
THE CANISTER

Monthly Newsletter of the Cincinnati Civil War Round Table



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

[CCWRT](#)

April, 2018 Issue

Meeting Date: April 19, 2018

Place: The Drake Center

(6:00) Sign-in and Social

(7:15) Business Meeting

(6:30) Dinner

(7:30) Speaker

**Dinner Menu: *Country Ribs and Sauerkraut,
French Salad w/ Russian Dressing, Oven Roasted Potatoes,
Vegetable Blend, and Caramel Nut Apple Pie***
Vegetarian Option: Upon request

Speaker: Chris Burns, Cincinnati, OH

Topic: *The Siege of Cincinnati*

Reservations: If you do not have an Automatic Reservation, please remember to submit your meeting reservation to the web site at <http://cincinnatiwrt.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 11, 2018.**

April Speaker:

In September 1862, Cincinnati was under assault from an enemy whose goal was to pillage and burn the city, leaving destruction and fear in their wake. The assault was a major event that helped define the resolve of the citizens living in the Tristate region. Over 60,000 volunteers poured into the hills of Northern Kentucky to stop the Confederate onslaught that ripped through Kentucky virtually unchallenged, before turning north to threaten the Queen City. This is their story of leadership, patriotism, selflessness, and courage.

Chris Burns is a Civil War historian and lifelong Cincinnati resident. In 2016, Burns completed 16 years of research for an upcoming book about Ulysses S. Grant with noted historian Dr. James A. Ramage. He currently speaks on various aspects of Ulysses S. Grant's life, as well as the Siege of Cincinnati. Burns is a former adjunct history faculty-member at NKU and is currently employed as Marketing and Education Manager at Encore Technologies. His passion is researching history and touring battlefields, as well as working with educators to prepare students for college and career readiness.



Chris Burns



We had a fantastic turnout for Bud Robertson's talk at our last meeting. It was one of my favorite talks, mostly because it makes you think about how many decisions were made during the Civil War that were controlled by the need for water. It's definitely a topic which I hadn't focused on before.

I enjoyed spending a few minutes with Bud before the meeting. He autographed his newest book, *After the Civil War*, which is a study of 70 people who shaped America during Reconstruction and beyond. Bud is writing one final book on Robert E. Lee. It is apropos that Lee is the topic of his final book, since he holds Lee in the highest esteem.

During our discussion, we discovered that we both graduated from Emory University in Atlanta. He has fond memories of his mentor, the eminent historian and Emory professor Bell Wiley (from whom I actually took a class). Bud explained that Professor Wiley contributed to his life-long interest in the Civil War. What Bud may not realize is that, in spending many years speaking and teaching about the Civil War, he, too, has certainly mentored our life-long interest in the Civil War, and so it goes on. As Bud told us all at the meeting, he is retiring from the speaking circuit. CCWRT has been fortunate to have hosted Bud over ten times over the years, and this past lecture was his final one for us. The torch is passed to a new generation (us) to serve as mentors to the next generation.

Items of Interest

Reminder: Morgan's Raid Tour on May 18-19, 2018

A no-fee caravan (carpool) tour of Morgan's Great Raid sites in the Greater Cincinnati area will be led by historian and author David L. Mowery on **Friday, May 18, through Saturday, May 19, 2018**. Anyone can come – bring your family, friends, and acquaintances. We will welcome all visitors. We will travel from Sunman, Indiana, to Williamsburg, Ohio, over the two-day period. The tour days will each last roughly from 8:30am to 5:30pm. We will leave promptly at 8:30am from the starting spots indicated below. We will drive along Morgan's "Great Ride" around Cincinnati from July 13-14, 1863, the longest non-stop cavalry ride of an American division of horsemen in enemy territory (85 miles in 35 hours). We will stop for lunch and will follow up the tour with dinner together (you'll pay for these). If you wish to drop off early in the tour, you can do so, since it will be caravan-style. **The optional 15-passenger van is full.** For those who signed up to ride in the van with David, a member of the Round Table will contact you with the details about the cost per person. The van will be present at each of the designated starting spots. For all tourees, we will begin and end the tour at the Starting Spot on the specified day. Since we are expecting a large attendance, carpooling is highly encouraged, because parking will be limited at some of the sites we will visit.

Day 1 (Friday, May 18) Starting Spot: Meet at the **Cincinnati Mills Mall sign on Forest Fair Dr** (GPS: 39.301082° N, 84.518713° W) in Forest Park, OH. You can park your cars here and carpool, or you can follow the caravan from here. Depart Cincinnati Mills Mall at *promptly* 8:30am EST.

Day 2 (Saturday, May 19) Starting Spot: Meet at the **parking lot in front of the Tile Shop, as close to US 42 as possible, directly across US 42 from KFC** (GPS: 39.292423° N, 84.394205° W) north of I-275 exit at Sharonville, OH. You can park your cars here and carpool, or you can follow the caravan from here. Depart Sharonville, OH, *promptly* at 8:30am EST.

Civil War Trust Park Day - Stowe House

Saturday, April 7, 2018

Harriet Beecher Stowe House, 2950 Gilbert Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45206



The Round Table will be working with the Harriet Beecher Stowe House in Walnut Hills to support the Civil War Trust's Park Day event. Come out and help a local site for a few hours, then engage in more conversation over a meal and libations at a local restaurant.

The object of Park Day is to give some help to the venues that we all enjoy going too so often, but seldom think how much work is needed to keep these sites viable. To this end, we will do our part to spruce up the grounds around the Home to make it more appealing to visitors. As many residents can attest, this has been a rough winter, and it has taken its toll on the grounds around the Stowe House, and any help will be appreciated.

What are you getting for your efforts? The Stowe House staff will give us a tour of the home and the grounds. The first thirty-five participants will receive a Park Day t-shirt. And you will have the satisfaction of helping this historic site.

We ask that everyone show up at **9:30 am**. Comfortable clothes are a must – remember, we are going to work first. We will have gloves, trash bags, brooms, sticks for paper pickup, water (if you work up a thirst), and above all, eagerness to help make the Stowe House ready for summer visitors.

March Presentation

... submitted by **Don Vogel**

WHAT A GREAT NIGHT! Seventy-seven people attended the meeting, followed by a presentation by Dr. James Robertson, a very well-known author of many books on the Civil War. Tonight, Dr. Robertson addressed the topic of water. All the things you can say about water are pretty well understood by most people who take the life-giving liquid for granted. We all have become quite accustomed to using and abusing water today and don't pay much attention to the reality that in some parts of the world, the same problems exist today that plagued the Civil War soldiers and civilians: the availability of clean, safe water. People are still dying from lack of water and the sickness that enters the body from polluted sources. LET THAT SINK IN.

Why was water so important during the war? It played a part in the whole fabric of the conflict. Water influenced where battles were fought. Water was always on the soldier's mind, and commanders were wise to check the availability of water in any area that would be a potential battle site. Water was necessary for fighting men, cooking, sanitary needs, horses, cooling of cannon barrels, and hospitals. Also, water was used, to a great extent, for transportation of armies to and from battle areas. Dr. Robertson explained that there are six rivers between Washington and Richmond that, according to the season, must be navigated for any assault to take place either north or south. Think about it: six rivers in only one hundred miles; if it was the rainy season, this would certainly slow down troops, cannon, and all the equipment needed to fight the war.

Sickness from polluted water was an ever-present danger, with typhoid fever being the great killer on both sides of the war. Just to make maximum use of waterborne illness, soldiers would often kill horses and mules and put them in streams to breed more sickness among the opposing forces. One and a half million horses died for lack of water. This was truly a dirty war, with over eight hundred thousand plus lives lost.

What a great presentation this was. And, I believe it to be the eighteenth time Dr. Robertson has spoken to the Cincinnati Civil War Round Table, and I hope not the last.

Book Review

...submitted by Thomas L. Breiner

On to Petersburg: Grant and Lee June 4-15, 1864 by Gordon C. Rhea, Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, LA, 2017, 453 pages, Hardcover \$29.00.

On to Petersburg: Grant and Lee June 4-15, 1864 by Gordon C. Rhea is a detailed analysis of the strategic and tactical decisions made by Lieutenant General U. S. Grant that resulted in the end of the Overland Campaign and commenced the Siege of Petersburg. The author also looks at how General Robert E. Lee responded to the movements of the Army of the Potomac. This is the fifth book and the completion of Gordon Rhea's excellent analysis of the Overland Campaign of 1864. This volume maintains the high standards and quality that he established with the four previous volumes.

The author not only provides the reader with the details of the shift of the Army of the Potomac from the confrontation at Cold Harbor, but he also provides an outstanding and very insightful analysis of Grant and Lee's decisions during the period June 4-15. With all the excellent planning that Grant and his staff did in preparation for the maneuver, there were still numerous and very decisive mistakes made in the process. Grant's failure to keep both Major General George G. Meade and Major General Winfield S. Hancock apprised of the plans for the Second Corps resulted in the failure to provide the timely support required to capture Petersburg before Lee could adequately respond. Grant also failed to notify Major General William F. (Baldy) Smith of his assignment to capture Petersburg upon his return to Bermuda Hundred and that Hancock's 2nd Corps would support him.

Grant was extremely successful in maneuvering the Army of the Potomac from the close proximity to Lee's Army of Northern Virginia in the fortifications at Cold Harbor to the crossings of the both the Chickahominy and James Rivers. He was able to keep Lee completely at a loss on how to locate the Army of the Potomac and how to react to Grant's movements. Grant's strategy eliminated Lee's ability to be proactive.

The author has created a superb manuscript that is well researched and written. He provides many details that are missing from previous works covering the same period of the war and also provides a provocative look at what could have occurred and what did. The results of Grant's actions resulted in the end of the Overland Campaign and the start of the siege of Petersburg. The result was ten more months of war rather than a quick and decisive end to the war in Virginia. I heartily recommend this work and the previous volumes that Gordon Rhea has produced on the Overland Campaign. As an interested reader, you will not be disappointed.



March Quiz:

The greatest compliment to Jackson came publicly and from the general-in-chief himself. Shortly after the occupation of Mexico City, General (Winfield) Scott hosted a reception for his officers. Jackson eagerly attended to get an up-close view of the living legend commanding the American forces. Scott's manner was full of grace, with the dignity of a demigod that repelled any advance toward familiarity.

Jackson was moving dutifully through the receiving line as he waited his turn to be introduced to the commander. "Lieutenant Jackson," came the announcement. Whereupon Scott drew himself to full height and, placing his hands behind his back, proclaimed in a loud commanding voice: "I don't know if I will shake hands with Mr. Jackson!" Silence swept over the hall as all eyes turned toward the young officer who, blushed and confused, stared at the floor as he stood uncertainly before his general. Scott then said to Jackson, "If you can forgive yourself for the way in which you slaughtered those poor Mexicans with your guns, I am not sure that I can!" Jackson felt a rush of humiliation course through him. Suddenly he beheld Scott's massive right hand extended toward him while a warm smile of affection and respect spread across the commanding general's face. Applause filled the room. An officer in attendance declared, "No greater complement could have been paid a young officer for courage & zeal."

Ref.: *Stonewall Jackson*, J. Robertson, pp.70 & 753.

Who spoke each of the following "famous last words?" (1 thru 5)

1. "You know best."
2. "God, help me now. Oh! Oh! Oh!"
3. "Useless, useless."
4. "There is Jackson standing like a stone wall. Let us determine to die here, and we will conquer. Follow me."
5. (the following are the last words written before the author died): "Allow Mr. (George) Ashmun and friend to come in at 9:00am tomorrow."
6. James I. Robertson, Jr., lecturer, teacher, author, and Alumni Distinguished Professor Emeritus at Virginia Tech and close associate of Jack Davis, is an expert in Civil War history. In addition, while Robertson was at Virginia Tech, he was also an expert in another field. Name it.

Bonus Question: "Let us cross over the river and rest in the shade of the trees." According to author James Robertson, where was the location of the trees referred to in Stonewall Jackson's last words noted above?



Quiz Answers:

1. Lewis Powell (Payne)
Ref.: *Manhunt*, Swanson, p. 365.
2. George Atzerodt (last “Oh” spoken at 1:26pm when scaffold dropped)
Ref.: *Ibid.*, p. 365.
3. John Wilkes Booth
Ref.: *Ibid.*, p. 342.
4. Bernard Bee
Ref.: *Lee’s Lieutenants*, Freeman, Vol. I, p. 82.
5. Abraham Lincoln (written 14 Apr. 1865, just before he took the carriage ride to Ford’s Theatre)
Ref.: *The Life and Writings of Abraham Lincoln*, Stern, pp. 851-852.
6. Football field, as an Atlantic Coast Conference referee for 16 years
Ref.: *Wikipedia*, “James I. Robertson, Jr.”

Bonus Question: Across the West Fork River at Jackson Mill, VA (now West Virginia)
Ref.: *Stonewall Jackson*, Robertson, p. 753.



Future Presentations:

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| May 17, 2018 | Darryl Smith, CCWRT <i>The Last Raid – The 1864 Battle of Cynthia</i> |
| Sep. 20, 2018 | Greg Biggs, Clarksville, TN <i>The Question Was One of Supplies: The Logistics for William T. Sherman’s Atlanta Campaign</i> |
| Oct. 18, 2018 | Dan Welch, Youngstown, OH <i>The Last Road North: A Guide to the Gettysburg Campaign</i> |
| Nov. 15, 2018 | Ted Savas, El Dorado Hills, CA Topic TBD |
| Jan. 17, 2019 | Gary Johnson, CCWRT <i>The A Sailor’s Life for Me: How Sailing Differs from Soldiering</i> |
| Feb. 21, 2019 | Wayne K. Durrill, University of Cincinnati <i>War of Another Kind: A Southern Community in the Great Rebellion</i> |
| Mar. 21, 2019 | Gary Dyson, Mount Airy, MD <i>The Ambush of the Isaac P. Smith and the Battle on the Stono River</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. 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 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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