into power in 1952 Adlai Stevenson, the Democratic candidate, received but 210 votes while Dwight D. Eisenhower, his victorious opponent, was the recipient of 408.¹⁴⁴ Whether the nation goes Republican or whether it goes Democratic, Camden has usually, with a few exceptions, given the majority of its votes to the Republican candidates.

¹⁴² Preble County News, op. cit., November 10, 1932.

¹⁴³ Ibid., November 8, 1934.

¹⁴⁴ "Abstracts, Preble County Board of Elections," (Board of Elections Office, Preble County Court House, Eaton, Ohio, 1944-1955).