

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

November 15, 2018

Place: The Drake Center

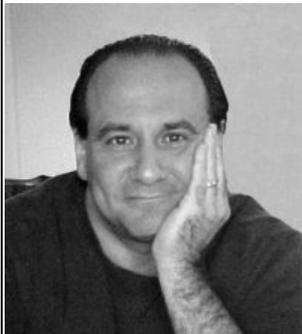
(6:00) Sign-in and Social

(6:30) Dinner

(7:15) Business Meeting

(7:30) Speak

Dinner Menu: Southern fried chicken, tossed salad w/ assorted dressings, sweet potato, succotash, peach cobbler.



November's Speaker: – Ted Savas, El Dorado Hills, CA

Topic: The War Outside My Window: The Civil War Diary of LeRoy Gresham, 1860 – 1865

An in-depth discussion about how one of the most important Civil War diaries was found, how it came to be published, the genius of the young teenager who wrote it, and the amazing insights we gain from it. LeRoy Wiley Gresham was born in 1847 to an affluent slave-holding family in Macon, Georgia. After a horrific leg injury left him an invalid, the educated, inquisitive, perceptive, and exceptionally witty 12-year-old began keeping a diary in 1860—just as secession and the Civil War began tearing the country and his world apart. He continued to write even as his health deteriorated until both the war and his life ended in 1865. The War Outside My Window captures the spirit and the character of a young privileged white teenager witnessing the demise of his world even as his own body slowly failed him.

LeRoy read books, devoured newspapers and magazines, listened to gossip, and discussed and debated important social and military issues with his parents and others. He wrote daily for five years, putting pen to paper with a vim and tongue-in-cheek vigor that impresses even now, more than 150 years later. His practical, philosophical, and occasionally Twain-like hilarious observations cover politics and the secession movement, the long and increasingly destructive Civil War, family pets, a wide variety of hobbies and interests, and what life was like at the center of a socially prominent wealthy family in the important Confederate manufacturing center of Macon. The young scribe often voiced concern about the family's pair of plantations outside town and recorded his interactions and relationships with "servants" Howard, Allen, Eveline, and others as he pondered the fate of human bondage and his family's declining fortunes.

Theodore P. Savas is the Managing Director of Savas-Beatie, a leading independent trade publisher in military and general history titles. He graduated from University of Iowa College of Law in 1986 (with distinction), and practiced law in the Silicon Valley for many years. Following that, Ted taught business and history classes for about 20 years and has written or edited a dozen books (published in 7 languages).

President's Report

By Dave Stockdale

More than 60 years ago a small group of Cincinnatians founded the Cincinnati Civil War Round Table. Their purpose was to expand their knowledge and understanding of what historian James M. McPherson termed the central event in the American historical consciousness. Back then each member did his own research on a Civil War topic (there were no female members) and presented it at one of the monthly dinners. I don't know if there are any extant records of the number of members in the early days, but the by-laws capped membership at 50.

Today, of course, our membership is more than twice that maximum number, and many women have joined the ranks. While a few of our speakers still come from among our members (something we encourage), we now bring in noted historians from all over the country. You can come for dinner or just for the meeting and program. We have an informative website, email reminders, and a newsletter that goes out to members to keep you up to date. Significantly, we have also expanded our purpose to include preserving the heritage of that central historical event. Our modern round table requires more structure than the founding members needed 60 years ago. All those activities must be planned, organized, constructed and administered by the volunteer members who make up the Board of Trustees.

Although members are no longer required to research and prepare presentations as a part of their membership, the Round Table still needs your help. If you think you might be willing to lend a hand, or you just want to see what goes on behind the scenes, we invite you to attend one of our board meetings. They are usually held four times during the year, and we try to schedule them when as many board members are as able can attend. We will announce the date of the next meeting soon, but it will probably be in early December. The positions of Secretary, Newsletter Editor, and Co-chair of the Preservation Committee are currently vacant and need to be filled.

One of the things the board has undertaken recently is a search for a new software program that will make it easier to track membership, handle dues, process dinner reservations, generate email notices, etc. Our Treasurer, Tom Williams, and our Membership and Publicity Chair, Wanda Langdon, have vetted a program that will do these things and that is within our means financially. The Board believes this will meet the Round Table's needs now and for the foreseeable future, and we hope to have it in place within the next couple of months.

Book Review

By Thomas L. Breiner

"To Prepare for Sherman's Coming": The Battle of Wise's Forks, March 1865 by Wade Sokolosky and Mark A. Smith, Savas Beatie, LLC, El Dorado Hills, CA 2015, 270 pages, Hardcover \$27.95.

Author Sokolosky writes in his book, about a little known battle that was the first major action by the Confederacy to stop Major General William T. Sherman's advance through the Carolinas. It is also a story about logistics, a subject near and dear to Sherman's heart. To oversee the logistics operations, he would send his chief quartermaster, Brevet Brigadier General Langdon C. Easton, and his chief commissary officer, Colonel Amos Beckwith. The authors have provided a well-researched history of this 4-day battle that is usually a footnote in some other work or just totally overlooked. Here for the first time is a detailed look at the battle that took place over the period March 7-11, 1865.

General Braxton Bragg having failed to hold Fort Fisher and then Wilmington, NC convinced General

Joseph E. Johnston to allow him to use the forces available, along with some of the transferred troops from the Army of Tennessee, to turn back the Union forces under Major General Jacob Cox advancing from New Bern to Goldsboro to unite with Sherman. Cox's mission was to complete the railroad from New Bern to Goldsboro to provide supplies for Sherman's army. Joe Johnston took the risk of dividing his forces to prevent the resupply of Sherman.

For four days Bragg's soldiers were able to slow Cox's advance at Wise's Forks. However, while allowing Johnston to concentrate enough forces to attack Sherman at the larger Battle of Bentonville, the delay did not significantly change the course of Sherman's march through the Carolinas or extend the life of the Confederacy.

The authors have created a much-needed analysis of the action at Wise's Forks and bring it to light. General Bragg had an opportunity for a significant victory, but as was his usual practice he let the potential for success slip away. The reader will need to determine for themselves who won the battle and define exactly what in this case constituted victory. The Union forces held the field at the end of the battle as Bragg and his forces retreated to Goldsboro and then on to Smithfield to unite with Johnston. Bragg had delayed Cox and his railroad rebuilding crew for four days providing time for Johnston's concentration. So you decide which side won.

The manuscript is well researched and well written. There are also numerous maps that will help the reader follow the action and the bibliography is excellent. The authors have created a very interesting and readable book that I found to be very important to the history Sherman's Carolina Campaign. If you have any interest in this period of the war, I highly recommend this work. It has been long overdue.

Support the Round Table This Shopping Season

Do you know that you can support the Cincinnati Civil War Round Table each time you make a purchase at Amazon, and at no cost to you? The Round Table is registered as a charitable organization with the Amazon Smile program. When you shop at <https://smile.amazon.com>, you will have the exact same shopping experience, with the bonus that Amazon will donate 0.5% of the purchase price to the Round Table.

On your first visit to Amazon Smile (smile.amazon.com), you need to select a charitable organization (Cincinnati Civil War Round Table) to receive donations from eligible purchases before you begin shopping. The site will remember your selection, and then every eligible purchase you make at smile.amazon.com will result in a donation to the Round Table. It's easy to forget to shop on Amazon Smile instead of going to [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com). It helps to create a bookmark on your browser to save smile.amazon.com to ensure that you make a donation to the Round Table while you shop.



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Be certain to Like our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/CincinnatiCWRT>

Follow us on our new Twitter account: <https://twitter.com/CwrtCincinnati>.

Yet another way to stay connected with your round table!

October Quiz

By Alan Berenson

"Stanton wanted an honest assessment of Grant's drinking habits and daily reports on the Vicksburg campaign. . . . It was an open secret that [Dana] was in Mississippi to spy on Grant and report back to Stanton, a situation that hardly endeared him to Grant's staff. 'Dana was about as popular in camp as a case of measles' said Captain Samuel H. Beckwith. . . .

"It attested to Grant's excellent political judgment that, instead of snubbing Dana, he received him with such disarming civility that the two men formed a warm friendship. . . . Dana soon vouched to Washington that Grant was 'the most modest, the most disinterested, and the most honest man I ever knew. . . .' As to whether Grant drank, Dana delivered a categorical rebuttal: 'I have been able, from my own knowledge to give a decided negative.' Dana later had to modify his sweeping declaration."

from *Grant*, Chernow, pp. 251-52.

The October Quiz – Now did you do?

1. Written in 1846 after his visit to southern Indiana in 1844

First stanza:

My childhood home I see again
And gladden with its view;
And still as mem'ries crowd my brain
There's sadness in it too.

Last stanza:

I range the fields with pensive tread
And pace the hollow rooms
And fee companion of the dead
I'm living in the tombs.

Who is the author? _____



2. Houck Ridge is a militarily significant part of the Gettysburg battlefield; Indicate where it is located on the map by drawing a circle the size of a nickel in the appropriate area.
3. Although General George Thomas never experienced a defeat as a Union general in the Civil War, he is not held in the highest regard by the general public. His last and arguably greatest victory was that over General Hood's rebels in late 1864 in the Nashville, TN area. What was his 1st victory as a Union general? _____
4. Montgomery Meigs was a great engineer. 2nd in his 1836 West Point class, he improved the Philadelphia harbor, built forts in Michigan and at Lake Champlain. In 1852 he was sent to Washington D.C. to help rid it of its cesspool environment by building an aqueduct to Great Falls, VA. Who was his boss while he completed that project? _____
5. The Confederate Navy constructed 6 submarines. The Hunley was built in Mobile; the other five were being built in what City? _____

October Quiz Answers:

1. Abraham Lincoln
ref.: *The Life and Writings of Abraham Lincoln*, Stein, pp.286-89
2. Located opposite Little Round Top, west of Plum Run, south of Rose's wheat field on Wheat Field La. and north of Devil's Den. *Gettysburg, The Last Invasion*, Guelzo, map, p. 259
3. The Battle of Mill Springs, KY.
ref.: *The Battle of Mill Springs, Kentucky*, Sanders
4. Jefferson Davis (Secretary of War under President Pierce)
ref.: *America's Quartermaster*, Greenbaum, N.Y. Times, Opinionator, 12 April 2013
5. Shreveport, La.
ref.: *One Damn Blunder from Beginning to End*, Joiner, p.18

Be sure to sign up for the November Round Table. There is a great dinner offering and for sure, Alan will have another quiz up and ready to stump you. Click the below link if you are still on line. It will take you to the sign-in for the November 15th round table.

[RSVP - November Round Table](#)

We must call in to the Drake all the dinner reservations by no later than Wednesday November 7th, so don't delay! Make your reservation today

Make your reservation by clicking the link above if you are viewing this *Canister* while on line.

If you printed out this Canister, then you can also go to our web site <http://Cincinnatiwrt.org>, plus if you don't have a computer, then you can call in your reservation to Esly Caldwell at 513-607-6598.

Hope to see you at the November Round Table.

October Speaker's Review

By Dave Stockdale

The Last Road North: A Guide to the Gettysburg Campaign 1863

For our October presentation, the Round Table was pleased to welcome to the podium Dan Welch, co-author with Robert Orrison of *The Last Road North, A Guide to the Gettysburg Campaign, 1863*. Although his book covers the entire Gettysburg campaign, Dan's talk concentrated on the moves and countermoves of the Army of Northern Virginia and the Army of the Potomac as they made their way to that fateful rendezvous in Pennsylvania. Dan's extensive study of the campaign and his years as a seasonal Park Ranger at Gettysburg National Military Park were evident in this clear, insightful, and occasionally amusing presentation.

Following the Confederate victory at Chancellorsville, Gen. Robert E. Lee obtained the approval of Jefferson Davis to mount a second invasion of the North. His objectives were to clear Federal forces from the Shenandoah Valley, to bring a respite from the war to Virginia and allow her farmers to harvest their crops, to ease pressure on Confederate forces in the Western Theater by forcing the Union to bring some of their forces east, to gather provisions from Pennsylvania, and encourage the Peace Democrats in the North.

Stealing a march on Union Gen. Joseph Hooker, who was busy trying to rebuild the Army of the Potomac, Lee moved out of Fredericksburg on June 3rd with 75,000 men bound for the Shenandoah Valley, thence down the Valley, across the Potomac River, through Maryland, and into Pennsylvania. Hooker's cavalry attempted to keep tabs on Lee's whereabouts, but Jeb Stuart's cavalry succeeded in screening the Confederates' movement down the Valley, at least for awhile. The Union cavalry's attempt to penetrate Stuart's screen precipitated on June 9th the largest cavalry engagement of the war, Brandy Station, which lasted some 14 hours. By June 13th, the Army of Northern Virginia's Second Corps under Richard Ewell had reached Winchester, eventually routing Union forces under Robert Milroy in the Second Battle of Winchester. And on June 15th, the lead elements of Lee's army crossed the Potomac into Maryland and continued north into Pennsylvania, threatening the state capital at Harrisburg. The Army of Northern Virginia had travelled 270 miles in 12 days.

Meanwhile Gen. Hooker, although keeping his army between the Confederates and Washington, D.C., was only moving three to four miles per day, reluctant to engage Lee because he believed his forces were outnumbered. Finally, on June 28, Lincoln replaced Hooker with Gen. George G. Meade, ordering him to find and attack the Confederate Army. The Union Army now had to march 35 miles per day to reach them.

By that point, the Confederate forces were widely dispersed throughout that portion of Southern Pennsylvania: from Chambersburg to Carlisle to near Harrisburg. They had also reached Wrightsville, south of the state capital, on the Susquehanna River. Wrightsville was the site of the world's longest covered bridge. Pennsylvania militia attempted to burn the bridge to deprive the Confederates of its use, but the wind shifted and set the town on fire. Confederate troops ended up helping the townspeople extinguish the flames.

When Lee learned on June 29th that Federal troops had crossed the Potomac, he ordered his widely dispersed forces to concentrate in Cashtown, Chambersburg and Gettysburg. He chose Gettysburg not because of any provisions it might hold, but because it was where many roads converged.

On June 30th Gen. Henry Heath of A.P. Hill's corps sent a force under Gen. James Pettigrew to Gettysburg in search of provisions. Heath was apparently unaware that four days before, elements of Ewell's corps had cleaned it out. Upon approaching the town, Pettigrew observed a large force of Union

cavalry advancing from the south. Pettigrew immediately returned to report what he had seen but his superiors, including Lee, believing that the Union forces were still in Maryland, were not persuaded there was a significant Union force in the area.

If you want to know Dan Welch's assessment of the extent to which Lee's second invasion of the North achieved any of his objectives, you will have to read the book. Or, you can ask one of the attendees at the meeting who bought a copy following Dan's talk. There were apparently quite a few, as Dan sold out of the entire supply he had brought. It is still available though from Savas-Beatie, Amazon, and Barnes & Noble.

Future Presentations

November 15, 2018	Ted Savas, El Dorado Hills, CA <i>The War Outside My Window: The Civil War Diary of LeRoy Gresham, 1860 – 1865</i>
January 17, 2019	Gary Johnson, Cincinnati Civil War Round Table <i>A Sailor's Life for Me: How Sailing Differs from Soldiering</i>
February 21, 2019	Wayne K. Durrill, University of Cincinnati <i>War of Another Kind: A Southern Community in the Great Rebellion</i>
March 21, 2019	Eric Wittenburg, Central Ohio Civil War Round Table <i>Second Winchester</i>
April 18, 2019	Gary Dyson, Mt. Airy, MD <i>The Ambush of the Isaac P. Smith and the Battle on the Stono River</i>
May 16, 2019	Wayne Motts, Harrisburg, PA <i>Pickett's Charge: A Battlefield Guide</i>

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 Esly Caldwell at 513-607-6598. 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 of the Wednesday of the week before the Round Table Meeting.

Events of Interest

Throughout the local area, there are numerous Civil War related events that you might be interested in attending. The calendar below list just a few. The events listed in bold type are for our own; The Cincinnati Civil War Round Table.

For additional details about these events, go to our website at:

<http://cincinnatiwrt.org/wordpress/events>.

November 3 rd	Speaker Series and Founder's Dinner – Cynthia
November 14 th	Hamilton CWRT Meeting – Jack Barnhart
November 15th	CCWRT Meeting & Presentation – Ted Savas
December 12 th	Hamilton CWRT Meeting – Christmas Banquet
January 9 th	Hamilton CWRT Meeting – Round Table Discussion
January 17th	CCWRT Meeting & Presentation – Our own Gary Johnson
February 13 th	Hamilton CWRT Meeting – Chris Burns
February 21st	CCWRT Meeting & Presentation – Wayne Durrill
March 13 th	Hamilton CWRT Meeting – Millie Henley
March 21st	CCWRT Meeting & Presentation – Eric Wittenberg
April 10 th	Hamilton CWRT Meeting – Michael K. Shaffer
April 18th	CCWRT Meeting & Presentation – Gary Dyson
April 25 th - 27 th	Annual US Grant Days – Georgetown
April 27 th	197 th US Grant Birthday Celebration – Point Pleasant
May 8 th	Hamilton CWRT Meeting – Scott Parkinson
May 16th	CCWRT Meeting & Presentation – Wayne Motts
May 29 th June 2 nd	American Battlefields Trust Annual Conference – Lexington, Kentucky
June 14 th -19 th	Civil War Institute Summer Conference – Gettysburg

ABOUT THE CINCINNATI CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

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 our meeting location 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://cincinnati.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 p.m. 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 p.m. 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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