



CINCINNATI
CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE
SERVING OHIO, KENTUCKY AND INDIANA SINCE 1956



THE CANISTER

Monthly Newsletter of the Cincinnati Civil War Round Table

Cincinnati CWRT P. O. Box 621082 Cincinnati, Ohio 45262 <http://www.cincinnati-cwrt.org>
March, 2014 Issue

Meeting Date: March 20, 2014

Place: The Drake Center

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

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

**Dinner Menu: Chicken Alfredo, Steamed Broccoli,
Garlic Bread Sticks, Chopped Salad, Italian Cream Cake**
Vegetarian Option: Available upon request

Speaker: Mike Rhein, CCWRT
Topic: *General Lytle: Home Again*

Reservations: If you do not have an Automatic Reservation, please remember to email your meeting reservation to reservations@cincinnati-cwrt.org; call it in to Tom Williams at 513-563-2665 or email ccwrt.dinners@gmail.com. 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 Tues, Mar. 11, 2014.**

March Speaker:

For our March, 2014 meeting, we welcome back Cincinnati Civil War Round Table member Mike Rhein. Mike will be speaking to the Round Table for the tenth time (we think this must be some sort of record). He first presented in 1978! This month's talk will be the fourth and final installment of Mike's William Haines Lytle series. Mike last spoke to us in 2004 about the fatal ending of General Lytle at the Battle of Chickamauga. His funeral service back home (attended perhaps by more people than any other Cincinnati in history) and his subsequent burial in Spring Grove Cemetery ended a chapter, but Mike will continue General Lytle's story beyond his death from an interesting angle. Many of us know about Lytle Park in downtown Cincinnati. Many of us also probably know William Haines Lytle's family home was located on this property. What many of us may not realize is how the home, despite its obvious historic value, became a

victim of “progress.” Built in 1809, the Lytle home was, from the beginning, a very sturdy and stately structure. Mike will talk about how this home in 1907 became a battleground of a more civil sort between the City of Cincinnati who saw it an obstacle in the formation of a park, and historic preservationists who wanted to maintain a symbol of the rich Lytle heritage. As many of you are aware, historic preservation is an important part of our Round Table’s mission. Mike’s diligently researched talk will illustrate how a landmark, such as the home of William Haines Lytle, can be overlooked and disappear, if we are not vigilant.

A dedicated member of our Round Table since 1977, Mike has served as president (twice) and newsletter editor for our Round Table. He has spoken numerous times in four states: Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana and Georgia. In addition to his expert talks on William Haines Lytle, whom he has studied since the 1970’s, Mike has given several presentations on the life of Robert E. Lee, a personage he has been fascinated with since studying him as a youth in the 1960’s.



President’s Report

... Pat Homan

So here it is, March 2, with Spring less than three weeks away and we are waiting for another visit of the WHITE DEATH! The weather folks have been predicting the WORSE STORM OF THE YEAR, so I am waiting to see what will happen. As the predictions Friday indicated we would probably have a snow day Monday, I gave my students extra work. We are almost two weeks behind where we should be but there is little to do but push a bit.

We had an excellent presentation by our editor on Harriet Beecher Stowe. I need to correct a statement I made about the quote of President Lincoln, which he may or may not have made. I cited a reference from *Battle Cry of Freedom*” which states Lincoln as greeting Mrs. Stowe with “So your the little woman who wrote the book started this great war”. McPherson citation is *Lincoln Day by Day: A Chronology 1809-1865* by Earl Schenk , three volumes but not published until 1960. Therefore, I will yield to Dan’s superior research that the statement is questionable.

This leads to my final point. I am constantly in awe of the massed knowledge of the members of our Round Table. We have had a number of top-notch presentations from within our ranks. Many of you have areas of the War or items related to the war, which have fascinated you and led to further research. I encourage you to think about presenting your knowledge to the rest of us. You certainly do not have to be a “professional speaker” whatever that is. All it takes for consideration is to talk to our Program Chair, Albert Hallenberg, and he will take it from there. If you need help in researching your topic, there are many, including Albert (a librarian) who can assist.

Finally, I continue to encourage you to bring a guest and talk up the Round Table whenever possible. So, stay warm, watch the ice and enjoy Fat Tuesday. See you on the 20th.

February Presentation:

... submitted by Mark Silbersack

At our February meeting, member and officer Dan Bauer spoke on “Harriet Beecher Stowe and the Politics of Slavery.” In essence, he posed this question: was there a causal link between *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and the onset of the War?

Harriet Beecher Stowe had little interest in politics as she considered herself to be primarily a writer. Yet Dan Bauer believes that *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, first serialized in 45 installments of the magazine *National Era* between June 1851 and April 1852, and later published as a best-selling 1852 book, had a tremendous influence on national politics. To provide context, Dan sketched the political environment prior to release of the book and then compared it to politics after the release of the book. He described events leading to the Compromise of 1850 and specifically creation of the Fugitive Slave Law, Harriet Beecher's life in Cincinnati, a few real-life antecedents for the contents of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and then offered a little sampling the UTC storyline.



Dan Bauer

Dan began by referencing the myth that Mr. Lincoln welcomed Mrs. Stowe to the White House in late 1862 by saying that she was “the little woman who wrote the book that started this great war.” The meeting occurred but what was said is shrouded in mystery. Dan then posed the question: “Did HBS in fact write the book which started the great war?” He explained how the book raised the level of hostility between the North and South further dividing the two major national political parties (the Democrats and Whigs) along sectional lines. He cited the presidential and congressional elections from 1852 to 1860 as evidence of the changing sentiment. These political developments led to Lincoln’s 1860 election and ultimately the Civil War

Let’s summarize the political events Dan described. After the Mexican War ended in 1848, the United States controlled a vast amount of western land. The paramount national issue became whether the territories and states formed there would be free or slave. The strength of the largest national party, the Democrats, was the slave-holding South and slavery-tolerant voters up North. Meanwhile, the Whig Party waffled on the issue. Leading Whigs like Senator

Henry Clay and President Millard Fillmore supported the Compromise of 1850 including its strong Fugitive Slave Law. The move outraged many Northerners. New York Whig William Seward and Ohio Free Soiler Salmon Chase (both joining the Senate in March 1849), took a strong anti-expansion of slavery stance. Dan traced the Whig Party’s rapid decline, as it dropped from 115 House seats in 1846 to 71 in 1852, the last time it fielded a presidential candidate. With the Whig Party in tatters and strong opposition to the Kansas-Nebraska Act, the Republican Party was founded and grew rapidly.

Did *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* influence political events occurring in 1852 and beyond? Dan’s thesis is that the book incited those who already had anti-slavery leanings. As more and more people read UTC during the 1850s, Northerners were converted from quite acceptance of slavery to (a) resisting enforcement of Fugitive Slave Act (b) vocally opposing the expansion of slavery into Kansas, and (c) supporting a political party which undoubtedly would permanently divide the nation. At the same time it moved moderate Southerners into becoming secessionists. Of course, a lot of other people and events contributed to the evolution of the Northern mindset and subsequent Southern alienation. But, as Dan asked: who shaped public opinion more on these issues than H.B. Stowe?

2014 Preservation Project:

The CCWRT has chosen the restoration of the General Lew Wallace Study and Museum as our 2014 preservation project. Wallace, a Civil War Major General and author of *Ben-Hur*, was said to have built the study because he wanted "a pleasure-house for my soul," that would be "a detached room away from the



world and its worries." The study was completed in 1898, seven years before Wallace's death in 1905. Later converted into a museum, the study now houses artifacts Wallace used during his lifetime, as well as many objects pertaining to his literary legacy. The General Lew Wallace Study is located in Crawfordsville, IN, and is the only National Historic Landmark in Montgomery County.

The first order of business is to replace the building's wiring. Next, conservators will move onto the primary objective of the restoration: remove nine layers of paint and so that the original fresco consisting of a military motif can be viewed. Lastly, the project will include installation of a modern security system. Total cost of the electrical work, paint conservation, and attendant services is

estimated to be \$300,000. Once restored and conserved, the study will feature one of the most elaborate and original Victorian finishes available for public viewing in the region.

The CCWRT will assist in financing this project by collecting tax deductible donations as well as contributing a member matching sum of up to \$500. Please forward your checks to our Preservation Chairs Becky Burket and Randy Donohue or our Treasurer, Jim Stewart. Help restore this architectural wonder and then make plans to visit this historic Civil War landmark.



Items of Interest

Springfield Civil War Symposium: The fourth Springfield Civil War Symposium, presented by the Clark County Historical Society, will trace the events of 1864 with emphasis on the eastern and western theaters of the conflict. Speakers will discuss Sherman's Atlanta Campaign, March to the Sea, Grant's Overland Campaign, Hood's Tennessee Campaign, and the Shenandoah Valley Campaign. Speakers include John F. Marszalek, Jonathan Noyalas, Eric A. Jacobson, and Eric J. Wittenberg.

When: Saturday, April 12, 2014

Tickets: \$50 for adults, \$40 for members, and \$20 for students. Sponsor: Clark County Historical Society

Location: Clark County Heritage Center, 117 South Fountain Avenue, Springfield, OH.

For more information: Visit www.heritagecenter.us or call (937) 324-0657

Ed Bearss is in Town!: Well actually it Georgetown, but that is close. Ed Bearss will speaking at the U.S. Grant Homestead Gaslight Theater, 301 S. Main Street on Saturday, March 8, 2014. at 1 p.m. Mr. Bearss's topic will be "The War in the West Begins." Admission is \$10.00. The U.S. Grant Boyhood Home and Schoolhouse will also be open from 10am-Noon. Music by Deann Kelley will begin at the theater at 12:30pm. **For more information:** Call 937-378-3087

Thanks to our Sustaining Members: Sustaining Members are persons who have contributed at least \$25 in addition to their regular membership. Thanks to the contributions of the following persons, the CCWRT is able to keep annual dues low for the rest of the membership. The following is a list of the sustaining members for the 2013-14 campaign:

Lester Burgin, Paul Busam, Rich Foy, Bob Haines, Albert Hallenberg, Dan Kemble, Bruce Kirchner, Bob Limoseth, John Linnenberg, Jim MacKnight, Dave Mowery, Dawn Mowery, Harvey Oloff, Dan Reigle, Mark Silbersack, Jim Stewart, Geoff Strauss, Harriette Weatherbee, Paul Weber, Jackie Williams, Tom Williams

We're Moving: This month, March 2014, the Round Table will move to a new location within the Drake. We will now be on the first floor, which is quite handy to the west entrance of the Drake. So no longer will you need to go by stairs or elevator to the basement, walk down a long hallway, and then navigate more stairs to get to our meeting/dinner space. More importantly, beyond being more accessible especially for those with disabilities, the new space will be larger, give us some room to grow, and be much more inviting than our current basement Drake room.



Book Review: **Making Freedom: The Underground Railroad and the Politics of Slavery.** By J.M. Blackett. Notes, index, 136 pp., 2013, UNC, www.uncpress.unc.edu, \$27.95.

The popularity of the recent movie "12 Years a Slave" has helped to heighten interest about the practice of slavery in the pre-Civil War South. This book provides background and insight into one of the topics explored in the movie — the practice of kidnapping free Northern blacks and selling them into slavery. The book explores the motivation behind slave escapes, the operation of the Underground Railroad and the effects of abolition.

J.M. Blackett notes that the kidnapping of Northern blacks was widespread, although it occurred primarily in border areas separating free and slave states, such as that between Pennsylvania and Maryland. Groups of men in Maryland, for example, would travel to free black communities in southeast Pennsylvania and search — especially at night — for vulnerable teenagers. These gangs would sometimes pay money to free black spies in order to locate prospects. The victims would be overpowered, tied up and shipped by wagon to a convenient port, such as Baltimore, which was full of Southern sympathizers. From there, the victims would

be transferred by ship to the Deep South, where fewer questions were asked about a for-sale slave's provenance.

While criminal gangs conducted kidnapping for money, there was also a problem with government-sanctioned "legal kidnapping." After the federal Fugitive Slave Act passed in 1850, government-approved slave catchers fanned out throughout the North in search of runaways. In their zeal, these authorities would sometimes grab and incarcerate free blacks who merely bore a physical resemblance to the escaped slave they were seeking. Since slaves were property and had no rights, these hapless victims of mistaken identity would end up being shipped South in chains without the benefit of judicial review.

Blackett contends that most escapes were planned and executed by the slaves themselves, often without any contact with abolitionists. Many escaped slaves had been treated well by their owners and had not been physically abused. When asked why they had fled, they explained that they simply wanted their personal freedom. Blackett's book, an academic study, provides a new, unique cause of the Civil War: a sharp reduction in the cost of postage starting in 1851. The introduction of cheap letters made it possible for anyone, including an impoverished escaped slave, to write long distance to former compatriots in bondage. Most wrote through intermediaries in order to avoid arousing suspicions among the slave owners.

In these letters, the ex-slaves would relate their escape experiences, detailing the safest escape routes and the most secure safe houses. This type of black networking led to a sharp escalation in slave escapes in the 1850s. This book is highly recommended.

Reviewed by Walt Albro and as published in the *Civil War News*



February Quiz:

1. Which of these four men was not elected President of the United States?
James Buchanan, Millard Fillmore, Franklin Pierce or Zachary Taylor
2. William Seward and Salmon Chase were both members of Lincoln's cabinet. The two share something else in common: the date March 4, 1849. What happened to these men on this date?
3. What do the terms Barnburners, Hunkers, and Silver Grays refer to?
4. In the summer of 1855 around 1,200 New Englanders immigrated to the Kansas Territory to help counter the "Border Ruffians". Henry Ward Beecher, brother of Harriet Beecher Stowe, supplied many of them with Sharps rifles. What was the nickname given to these rifles?
5. What is "grasshoppering"?
6. Ohioan William Hoel was the only volunteer to be promoted to_____.

Quiz Answers

1. Fillmore. Fillmore became president upon the death of Zachary Taylor, but he was never *elected* president.
2. They made their senatorial debuts--Seward, a Whig from New York, and Chase, a Free Soiler from Ohio.
3. Political factions within the state of New York. Barnburners bolted the Democratic Party in support of the Wilmot Proviso while Hunkers sided with Southern Democrats rejecting the Proviso. Silver Grays supported Millard Fillmore in his 1852 bid for the Whig Party nomination.
4. Beecher's Bibles--The rifles were transported in wooded crates labeled bibles.
5. This term refers to getting a steamship over a sandbar or shallow water.
6. Lieutenant Commander



Future Presentations:

Apr. 17, 2014	John Fazio, Cleveland Civil War Round Table <i>The Confederate Secret Service and the Assassination of Abraham Lincoln</i>
May. 15, 2014	Greg Biggs, Clarksville, TN Civil War Round Table <i>The Fall of Nashville and the Rise of the Sirens</i>
Sept. 18, 2014	Don Rightmyer, Danville, KY <i>Kentucky's Bookends to the Civil War: Robert Anderson and Fort Sumter</i>
Oct. 16, 2014	Mark Holbrook, Ohio Humanities Council <i>Mr. Lincoln's Cameraman: An Evening with Mathew Brady</i>
Nov. 20, 2014	Tom Parson <i>Work for Giants: The Campaign and Battle of Tupelo/Harrisburg</i>
May. 21, 2015	Christopher Phillips, University of Cincinnati <i>TBD</i>

We Who Study Must Also Strive to Save!

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 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.

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 \$28. 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 and take the elevators to your right to level A, go to your right and Motivation Meeting Room G is located at the end of the hallway.

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Don't Forget to Bring a Friend!