
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](#)

February, 2016 Issue

Meeting Date: February 18, 2016

Place: The Drake Center

(6:00) Sign-in and Social

(6:30) Dinner

(7:15) Business Meeting

(7:30) Speaker

**Dinner Menu: *Baked Stuffed Fish,
Wild Rice, Ratatouille,
Waldorf Salad, Rye Dinner Roll,
and Carrot Cake***

Vegetarian Option: Upon request

Speaker: Gene Schmiel, Washington D.C.

Topic: *Citizen-General: Jacob D. Cox*

Reservations: If you do not have an Automatic Reservation, please remember to email your meeting reservation to reservations@cincinnati-cwrt.org or call it in to Lester Burgin at 513-891-0610. 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 Tuesday, February 9, 2016.**

February Speaker:

In the 19th century there were few professional schools other than West Point, and so the self-made man was the standard for success. True to that mode, Jacob Dolson Cox, a long-time Cincinnati resident who is buried in Spring Grove Cemetery, fashioned himself into a Renaissance man. In each of his vocations and avocations— Civil War general, Governor of Ohio, Secretary of the Interior, President of the University of Cincinnati, Dean of the Cincinnati Law School, President of the Wabash Railroad, historian, and scientist—he was recognized as a leader. Cox's greatest fame, however, is as the foremost participant-historian of the Civil War. His accounts of the conflict are to this day cited by serious scholars and serve as a foundation for the interpretation of many aspects of the war.



Gene Schmiel

Gene Schmiel is a retired U.S. Department of State Foreign Service officer. He was an assistant professor of history at St. Francis University (PA) and has taught at Marymount, Shenandoah, and Penn State universities. He holds a Ph.D. from The Ohio State University and coauthored, with his wife Kathryn, a book on life in the Foreign Service. His book *Citizen-General: Jacob Dolson Cox and the Civil War Era* was published in 2014 by the Ohio University Press, and is a History Book Club selection.



Items of Interest

Civil War Panel Discussion

On **Thursday, February 4, 2016, at 6:30 pm**, a Civil War Panel discussion titled “The Civil War Rages On” will be held at the Reading Branch of the Cincinnati & Hamilton County Public Library, 8740 Reading Road, OH, 45215. The Reading Historical Society is the sponsor of the event. The five members of the panel are all members of the Cincinnati CWRT: Tom Breiner, Paul Weber, Richard Swigert, Dawn Mowery, and David L. Mowery. They will cover general topics on Civil War history, including the reasons the Civil War was fought, the inevitability (or not) that the North won the war, and the lingering effects of the war on today’s society. Audience questions will be answered throughout the one-hour panel discussion. For more details, please contact the Reading Branch of the Cincinnati Public Library, phone 513-369-4465, <http://www.cincinnati.org/branches/reading.html>. The public is invited to attend, and the event is free.

Ed Bearss Speaks on Ulysses S. Grant

Civil War historian and author Edwin C. Bearss will return to Georgetown, OH, for the ninth time on **Saturday, March 5, 2016**, to speak at the Gaslight Theater, 301 S. Main Street, Georgetown, OH. His topic will be “Ulysses: From Cadet to General.” This lecture will focus on Ulysses S. Grant and the experiences that molded him into our first modern soldier, spanning his military career in California and Mexico to the explosion of civil war in 1861. At the age of 92, Bearss still tours over 200 days a year and is truly an institution himself. He is a Chief Historian Emeritus of the National Park Service and a U.S. Marine Corps WWII veteran. Bearss is well known for his engaging oratory and encyclopedic memory. Period music by Deann Kelley Kroft will begin at 12:30 pm, with Bearss’s lecture to follow at **1:00 pm**. If time allows, there may be a book-signing immediately following the presentation. Tickets are \$10 and can be purchased at the

door; seating is strictly first-come. Advanced tickets can be ordered through the Bailey House Bed & Breakfast by calling 937-378-3087, or by contacting the Purdy & Ring Law Office at 937-378-4119. For more information, please call 937-378-3087, or email baileyhou@frontier.com.

Ohio History Day Judges Needed

The Cincinnati Museum Center, in conjunction with the Ohio History Connection, is sponsoring an Ohio History Day regional contest for Cincinnati-area students in Grades 4 through 12. Ohio History Day contests for grades 6-12 are divided into three tiers: District, State, and National. The Youth Division is for students in grades 4-5, and they only compete at the state level. All other age groups must advance through the different tiers by advancing from the regional to the state level. Award-winning entries at Ohio History Day State Competition are eligible to participate in the National History Day event held in June in College Park, Maryland. Students are required to select a topic related to this year's "history theme" and present the topic in one of the following formats: a paper, an exhibit, a live performance, a documentary, or a website. All formats must give footnotes or endnotes and a bibliography to support the student's research. The theme for 2016 is: "Exploration, Encounter, Exchange in History."

The Region 8 District contest is to be held on **Saturday, March 19, 2016**, at Hamilton High School, 1165 Eaton Avenue, Hamilton, OH 45013. The contest organizers are looking for history-minded volunteers (such as members of the Cincinnati CWRT) to participate as judges for the Region 8 contest. Judging instructions are provided at <https://www.ohiohistory.org/OHC/media/OHC-Media/Documents/JudgingInstructions.pdf>. What a great way for one to inspire, encourage, and celebrate the achievements of a new generation of historians! If you are interested in being a volunteer judge for Region 8, please contact Rebecca Rasnick at the Cincinnati History Museum by e-mail at RParker@cincymuseum.org or by calling her at 513-287-7000 ext. 7246. Rebecca would like your name, title, affiliated organization (CCWRT), phone number, and e-mail address. Times for the event will be announced soon. For more information about the contest, go to <https://www.ohiohistory.org/learn/education-and-outreach/ohio-history-day/about/contest-information>.

Restoration of the Lew Wallace Study: A Visitor's View

Each year, our Round Table adopts and seeks financial support from our members for a Civil War "preservation project." In 2014, we made contributions to assist the interior restoration of the General Lew Wallace Study & Museum in Crawfordsville, Indiana (about 50 miles west of Indianapolis). We thought this a most appropriate way to honor the commander who led Cincinnati's successful defense against threatened attack by Confederate forces over a hundred and fifty years earlier.

Our meeting in February 2015 highlighted the events of General Wallace's life, both during the Civil War and afterwards, including the writing of his epic religious novel *Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ* (1880). In Wallace's Crawfordsville Study, which he designed and built in 1895, the modern visitor can see personal memorabilia of his distinguished career near the very site where he penned his masterpiece. It is well worth a visit.



After over a century's wear and tear, parts of the Study were in poor condition. Restoration of its interior required replacing old wiring and the electrical system. But the most dramatic aspect of the project turned



out to be refurbishing of the interior paint finishes created 120 years ago, during which it was discovered that there were thirty-two vignettes on the Study's domed ceiling. These frescoes, generally forgotten, but now gloriously restored, reveal an elaborate Victorian work of art that presents a military motif designed by Wallace himself.

In September 2015, Cincinnati Civil War Round Table officer Mark Silbersack visited the Wallace Study to look at the completed restoration. He was warmly welcomed by the Study's curator, Larry Paarlberg, who expressed the Study's appreciation to our members for supporting the restoration project,

and extended an invitation to any of our members to visit and see the Study's collection and restored building. Mark took a few pictures of the building, which are available here for your inspection.



The exterior of the Lew Wallace Study, Crawfordsville, Indiana.
All photos courtesy of Mark Silbersack.

January Presentation ... submitted by David L. Mowery

At our January 21st meeting, we were treated to a very interesting and well-researched powerpoint presentation titled "Countering Mallory's 'Infernal Machines'," a deeper look into the Confederacy's attempt to counter the strength and numerical superiority of the U.S. Navy. Our presenter, Gary Johnson, of the Cincinnati Civil War Round Table, is a U.S. Navy veteran who spent many years working on submarines. With this first-hand knowledge of the inner workings of the navy, Gary was able to attain a firm grasp of the organizational and political obstacles confronting the fledgling Confederate navy during the Civil War.

Confederate Secretary of the Navy Stephen Mallory was a former U.S. senator (1851-1861) from Key West, Florida, who prior to the war had served as the chairman of the Naval Affairs Committee. Mallory's goals in 1861, as he understood it, were to demonstrate the Confederacy as an independent state, protect its territory, and break the Union naval blockade so that Great Britain and France would recognize the Confederacy as a sovereign nation.

Unfortunately, from the very first shots at Fort Sumter, the Confederate States Navy (CSN) owned no significant fighting ships and no shipbuilding industry except for the works at New Orleans, Louisiana, which fell to Union forces on April 29, 1862. Early in the war, the Confederates captured two Federal naval yards, but both were lost to the Union army by May 1862. Thus, the C.S. Navy was compelled to retreat to inland naval facilities that were ill-equipped to construct deep-water ships which were required to break the Union blockade. During the course of the war, the Confederate Navy built or acquired a total of 130 ships for its fleet, while the US Navy had 671 ships. Many of these CSN ships came from foreign countries, primarily Great Britain, but because of the political relationship that Britain wished to maintain with the U.S. government, the British could not arm the ships that the Confederacy bought.

From a manpower standpoint, the U.S. Navy dominated. In 1861, the U.S. Navy secured three-fourths of its pre-war naval officers to its side. This loss of experience for the Confederacy could not be recovered in the short time that the Civil War was fought. The Confederate Navy enlisted 5,133 men into its ranks, while the U.S. Navy employed a staggering 51,500 sailors! Overall, the Confederate Navy was outmanned and outgunned from the start.

Political obstacles also stunted Stephen Mallory's efforts. The Confederate government felt the navy was less important than the need for ground troops. The CSA government also promoted a cotton embargo to try force Great Britain and France, whose economies depended heavily on the U.S. cotton trade, to back the Confederate cause. The latter decision is considered one of the worst mistakes that the Confederacy made during the war, because, before the war started at Fort Sumter, the Confederacy could have sold their cotton overseas to build up a war chest that would have exceeded that of the United States.

With the understanding that conventional means of defeating the U.S. Navy could not be used, Mallory chose unconventional methods to try to win the war on the water. He promoted privateering, better known as commerce raiding, as one method. Commerce raiders like Raphael Semmes and his CSS *Alabama* were quite successful; unfortunately, privateering caused so much political strife between the Union and the Confederacy over the question of piracy that the Confederacy cancelled the practice in 1863. Another method that Mallory used was accepting foreign blockade runners, primarily English mariners, to slip through the Union blockade to provide much needed goods. Nevertheless, this dangerous approach had only spotty success, and certainly not enough to change the course of the naval war.

Another approach was the Confederate Navy's investment in ironclad war vessels. The C.S. Navy built twenty-six ironclads during the Civil War (five offensive type and twenty-one defensive type). However, the C.S. Navy's biggest obstacle in constructing ironclads was obtaining two-inch iron plating for the ships' armor. Only two or three of the Confederacy's manufacturing facilities, one of which was the Tredegar Iron Works in Richmond, Virginia, had the capability to produce two-inch plating. On average, a single ironclad needed 16,000 tons of armor plating. For example, the CSS *Georgia* used the equivalent of 120 to 160 miles of railroad rails. The difficulty in harvesting and producing such large amounts of iron, along with the lack of obtaining good marine engines, naturally led to a limited production of Confederate ironclads. And, as the Union armies took more territory away from the Confederacy, the Confederate navy was forced to scuttle its ironclads to prevent them from being used by the enemy. Most of the twenty-six CSN ironclads were destroyed by their own crews.

As another approach, the Confederacy tried their hand at building submarines to break the blockade. The most famous example, the CSS *Hunley*, proved to be the world's first submarine to sink an enemy ship, but the submarines were unreliable, dangerous, and too difficult to maneuver. In essence, Mallory's attempt to take the war underneath the waves was too early in its conception and too limited to be effective.

Lastly, Mallory promoted the development and use of torpedoes (underwater mines) to stop Union naval incursions and disrupt enemy commerce. Confederate naval officer Matthew F. Maury helped perfect these torpedoes, particularly the electric detonation torpedo. Other torpedoes created for the Confederate Navy were the spar torpedoes, the floating (or drift) torpedoes, and the coal torpedoes (made to look like a lump of coal that would explode when placed inadvertently into an enemy ship's boiler). By far, torpedoes proved to be the most effective method of Mallory's unconventional arsenal. Confederate torpedoes accounted for the most damage done to the U.S. Navy (by nearly five times that of the next nearest method). Twenty-eight U.S. Navy vessels were sunk by torpedoes during the Civil War.

In the end, the U.S. Navy was able to develop effective countermeasures for Mallory's unconventional methods of warfare. Mallory was never able to achieve any of the original goals that were set for him in 1861. Nonetheless, Mallory did a lot with the little he had. It was simply unrealistic to expect that the Confederacy could fight a naval war against a strong industrial nation like the United States.



January Quiz:

1. Why was Sally Thomkins of Richmond, VA, personally granted a captain's commission by President Jefferson Davis in 1861?
2. After their defeat at the Battle of Buffington Island, the bulk of the remaining Confederate troops in Morgan's Great Raid suffered additional losses in lesser skirmishes as they fled their Union pursuers. Upon entering Ewington, Ohio, they surprised 250 Union militiamen who surrendered without a shot. After their parole, Gen. Morgan gave his men a very unusual option not otherwise known to have been offered to troops of either army during the Civil War. What was his offer?
3. In which years(s) did Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis spend common time in Washington, D.C.? Did they ever meet?
4. Edward A. Pollard, editor of the *Richmond Examiner*, lawyer, writer, and historian, is the author of an 1866 history of the Civil War whose title gave origin to a line of thought sympathetic to the postwar South. Its name was _____.
5. The highest ranking officer killed at Okinawa in World War II was the namesake and son of a prominent Kentuckian and Confederate general. Their name was _____.
6. BONUS QUESTION #1: A railroad terminal in Desoto, LA, was a vital supply line to the city of _____.
7. BONUS QUESTION #2: Edmund Ruffin was a true Southern "fire eater." What was the cause of his death?

Quiz Answers:

1. In order to prevent the closure of her successful and popular small (100-bed) Robertson Hospital.
Ref.: *General Lee's Army*, Glatthaar, p.391-2; *Bing.com*, "Sally Louisa Thompkins"
2. To allow members of Morgan's forces to surrender themselves to the Union commander (Col. Sontag) of the already surrendered and disarmed Union militia.
Ref.: *Morgan's Great Raid*, Mowery, p.135.
3. a. Late 1848 & early 1849 while Abraham Lincoln was a congressman and Davis a senator
b. No*
Ref.: *Bloody Crimes*, Swanson, p.52.
* Quizmaster was challenged by alert Round Table members as to the accuracy of this negative answer by offering information that Abe & Jeff may have met in the Blackhawk War in 1832. Without going into detail regarding findings in research by the quizmaster and Dan Reigle, to whom great thanks is given for his assistance by the quizmaster, readers are advised that it is concluded that it is **highly unlikely** that Lincoln and Davis were logistically able to affect a face-to-face meeting and that the answer as given above to 3b is correct.
4. The Lost Cause
Ref.: C-SPAN3, *Lectures in History*, "Civil War Memory and the Lost Cause," Rubin, 12/6/13.
5. Simon Bolivar Buckner
Ref: 2012 Signature Conference, 22 Mar. 2012, "Grant and the Army of the Potomac," Bunting.
6. Vicksburg, MS; this railroad originated in Marshall, TX, and facilitated the supply of the rebel army east and west of the Mississippi with foodstuffs, military equipment, and cotton.
Ref.: *The Official Military Atlas of the Civil War*, Davis et. al., Plates 54-1,34-4.
7. Suicide; after waiting for some unexpected house visitors to complete their visit, he went to his study, stuck the muzzle of his shotgun into his mouth, and manipulated the trigger with a forked stick. A true fire eater!
Ref.: *Civil War Dictionary*, Boatner, p.712; *Wikipedia*, "Edmund Ruffin."



Future Presentations:

Mar. 17, 2016	Dr. Michael Adams, Northern Kentucky University <i>Living Hell: The Dark Side of the Civil War</i>
Apr. 21, 2016	Stephen M. Hood, Huntington, WV <i>The Lost Papers of John Bell Hood</i>
May 19, 2016	William Alan Blair, Pennsylvania State University <i>The Dirty Business of Winning a Civil War: Combating Disloyalty</i>
Sep. 15, 2016	David G. Moore, Washington, DC <i>William S. Rosecrans and the Union Victory</i>
Oct. 20, 2016	William C. "Jack" Davis, Virginia Tech University TBD
Nov. 17, 2016	David T. Dixon, Santa Barbara, CA <i>The Lost Gettysburg Address: The Civil War Odyssey of Charles Anderson</i>
Jan. 16, 2017	Theresa Leininger-Miller, University of Cincinnati <i>Illustrated Sheet Music of the Civil War</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 an email to reservations@cincinnatiwrt.org 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. 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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