
THE CANISTER

Monthly Newsletter of the Cincinnati Civil War Round Table



PO Box 621082 • Cincinnati, OH 45262 • www.cincinnati-cwrt.org
Serving the Tri-State area of Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana since 1956

[CCWRT](#)

April, 2017 Issue

Meeting Date: April 20, 2017

Place: The Drake Center

(6:00) Sign-in and Social
(7:15) Business Meeting

(6:30) Dinner
(7:30) Speaker

**Dinner Menu: Beef Burgundy w/ Wine & Mushroom Sauce,
Tossed Salad w/ Assorted Dressings, Wild Rice,
Spinach Soufflé, and Double Chocolate Cake**
Vegetarian Option: Upon request

Speaker: Carleton Young, Pittsburgh, PA

Topic: *Voices from the Attic: The Williamstown Boys in the Civil War*

Reservations: If you do not have an Automatic Reservation, please remember to submit your meeting reservation to the web site at <http://cincinnati-cwrt.org/wordpress/contact/rsvp/> or call it in to Dave Stockdale at 513-310-9553. Leave a message, if necessary. If you are making a reservation for more than yourself, please provide the names of the others. Please note that **all reservations must be in no later than 8:00 pm Wednesday, April 12, 2017.**

April Speaker:

Imagine clearing out your family attic and finding an old wooden box jammed with hundreds of letters written during the Civil War. You soon discover they are written by two brothers serving in the First Vermont Brigade of the Union Army. The letters offer an eye-witness description of the battles of the Peninsula Campaign, South Mountain, Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, the Wilderness, and Cedar Creek, as well as an in-depth account of regular army life. Using the letters, Carleton Young and a few other researchers were able to weave together their dramatic war-time narrative into a book entitled *Voices from the Attic: The Williamstown Boys in the Civil War*.

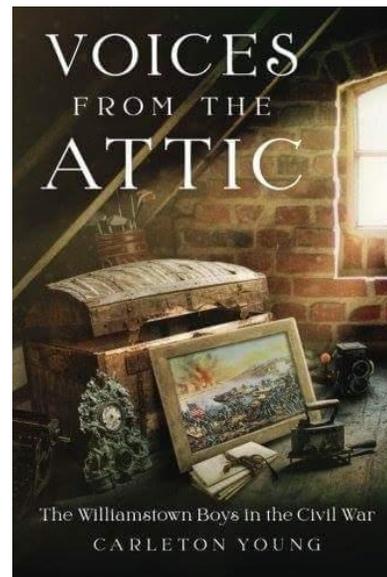
There were about 250 letters, still in their original envelopes, as well as hand-written orders, officer commission papers, and many other documents from the war. The letters are significant in part for the depth that they go into about each of their battles and specific aspects of army life. It was much more common for soldiers to gloss over such topics and dwell on more mundane matters in their letters home. One of the letters, for example, details an execution. Another describes the burning of dead bodies, rather than burials, by Union soldiers at Antietam. An NPS ranger at the battlefield read the letter and said that he had heard of this occurring but that he had never before seen a firsthand account like this confirming it. A ranger at Fredericksburg said that the letter he read was the most detailed account he had seen of the part of the battle fought between Vermont and North Carolina regiments along Deep Run Creek. The letters include everything from step-by-step instructions on how they built their winter quarters, to recipes for makinghardtack into a tasty pudding, and how best to prepare coffee in a frying pan over an open fire. The use of cross-writing by the brothers, to conserve paper, was one reason that it took so many years to read and transcribe the letters.

The research team, consisting of the author along with Edd Hale, Nancy Hale, Bill Lutz, and Carol Young, spent more than a decade transcribing the letters, researching friends and relatives mentioned in the letters, and visiting battlefields and the soldiers' hometown in Vermont. To read and learn more about the letters that were written by the Martin brothers, click the link *Voices from the Attic*. For more unique information about the Civil War, visit www.martinletters.com.

Carleton Young has undergraduate degrees in economics and English from Westminster College and Point Park University, an MA in history from Ohio University, and his PhD in the history of education from the University of Pittsburgh. For 37 years he taught a very popular AP history class at Thomas Jefferson High School in Pittsburgh. He has also taught classes as an adjunct professor at the Community College of Allegheny College, the University of Pittsburgh, Eastern Gateway Community College, and in the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Carnegie Mellon University. He and his wife, Carol, currently reside in Pittsburgh.



Carleton Young



Young's book



President's Report

...from Lester Burgin

Many of us shop online at Amazon. And many of you might be aware that Amazon has a program known as **AmazonSmile**, which allows you to direct 0.5% of the price for items purchased on Amazon to the Round Table.

This is a simple and automatic way for all of us to support the CCWRT at absolutely no cost to you. To “give back” to the Round Table, you simply shop at smile.amazon.com, rather than regular amazon.com. Same prices, same selection, but now you'll have an opportunity to choose CCWRT as the charity you want to support. How easy is that?

Every time you shop at [smile.amazon](http://smile.amazon.com) you'll be helping out the Round Table. If you spend \$100 (I could easily spend that amount on Civil War books!), CCWRT will receive 50 cents. That may not seem like a lot at first, but I know many people buy much more than mere books. They buy electronics, household items, and even food on Amazon! These contributions can add up and will provide funds to the CCWRT to aid in helping our programs, which I know all of you enjoy.

The best part about it? It's so easy for our members who already shop on Amazon. And, if you don't currently shop online, I hope you'll consider trying it out. You'll feel good about supporting the CCWRT with things you would buy anyway.

CCWRT is currently in the process of registering to participate in this program. We'll be sure to notify all of our membership as soon as it's ready to go.

So, remember, shop at smile.amazon.com and support the CCWRT.

Items of Interest

7th Annual Blue & Gray Dinner

The James A. Ramage Civil War Museum will hold its 7th Annual Blue & Gray Dinner on **April 25, 2017**. Cocktail hour (cash bar) will be between 6:00pm-7:00pm. Dinner will start at 7:00pm. The Blue and Gray Dinner's guest speaker is Andrea Watkins. The topic will be "First Ladies of the Civil War." During the event, the hosts will hold a silent auction, the proceeds from which go toward the maintenance of the museum. Tickets are \$50 per person. Cash and check only. Please RSVP to Linda Hornsby at 859-261-3045 or lykantee@aol.com by April 20, 2017. Please make all checks payable to James A. Ramage Civil War

Museum and mail check to: James A. Ramage Civil War Museum, Attn: Blue & Gray Dinner, 409 Kyles Lane, Ft. Wright, KY 41011.

You Can Help Save Camp Letterman Hospital

The Gettysburg Battlefield Preservation Association is trying to save the site of Camp Letterman General Hospital in Gettysburg from development. At that hospital, eleven soldiers from Ohio died from wounds received in the battle. The GBPA is trying to get S&A Homes to save 17 acres out of 191 acres they own that contained tents with the wounded at Letterman. If you would, could you please send a brief note to S&A Homes asking them to work with the Gettysburg Battlefield Preservation Association to save those 17 acres? The S&A Homes address is S&A Homes, c/o Bob Poole, CEO, 2121 Old Gatesburg Road, Suite 200, State College, PA 16803. A two-part blog on the group's efforts just came out. Go to GOOGLE, type in "maineatwar", click on MAINEATWAR/MAINEINCIVILWAR. The two articles are titled, "Help Save 17 Acres of Camp Letterman." If you have any questions, please contact Glen Hayes at wesleyculp1@gmail.com.

Book Review

...submitted by Thomas L. Breiner

American Ulysses: A Life of Ulysses S. Grant by Ronald C. White, Random House, New York, NY, 2016, 826 pages, Hardcover \$35.00.

American Ulysses by Ronald White is the latest biography of Ulysses S. Grant. It is a well-written and well-researched work that I found to be very entertaining and enjoyable reading. The author covers the usual family background information, his birth in Point Pleasant, Ohio, and the family move to Georgetown. Grant's early childhood is interesting and in more detail than many biographies. The discussion on Grant's years at West Point are mostly about what he read outside the normal academics; however, this background material is important in developing the complete picture of his formative years.

I think the best portions of this biography are in defining Grant's relationship with President Andrew Johnson and Congress in the years just after the Civil War. The author does a much better job of explaining the position of Grant in trying to be the mediator between the two sides. Ronald White also does an excellent job of detailing the various conflicts and scandals that arose during Grant's presidential years.

After leaving the White House, Grant embarked on a two-plus-year tour of the world. This biography has a lot of information on his thoughts and experiences concerning the countries, cultures, dignitaries, and royalty that he encountered.

Ronald White spends very little of this work covering the issue of Grant's drinking. The issue is really glossed over, which, considering the author's feelings for his subject, is not surprising. Our author is definitely very sympathetic to Grant. In fact, his favoritism of Grant is maybe a little extreme. Grant can do no wrong. My major problem with this biography is the author's method of listing footnotes. They are not identified within the text. All footnotes are located at the end of the book and identified by a phrase. Even with the author's apparent idolization of Grant, it is still found that this work has a definite place in the Civil War genre. The usual question: Is there a need for another biography of U. S. Grant? In this case, the answer is yes. I highly recommend this manuscript to anyone interested in a real American hero.

There have always been celebrities. People whom other people flock to, listen to, admire, live vicariously through, worship, and adore and, yes, would kill to be just like them. History is jammed packed with celebrities. There are also people who are self-created celebrities, and as our speaker pointed out in his presentation, there are many people who are “FAMOUS FOR BEING FAMOUS.” They have no substance, just a yearning to be someone that people admire and are drawn to.

For our 60th Anniversary meeting, Mr. William “Jack” C. Davis, professor of history at Virginia Tech, comes to us to share from his book: *The Confederate Kardashian: Loreta Janeta Velasquez and the Invention of Confederate Celebrity*. Jack has written 50-plus books, and this fascinating tale continues his quest to shed light on some of the seamy aspects of the Civil War, and it is my hope that he continues to explore people and places and write more books like this that help us understand life during the great conflict.

Loreta or Lt. Harry Buford, according to who she chose to be on a particular day, was a consummate liar and scam artist. But she was good at it. She continued to build the life that she wanted people to see, a life devoid of truth or substance, but really looking good to people who wanted to believe in the courage and daring that she portrayed in her testaments about herself. It would seem that no one wanted to look closely enough to see the real Loreta. On the rare occasion that someone would pull back a layer to expose her, she was quickly able to stop the damage with yet another lie.

One of the amazing aspects of Loreta’s mystique was how widely her stories were enjoyed by audiences. When one of her daring tales was posted, it would be picked up by numerous newspapers in many Eastern states and the Midwest, and people would clamor for a copy to keep up with her adventures. The newspapers then, as it is today with broadcast news, are not adverse to printing news that has not been verified. Some things never change.

Loreta Velasquez was married five times, bore several children, and was a prostitute, a Confederate army officer/soldier, a thief, and an embezzler. She died in a hospital for the insane.

As is often said, “You can’t make this stuff up.” It should be a great read.

Professor, you’ve done a great job on a tough subject. Thank you.



March Quiz:

THE MARKET PRICE FOR SLAVES (22 August 1863)

Slaves command a higher market price in Kentucky, taking gold as the standard of value, than in any other of the southern states. In Missouri they are sold at from forty dollars to four hundred, according to age, quality, and especially according to place. In Tennessee they cannot be said to be sold at all. In Maryland the negroes upon an estate were lately sold, and

fetches an average price of \$18 dollars a head. In the farther states of the Southern Confederacy we frequently see reports of negro sales, and we occasionally see boasts from rebel newspapers as to the high prices the slaves bring, notwithstanding the war and the collapse of Southern industry. We notice in the Savannah Republican of the 5th, a report of a negro sale in that city, at which we are told, high prices prevailed, and at which two girls of 18 years of age were sold for about \$2500 apiece, two matured boys at about the same price, a man of 45 for \$1850, and a woman of 23, with her child of 5 for \$3950. Twenty-five hundred dollars may be taken as the standard price of first class slaves in the Confederacy, but when it is remembered that this is in Confederate money which is worth less than one twelfth its face in gold, it will be seen that the real price, by this standard, is only about \$200. In Kentucky, on the other hand, though there is but little buying or selling of slave stock going on, we understand that negroes are still held at from seven to twelve hundred dollars apiece.

Ref: *The New York Times Complete Civil War*, Holzer and Symond editors, p.267.

1. Who has won the American Civil War Museum's (previously the Museum of the Confederacy's) Jefferson Davis Book Award more than any other author?
2. How many times has the author in Question #1 won the Jefferson Davis Book Award?
3. Robert E. Lee's headquarters in Gettysburg was the residence of and owned in part by its tenant, Ann Marie Long (Mary) Thompson. Who was the other part owner?
4. It's 3:00a.m. in Cumberland, MD, on 21 Feb. 1865. What event occurred then in the local hotel that affected Major General George Crook, recently appointed to that rank after his successes at (3rd) Winchester and Fisher's Hill?
5. What was the primary purpose of General Thomas Ewing's (foster brother to Gen. William T. Sherman) Order # 11, dated 25 Aug 1863, issued in Missouri?
6. Sterling Price, per Kirby Smith's order, invaded Missouri with 12,000 troops (one-third of whom were unarmed). Conflict began at Ft. Davidson, the Union position at Pilot Knob, protected by 1,100 Union troops who successfully fended off the Rebels and made an unimpeded retreat, suffering 200 casualties to the Rebels' 1,500. This Confederate military embarrassment presaged Price's ultimate military failure. Who was the Federal's commanding officer at Pilot Mountain?

BONUS QUESTION:

Which constitutional amendment prohibits the United States from defaulting on its debts?

Quiz Answers:

1. William (Jack) C. Davis
Ref.: Book Awards, American Civil War Museum, p.2
2. Four times - *Breckenridge: Statesman, Soldier, Symbol; Jefferson Davis; A Government of Our Own; Crucible of Command, U.S. Grant and R.E. Lee: The War They Fought, the Peace They Forged*
Ref.: *ibid*
3. Thaddeus Stevens
Ref.: *The Story of Lee's Headquarters*, Smith, pp.4-8, 50-51; *Wikipedia*, Thaddeus Stevens

4. The capture of George Crook (and his subordinate, Brig. Gen. B.F. Kelley) by rebel irregulars. They were transported to Libby prison but quickly exchanged under a previous agreement worked out between Richmond and Washington.
Ref.: *The Civil War*, Foote, Vol. 3, p.804
5. Evacuation of all civilians from four rural counties in western Missouri in order to deprive Rebel guerrillas of support and supply. Although supported by President Lincoln, it was withdrawn by a succeeding Union general in Jan. 1864 due to its gross unpopularity.
Ref.: *Wikipedia*, General Order No.11 (1863)
6. General Thomas Ewing
Ref.: *Civil War Dictionary*, "Price's Raid in Missouri," Boatner, pp.669 -671

BONUS QUESTION:

No.14, Section 4. It forbids dishonoring "[T]he validity of the public debt of the United States, authorized by law." Its initial intention was to prevent defaulting on the debt created by the U.S. government to finance the Civil War.

Ref.: "The Constitution and the Debt Ceiling Debate," Rivkin and Casey, *Wall Street Journal*, p.A15, 12 May 2011



Future Presentations:

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| May 18, 2017 | Philip Greenwalt, Everglades National Park
<i>Shenandoah Valley Campaign of 1864</i> |
| Sep. 21, 2017 | Erick Bush, Rome, NY
<i>Selma: The Confederacy's Arsenal City</i> |
| Oct. 19, 2017 | Richard L. Miller, Seattle, WA
<i>John P. Slough, the 1st Colorado, and Glorieta Pass</i> |
| Nov. 16, 2017 | Dave A. Powell, Chicago, IL
<i>A Tale of Two Corps Commanders: D. H. Hill and A. M. McCook at Chickamauga</i> |
| Jan. 18, 2018 | Peter J. D'Onofrio, PhD, Reynoldsburg, OH
<i>Medical Advancements of the Civil War</i> |
| Feb. 15, 2018 | Ron Blair, Lexington, KY
<i>Wild Wolf: Col. Frank Wolford and the 1st Kentucky Cavalry</i> |
| Mar. 15, 2018 | James "Bud" Robertson, Richmond, VA
<i>Water: The Most Overlooked Element of the Civil War</i> |
| Apr. 19, 2018 | Chris Burns, Cincinnati
<i>The Siege of Cincinnati</i> |
| May 17, 2018 | Wayne Motts, Harrisburg, PA
<i>Pickett's Charge: A Battlefield Guide</i> |

ABOUT THE CINCINNATI CWRT:

Membership in the Cincinnati CWRT is open to anyone with an active interest in the American Civil War. Annual dues (prorated throughout the year to new members) are \$25 (single) and \$35 (couple) for a **Regular Membership**. This fee helps cover operating costs which include this newsletter, as well as speaker expenses. A **Sustaining Member** level of membership is also available for \$50 (single) and \$85 (couple). The purpose of this membership category is to encourage and recognize members who make additional contributions of \$25 or more, in addition to their annual dues in any fiscal year, to the objectives and programs of the Cincinnati Civil War Round Table. If you are joining for the first time, there is a one-time, lifetime, **Initiation Fee** of \$20 (single) or \$30 (couple). Students enrolled full time in any recognized secondary or higher institute of learning can use a **Student Membership**, which applies a discount of \$10 to each of the above dues and initiation fee rates.

Dinner reservations are required, and can be made prior to the reservations deadline either by the web site <http://cincinnatiwrt.org/wordpress/contact/rsvp/> or by a phone call to the officer taking reservations for the meeting (whose name and number is listed on the header of the current **Canister**). **Meals** currently cost \$20. Menu selection will change with each meeting. A vegetarian meal option is available, if requested prior to the reservations cut-off date. A **Meeting Only Fee** of \$5.00 is assessed to members, visitors and guests who arrive after dinner to hear the speaker. *No reservation is necessary.* The monies collected are used to help offset the expenses of the evening's activities.

Late Reservations and Walk-ins without a reservation: Our ability to be flexible for late reservations or walk-ins is now restricted by the fact that the Drake Center only prepares meals according to the reservation count called in. Therefore, **Late Reservations** (after the Wednesday by 8:00 pm which is eight days before the meeting) will be accepted conditionally, subject to the caterer's ability to honor a change in dinner count if received close to the meeting date. **Late Reservations and Walk-ins without a reservation** will only be able to have dinner if offset by cancellations or no-shows, or if the caterer determines that sufficient food is available.

Late cancellations may be made by email or phone. Since a cancellation after the Wednesday 8:00 pm deadline which is eight days before the meeting means that CCWRT has guaranteed payment to The Drake Center for the reserved number of meals, the Treasurer will review the number of late cancellations and late reservations for every meeting. If a late cancellation results in the CCWRT being required to pay for an extra meal, the person making the late cancellation will be expected to pay for the dinner. **No-shows** who have a dinner reservation but do not attend will be billed for the meal. **Meetings** are held the third Thursday of the month, September – November and January – May at The Drake Center, 151 West Galbraith Road, Cincinnati, Ohio 45216 (**Phone: 513-418-2500**). If traveling Interstate 75, exit at Galbraith Road (Exit 10) and go west one mile. If coming across the Ronald Reagan Cross County Highway, take the Galbraith Road exit and go west two miles. Or, take the Galbraith/Winton exit and go east one mile. **Free parking** is available in the WEST PAVILION parking lot. The West Pavilion entrance will take you to the meeting rooms. **To get to our meeting room**, enter the West Pavilion main entrance and go to the left side of the gift shop found opposite the entryway; the meeting room is located at the far end of the cafeteria hallway.

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