

LEAVING CINCINNATIMarch 17, 2003Walter P. Herz

*Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,  
But to be young was very heaven!*

The year was 1868, the place Cincinnati and the blissful person Peter H. Clark, the city's most prominent and respected Afro-American, in the final bloom of youth at 39. His first career, as an abolitionist speaker and writer, was over. It included living with Frederick Douglass in Rochester, N.Y. for a year and a half helping edit his paper and filling anti-slavery speaking engagements throughout the mid-West; and he was a leader in the *antebellum* State Meetings of Colored Men that pressed the Ohio legislature for the vote and other civil rights.

Clark's second career-as a public school educator - began in 1850 and reached full flower with his successful lobbying for the first public colored high school in Ohio. It was named for Clark's uncle, John I. Gaines, the man most responsible for getting the State Legislature to enact the 1849 law authorizing public schools for colored children. Gaines High opened in 1866 with Clark as its Principal. Already principal of the colored Western District School, he was now the only educator in the city charged with the direct responsibility for educating students in grades 1-12. By 1868 Clark was - as he would remain for the next twenty years - nationally recognized as a demanding and highly effective educator.

Now Clark's third career - as a political activist - was about to flourish in tandem with his second one. He was an active Republican from the party's founding, and cast his first ballot in 1856 for its presidential nominee, General Fremont. As one of the few Afro-American political activists in *antebellum* Cincinnati, he got to know two prominent founders and early backers of the Party --abolitionist attorneys and future judges Alphonso Taft and George Hoadly. In the spring of 1867 the Reconstruction Act was passed by Congress, and later that year the 14th Amendment was ratified by two-thirds of the states. That Fall Rutherford B. Hayes, the former Union General and Radical Republican Congressman from Hamilton County, was elected Governor with Clark's support; and Grant's election in 1868 solidified Republican power in the White House.

While it's true that Ohio voters had overwhelmingly defeated a Negro Suffrage Amendment to the Ohio Constitution in 1867, Hayes was an ardent public supporter of Afro-American rights, and the 15th Amendment was destined for passage by Congress in a matter of months.

In 1868 Peter H. Clark was widely acclaimed as the State's leading Afro-American educator; he had established himself as an effective and respected participant in the City, County and State Republican Party Organizations; he was an active member of the Unitarian Church -- religious home to a number of the City's most powerful business, professional and political leaders, including Hoadly and Taft; he was, as he had been throughout his life, involved in the affairs of Allen Temple, the oldest A.M.E. Church in Ohio and a tower of strength in the Afro-American community; he had a loving and supportive wife with three fine children; he was the honored intellectual and social leader among Afro-Americans; and he was respected in important White circles. He had good reason for his conviction that Afro-Americans would soon secure full citizenship rights, and that he would play a prominent role advancing this cause - in Cincinnati and throughout the State. Bliss it was, indeed, for Peter H. Clark, in that dawn to be alive!

Two results of the Civil War had opened the window of opportunity for achieving Afro-American citizenship: the first, of course, was emancipation itself; and the other was establishment of a strong national government with the power to end the dominance of states' rights. The first fruits were the passage of the 13th Amendment abolishing slavery in 1865; passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1866 nullifying the Dred Scott decision by defining all persons born in the United States as national citizens, and specifying their rights irrespective of race; and ratification of the 14th Amendment in 1867, prohibiting the states from violating individual rights protected in the Bill of Rights. These actions, along with the 15th Amendment ratified in 1870 providing all male citizens with the right of suffrage, established the basis of our modern national government. However, passage of the 15th Amendment by only a single vote in the Ohio Senate and by just two votes in the House--after its ratification was already ensured by passage in enough other states--demonstrated once again the State's tenuous commitment to full Afro-American citizenship. In fact, so unpopular was Afro-American suffrage in Ohio that Hayes avoided discussion of the 15th Amendment during his re-election campaign in 1869. Even so, the former radical Republican Congressman's known favorable position almost defeated him in a close election.

On April 11, 1870 Clark proclaimed to a white audience at the G.A.R. Post at 7th and Vine: "We must not suppose that the ballot will sweep away all social distinctions. The theory of the American government is, that men widely separated by social lines, by poverty and wealth, by ignorance and culture, and race, may live quietly together, meeting on a grand political level but separate in all else. Education and wealth are the levers with which social distinction may be leveled, and with the ballot we may gain the standing-ground for the acquisition of these."

Just one year later, April 6, 1871, the *Enquirer* reported on a meeting of 300 Republican Party members - they were subsequently referred to as Liberal, or Progressive, Republicans--gathered to express their grave concern over the corruption and ineptitude in the Grant Administration, and the need for a more effective long-term policy in the South. Three men spoke: Jacob Cox, who had just resigned as Secretary of the Interior over interference with his efforts to make needed reforms; Judge Stanley Matthews, soon destined for the Senate and Supreme Court; and Peter H. Clark, whose participation underscored the respect he had earned in high Party circles. Clark's Unitarian Church friend George Hoadly was also an active member of the group, which was part of a serious Northern effort to deny Grant re-nomination for the Presidency in 1872.

Later in 1871 Clark spoke at the August First celebration in New Richmond where he expounded on the need for a national civil rights law to assure enforcement of the 14th and 15th Amendments in the South. He warned against the Democrats' lure of a so-called "new departure" designed to attract Liberal Republican and Afro-American votes: "Imagine anything strange and unnatural that you choose, but a Democratic party which upholds the 13th Amendment, which forever prohibits slavery and involuntary servitude, except for crime, the 14th Amendment which would make a citizen of Dred Scott if he were alive, and the 15th Amendment which brings black men to the ballot box,

these cannot be imagined. The leopard will change his spots sooner."

By March of 1872 Clark and many other Afro-Americans were getting tired of Republican promises of patronage that were not kept at any level of government. He and about 100 others met on the 13th to discuss how they might secure a commitment of more of the city jobs that would be awarded by the whites for whom they were being asked to vote in the upcoming election. *The Commercial* reported Clark asserting that "when colored men assisted elect men to office they were entitled to a fair share of the public work under the control of these men . . . ." He proposed ascertaining which of the candidates would use their influence to see that colored labor received an equitable share of the city jobs, and "when the names of such gentlemen were ascertained, to use all honorable means to secure their election."

The following month Clark attended the National Convention of Colored Men in New Orleans presided over by Frederick Douglass. He was appointed chairman of a Committee on Address to the American People, whose report accurately reflected Clark's positions and rhetorical style: "It is our purpose to show . . . that we are capable of performing, and performing well, every task that shall fall to our lot . . . We have no desire to interfere with the prejudices, even, of our white fellow citizens, but we appeal to that sense of justice and desire for fair dealing so characteristic of the American people, to say, whether one man has a right to exercise his mere prejudices to the detriment of the legal rights of other men . . . States can no longer abridge his [Afro-Americans'] privileges . . . Shall that be permitted to individuals, or even to powerful corporations, which is denied to the states?"

By the late spring of 1872 Clark and almost all the rest of the Liberal Republican critics of Grant had returned to the fold and supported him for re-nomination. The Democrats nominated *antebellum* abolitionist Horace Greeley, publisher of the *New York Tribune*, hoping to attract enough Afro-American and Liberal Republican white votes in Northern states to swing the election. Holding onto these votes became much more challenging when Greeley secured the strong backing of Republican Senator Charles Sumner who detested Grant and whose partisanship in the cause of freedom and full citizenship for Afro-Americans made him exceedingly popular among them. Clark campaigned vigorously, giving more than sixty campaign speeches for Grant in Ohio, Indiana and Kentucky, twice speaking from the same platform as ex Governor Hayes in Cincinnati. When Grant was re-elected in a landslide, Clark had good reason to expect action on the Afro-American demands for equity in patronage and an effective national civil rights law.

On April 14, 1873 the United States Supreme Court announced its decision in the *Slaughterhouse Cases*, holding that the Fourteenth Amendment protected only those rights that owed their existence to the Federal Government, such as access to ports and navigable waterways and other rights of no practical significance to Afro-Americans, asserting that the protection of most civil rights was the province of the individual states.

By that summer there still was no movement on a national civil rights law, even

though Grant had recommended such legislation in his inaugural address; and Afro-Americans were still being given short shrift in the awarding of government jobs. So Clark issued a call for Afro-Americans from throughout Ohio to attend a convention in Chillicothe to discuss their political grievances and propose such action as may seem appropriate. About 100 men attended the sessions on August 23rd and 24th, including many respected leaders as well as younger men angry over having been rejected for patronage positions. In his opening speech Clark stated that "The [Republican Party] platform adopted in Philadelphia in 1872, declares that complete liberty and exact equality in the enjoyment of all civil, political and public rights shall be established and maintained throughout the Union by efficient and appropriate State and Federal legislation." And speaking of public sector jobs he said "This uniform exclusion from positions of profit and honor is not accidental. It originates everywhere from the same source, and the feeling of prejudice which produces it must be combated by every colored man who is not entirely lost to self-respect." He closed with this injunction: "If the Party managers refuse to let this be done, then use your ballot to enforce your claims. Do not hesitate to vote against those men who have crawled into the Republican ranks under false pretenses, and when you can defeat them, do it. It is better that the cause shall live than that they shall have office."

The three substantive demands enthusiastically approved by the Convention were:

Resolved, That we, the colored voters of the State of Ohio, in convention assembled, do protest against the unjust discrimination toward us by the representatives of the party whom we aid in securing official positions,

Resolved, That the colored voters of this State do not consider themselves under eternal obligation to a party which favors us as a class only in proportion as it is driven by its own necessities,

Resolved, That colored men of the State are hereby urged to refrain from conditionally pledging themselves to the nominees of their local Conventions, and that they use their best discrimination in determining for themselves, in each locality, whom to vote for.

The Resolves captured the attention of City and County Republican leaders. A mass meeting of Afro-American voters, carefully controlled by their Republican Party stalwarts, voted narrowly against the Chillicothe demands, but only after Clark and his supporters had been howled down and physically threatened by a gang of Party toughs invited to attend by the Republican leaders for just that purpose. The Party's concern was further emphasized when Frederick Douglass was brought in to speak at Chillicothe in response to Clark. He called the demands "premature" and asserted that "the colored people will only damage their prospects by acting in the matter now."

Clark responded forcefully in an address to an audience of 3,000 in Dayton at the Emancipation Day celebration on September 22, 1873 published in full by the *Commercial* the next morning. His rejoinder to Douglass was telling: "Among the noted

and honorable men who pronounced the Chillicothe movement premature, I find the eminent gentleman Frederick Douglass. In answer to his charge that the demands are prematurely made I have only this to say, that at the New Orleans Convention a large and influential minority was opposed to the resolutions which I have named, and that their passage by a unanimous vote was due almost entirely to an eloquent speech he made in their behalf. If they were timely then, they are not premature now . . .

"In my youth I was proud to sit at his feet and learn to hate and denounce wrong. I have heard him demand for the slave immediate and unconditional emancipation' at a time when the wealth, the religion, the culture and the politics of the Nation were opposed to that demand . . . The lesson I then learned was that it is never premature to demand justice."

On patronage he demanded "that color shall not be a bar to office, that the political rights of the colored man shall not be exhausted when he has cast his ballot. We protest against the colored man being listed in the assets of the Republican Party as a voting machine, which simply does the work of its master, and is then shelved until the next election . . . "

On education, he pointed out that the Republicans had failed to repeal the State's Black laws, including the one mandating separate colored schools, and he asserted that ". . . instead of closing the doors of schools against the colored man, the duty and interest of the Nation conspire to demand that school advantages shall be multiplied in his case, and, whether he will or not, he shall be educated."

Finally, on March 1, 1875 Congress passed the long demanded civil rights bill. However, it mandated that individual suits must be filed in the already overburdened Federal Courts to enforce its protections. This ensured the bill's failure to make a significant difference.

Clark actively supported Rutherford B. Hayes, the Republican presidential nominee in 1876. At the end of the campaign he chaired a large rally of Afro-Americans in Cincinnati, and introduced the speaker, a relative newcomer to politics, George Washington Williams, who stated: "My estimable friend Peter H. Clark tells me that he stumped this State with Mr. Hayes when the Constitutional Amendments were up for ratification and that he stood up square for the amendments." Clark surely recalled the candidate's failure to stand up publicly for the Fifteenth Amendment in his 1869 race for Governor, and could be excused if he had some reservations about his commitment to the cause now. Clark was probably not as shocked as others when Hayes agreed to the deal throwing the disputed electoral votes of Florida, Louisiana and South Carolina to the Republicans in exchange for the then victorious Hayes' agreement to withdraw the Federal troops from the South thereby ending Reconstruction.

As early as 1875 Clark's growing discouragement with the Republican Party was accompanied by increasing concern over the impact of a faltering economy on the lives of the laboring class, which included virtually all Afro-Americans. In November of that

year he spoke to the local Sovereigns of Industry in Cincinnati supporting the organization's producer and consumer cooperatives. He condemned equally the extremes of wealth and poverty, urging the regulation of capital. In March, 1877 he announced his support of the Workingmen's Party, stating that "The great middle class of society is being crushed out." In July he addressed the striking railroad workers in Cincinnati enthusiastically supporting their cause, but also advising--successfully it turned out--that they avoid the violence that had marked this national strike in other cities. The Workingmen's Party nominated Clark for State Superintendent of Schools and he ran a vigorous campaign that fall. Though the party fared badly, Clark led its entire ticket with 15,000 votes. In 1878 the party--by then named the Socialist Labor Party--nominated Clark for Congress and he ran a very distant third. On July 22, 1879 Clark resigned from the Socialist Labor Party, primarily because its rigidly imposed socialist doctrine was not appealing to free American workers.

On September 7, 1879 Clark was welcomed back by the Republicans at a Party Executive Committee meeting and was asked to speak on the issues of the day, and on the 22nd he addressed the 9th Ward Republican Club condemning the fraudulent election of the two local congressmen by the Cincinnati Democratic Party organization. He backed the Republican ticket once more in the 1880 election, hoping against fading hope that meaningful federal action on patronage and civil rights protection would be forthcoming if Garfield was elected. The assassination of the newly-elected president dashed his hopes. Chester Arthur, a New York machine politician unsympathetic to Afro-American aspirations, was sworn in as President.

Clark reviewed his political options during 1881-82 in light of the total Federal disengagement from civil rights protection. Very likely he discussed the evolving political situation with Hoadly, who had switched to the Democratic Party in 1876. Clark almost certainly knew of Hoadly's plans to seek the Democratic Party's nomination for Governor in 1883 when he decided, late in 1882, to switch parties himself. By supporting Hoadly Clark would put to the test his conviction that the Republican Party would not respond effectively to Afro-American demands for equity in civil rights and patronage until it was forced to compete for their votes in the election market-place. Confident of Hoadly's uncompromising advocacy of full citizenship for Afro-Americans, Clark was willing to risk his community stature and influence in an all-out attempt to help secure these rights in Ohio even as the Federal Government abandoned them nationally.

The Ohio Democratic Party was delighted over Clark's support. It gave him sufficient funds to publish a weekly newspaper during political campaigns and to circulate it among Afro-American voters throughout the State to compete with the rabidly Republican *Cleveland Gazette*. Clark's son, Herbert, was appointed a deputy Sheriff by the Cincinnati Democratic machine, and took over as publisher of the Cincinnati *Afro-American* while his father provided the editorial direction and wrote the important political articles.

Hoadly was nominated and won the election over Joseph B. Foraker, a highly

regarded Cincinnati attorney and war veteran. The major issue working in Hoadly's favor was a liquor regulation law passed by the outgoing Republican-dominated Assembly that alienated large numbers of German voters. However, Clark's active campaigning, combined with Hoadly's strong public civil rights stance, swung enough Afro-American votes to convince both parties they were decisive in electing Hoadly. On October 15th, just before election day, the U.S. Supreme Court-- in which all nine justices were Republican appointees-- announced its decision in *United States v. Stanley*. With only one dissent it declared the Civil Rights Law of 1875 unconstitutional and stated bluntly that civil rights was a state matter.

Hoadly started delivering on his commitment to full Afro-American citizenship immediately after his inauguration. With Clark as his advisor, he introduced legislation removing many of the Black Laws from the books. Aided by Clark's advocacy in committee hearings, the bill was reported out and, in due course, passed by the Democratic controlled Assembly, though it was not as strong a law as most Afro-Americans wanted. Hoadly appointed Clark as the first Afro-American Trustee of Ohio State University, and other Afro-Americans as trustees of Ohio and Miami Universities; and several, including Herbert Clark, were given clerkships on State agencies and with the legislature.

Removing the separate school law was a much more contentious issue. The vast majority of Afro-Americans in the State, including those in Cincinnati believed mixed schools would provide their children with superior education and would demonstrate racial equality and respect. The Republicans in the legislature were more inclined to favor them than the Democrats, whose number included a significant majority of die-hard oppositionists. Governor Hoadly was an ardent proponent of comprehensive school integration--and so, under ideal circumstances, was Peter H. Clark.

When Hoadly introduced a bill repealing the separate school law, Clark was torn between his idealistic belief in total integration and his conviction, as both politician and educator, that mixed schools would be detrimental to Afro-Americans in the context of the times. He was certain colored teachers would not be permitted to teach white children, thereby losing their jobs. He was also convinced that colored children were not capable of competing in the classroom with white children while coping with the extreme disrespect they were sure to encounter as a stigmatized minority--particularly without the empathetic support of their colored teachers. And he was well aware that he would damage--perhaps critically--his stature and influence among his Afro-American constituency were he to fight against mixed schools.

Clark refused to defend separate schools, but urged instead that school integration include the administrators and teachers as well as the children. He was accused of being the mouthpiece of the lobby representing black teachers and administrators, and of self-serving. However, he was successful in getting the bill amended to provide for the establishment of separate black schools if the majority of black voters in a school district requested them by petition. The amended bill passed the House by a 50 to 31 vote, lacking just 3 votes of being a constitutional majority. It had failed because a quarter of



the legislators were absent including 11 Republicans and Democrats from northern districts who would almost surely have voted for the bill. They were said to have been convinced to stay away by the *Cleveland Gazette's* vitriolic attacks on the bill and its backers, particularly Peter H. Clark.

In the summer and fall of 1884 Hoadly and Clark campaigned vigorously for the Democrat Grover Cleveland and were well pleased with his winning the Presidency. During 1885, the second year of Hoadly's term, the legislature attempted without success to devise a mixed school bill that could pass both houses by a constitutional majority. Even after the optional Black school provision that was so unpopular among Afro-Americans was dropped, and Clark supported the bill, it failed by one vote in the Senate. When Hoadly and Foraker were re-nominated in 1885, Hoadly emphasized the racial progress achieved by his administration. But the Republicans were not about to lose African-American votes as they had in 1883. Foraker courted them. His nomination was seconded by a young Afro-American; he saw that three prominent Afro-Americans were nominated for the legislature by the Republicans; he pledged to appoint more Afro-Americans to State positions; financial aid was promised to the struggling Wilberforce University; and he came out strongly for repeal of both the mixed schools and intermarriage laws. Hoadly wrote President Cleveland - a good friend and close political ally - in March and April extolling Clark and suggesting him for national appointive office. Now, perhaps appreciating Clark's precarious position in the event of an increasingly certain Foraker victory, he wrote President Cleveland again on September 9th, just a month before election day, with greater urgency, stating that "You can do two things to help me if you will: first do nothing, absolutely nothing in the way of appointments at Cincinnati: secondly, appoint Peter H. Clark to as high an office as you can find for him. My wishes are not numerous, and I hope may be called modest." Evidently they weren't modest enough for Cleveland to comply.

The presidential election of 1884 had been perhaps the dirtiest in Cincinnati history. The Democratic machine headed by John McLean, publisher of the *Enquirer*, and the flood of Federal Marshals sent in by the Republican administration in Washington, each attacked and tried to disrupt the illegal voting practices employed by the opposition Party. One of McLean's operatives, Lieutenant Mullen of the Cincinnati Police, was seized by Federal Marshals and indicted in Federal court for having unlawfully incarcerated more than 100 purported illegal Afro-American voters--24 of them from Kentucky--who had been hidden in the waterfront gambling den and tavern owned by an Afro-American, John Venable, a notorious purveyor of illegal votes, usually to the Republicans. Mullen was convicted and sent to prison, but was pardoned by President Cleveland at the request of Governor Hoadly in August of 1885. So the Mullen affair was already a *cause celebre* during the Fall election campaign, and became even more so when Venable shot and wounded a policeman in September during one of the frequent harassments of his tavern perpetrated by the police in revenge for his testimony that resulted in Mullen's conviction in Federal Court. Venable was due to stand trial after the October 13, 1885 election. The Republicans won control of the legislature--including election of the three Afro-Americans--and Foraker regained the Statehouse for the Republicans. He and his Party went on to keep the promises they had made under the

pressure of having to compete for Afro-American votes in the election marketplace. After the election excitement died down, and quite without warning, an article appeared in the November 30, 1885 issue of the strongly Republican *Commercial Gazette* in which Venable accused Clark of asking to meet with him the night of October 12, 1885 and attempting, on behalf of John McLean, to bribe him to say he had perjured himself in the trial of Lt. Mullen. The December 1st issue carried an interview with Clark in which he agreed he had met with Venable, but only at the latter's request, and that no such attempt had taken place. Rather, Venable had expressed concern over his upcoming trial and asked for Clark's help. Venable was asked to respond to Clark's statement and he called Clark a liar. The December 6th issue of the *Commercial Gazette* carried a lengthy analysis of the accusation and denial, coming down heavily on Clark as "A Colored Judas" and lauding Venable as an honest victimized citizen.

This stunning turn of events was rendered even more so by what followed --or, more to the point, what didn't follow.

- The story was never reported, or commented on, by any other Cincinnati newspaper.
- The *Commercial Gazette* did not carry another word about the purported attempted bribery.
- No legal action was initiated against Clark, nor was any likely by Clark against the paper considering how carefully the articles were written and edited according to Gordon Christenson, who kindly reviewed the detailed record of the affair for its legal implications.
- The almost pathologically combative John Mclean never took issue with the accusation that he was the perpetrator of an attempt to bribe a witness in a Federal trial.
- Peter H. Clark had been one of the most quoted and written about men in Cincinnati for twenty years. However, from December 7, 1885 until late in May 1886, so far as I've been able to determine, his name appeared in a Cincinnati newspaper exactly once, and that was in a one sentence item of questionable accuracy in the *Commercial Gazette* about a job offered Clark in Kansas City for a substantial increase over his salary in Cincinnati.

In the Municipal election of April, 1886, the Republicans were swept into control of both City Hall and the Cincinnati School Board. At its May 24th meeting the School Board postponed action on the routine reappointment of the principal of Gaines High School, and did so again at a special meeting on May 27th. At its regular meeting on June 8th, William Parham and Peter H. Clark were both nominated for the position and Parham won 19-13 on a straight party vote. Peter H. Clark had been fired without cause. The City's newspapers reported the result in the small type and summary form that was routine for School Board meetings--except for the *Commercial Gazette*, which not only covered the meeting in larger type and greater detail than usual, it also pronounced righteously in an editorial that Clark got what he deserved.

The expertly conceived and smoothly executed plan, with the dramatic accusation

followed by a seven month conspiracy of silence, had enabled the Cincinnati establishment to destroy Peter H. Clark as an educator and political activist with the appearance of complete Afro-American acquiescence. Why was this secretive coup regarded as necessary?

With the local newspapers closed to him, Clark, provided the answer in a letter published in the June 19, 1886 issue of *The New York Freeman*, a weekly newspaper published by T. Thomas Fortune, a friend and fellow Democrat. After relating how a Board member had informed him he would be fired even though there were no charges against him, Clark went on to state: "Privately it was assumed that the removal was in deference to the wishes of the colored people of the city. But a meeting of colored people filling and over-filling one of the largest churches in the City, protested against the proposed removal and gave the lie to the pretense. Then a memorial to the Board was prepared and signed by 100 well-known colored citizens, business men, trusted employees of public offices and of the banks of the city, all Republicans. To this document the Colored Preachers' Undenominational Union lent its sanction." He went on to relate that another meeting of colored citizens, one called to demand his dismissal, was broken up in a row to avoid the embarrassment of a vote to support Clark, when his friends outnumbered those who called the meeting. Further, a petition for Clark's removal "purporting to be signed by several hundred persons was printed and laid on the tables of members of the Board." But it was readily determined that most were non-existent people. Clark stated "Under the pressure of the real opinion of the colored people the solid Republican force began to waver, and eight [of the Republican] votes, more than enough to elect were promised." So the Board had to postpone voting twice until the waverers were whipped into line by the Republican party leaders. The accuracy of Clark's account of these events was never disputed.

He closed his letter with this trenchant statement of why he was fired: "The conduct of the men who have perpetrated this outrage upon free thought and free speech, shows that in the North as in the South, the colored man is only free to think and act with the majority of his white fellow-citizens, and that when he dares to do otherwise, proscription in the North and the bull whip in the South are the ready instruments to drive him in line." Peter H. Clark's respected civic pre-eminence as educator and political activist was destroyed for the crime of showing Afro-Americans how to use their voting franchise effectively to promote their own betterment. His public emasculation was an emphatic statement that the exercise of political power was a prerogative reserved exclusively for whites--in the North as well as in the South--and so it remained for another three-quarters of a century of Jim Crow with its consequent effective marginalization of Afro-Americans in the life of Cincinnati and the rest of the Nation.

Peter H. Clark left Cincinnati in 1887 for Huntsville, AL where he was principal of a State normal school for a year; and then to St. Louis where he taught in the segregated Sumner High School for twenty years. He died in 1925 without ever having come back to Cincinnati so far as I've been able to determine. What left Cincinnati with him?

When Clark left, Cincinnati lost an optimist who believed Afro-Americans would achieve full citizenship, if not in his lifetime or his children's, or in his grandchildren's, then certainly in his great-grandchildren's; Cincinnati lost a role model who understood and demonstrated that achieving self-respect is the necessary precursor of gaining the respect of others; and Cincinnati lost a tireless teacher of the meaning of citizenship to all the City's people.

When Clark left Cincinnati so did the Emancipationist memory of the Civil War--a vision that it was fought to end slavery, with the understanding that slavery would not really end until Afro-Americans were respected as full citizens throughout the Nation; until we repaired the ravages wrought by slavery and its horrific aftermath on the ability of Afro-Americans to learn, to earn and to enjoy the fruits there-of; until equality of opportunity for all citizens is a living reality and not merely a glib phrase.

What remained in Cincinnati--and the Nation--was a Reconciliationist memory of the Civil War--a vision that each side fought for an honorable cause it believed in and ennobled with the bravery and blood of its soldiers; and that political reunion was the only way to honor the dead and move ahead as a nation. This was a vision that could only be realized absent all respect for the citizenship rights of Afro-Americans--peace among the whites, as it was so aptly termed by Frederick Douglass. The price of political reunion was extra--legal adoption in the North of the white supremacy legalized in the South, thereby joining in the social, economic and political marginalization of Afro-Americans in our national life.

It is time we redeem the Emancipationist memory of the Civil War in Cincinnati. Surely, restoration of Peter H. Clark to his richly deserved position of honor and respect in our civic vision is an appropriate first step.

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Notes:

1. The terms "colored people", "Blacks", "Negroes" and "African-American" are used as they were used contemporaneously by Clark. Where I had a choice, I used Afro-American, the term Clark chose for the name of his newspaper. It was also the term preferred by T. Thomas Fortune, noted Democratic publisher and editor of *The New York Freeman* and numerous other publications, and by Harry Smith, the Republican publisher and editor of the *Cleveland Gazette*.

2. The concepts and terminology of the "Emancipationist" and "Reconciliationist" memories of the Civil War are adopted from David Blight's *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory*. I believe it is the finest available exposition and analysis of *postbellum* attitudes toward race. I hope I've done justice to his original and exceptionally apposite ideas about their meaning.

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