



CINCINNATI  
 CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE  
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# THE CANISTER

Monthly Newsletter of the Cincinnati Civil War Round Table

Cincinnati CWRT PO Box 621082 Cincinnati, Ohio 45262 <http://www.cincinnatiwrt.org>  
 February, 2008 Issue

Meeting Date: February 21, 2008

Place: Quality Hotel and Suites

Time: (6:00) Sign-in and Conversation

(6:45) Dinner: - Homemade Meat Loaf, RSVP Signature Salad, Rosemary Roasted New Potatoes,  
 Green Beans Almondine, Carrot Cake

(A vegetarian meal option is available, if requested prior to the reservations cut-off date)

(7:45): Meeting and Program

Speaker: Dr. Robert L. McLaurin, CCWRT:

Topic: *River Navies: The Forgotten Warriors*

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** If you do not have an Automatic Reservation, please remember to email your meeting reservation to [reservations@cincinnatiwrt.org](mailto:reservations@cincinnatiwrt.org); call it in to Bob Limoseth at **513.777.2160** (h); or email: [rlimo@fuse.net](mailto:rlimo@fuse.net). If you are making a reservation for more than yourself please provide the names of the others.

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For our February meeting, the Cincinnati Civil War Round Table welcomes to the podium one of its own distinguished members, Dr. Robert L. McLaurin, who will be making his first speaking appearance before the group. Though his career has centered upon the field of neurosurgery, Dr. McLaurin has fostered a longtime interest in the study of history and the American Civil War. In 2003, he published a book entitled *Richard M. Gano: Physician, Soldier, Clergyman*, a work that highlights the life of Confederate Brigadier-General Richard Montgomery Gano, who performed admirable service as a cavalry leader under Generals John Hunt Morgan and Edmund Kirby Smith. A graduate of the University of Cincinnati (J. D.) and of Harvard University (M. D.), Dr. McLaurin currently serves as an Emeritus Professor of Medicine at the University of Cincinnati. He also volunteers as captain of the steamboat *Queen of the West* at the Cincinnati Museum Center, an experience which has fueled his thirst for knowledge of the vessels that plied the shallow waters of the United States during the 1800's.

Before the Civil War ever began, both the North and the South understood the critical need to control US

waters. Lessons learned from the American Revolution told them that the side who dominated the oceans and the rivers would be able to dominate the country's most profitable commerce routes, safest supply lines, and best avenues of large-scale troop movement. After the fall of Fort Sumter in April 1861, the Union and Confederate nations worked feverishly to beef up their navies, particularly on the rivers, where initially the US Navy had no distinct military advantage over the Confederacy. Dr. McLaurin's presentation will concentrate on the types of gunboats used and the principal persons involved in the Western river fleets of the Union and Confederate navies. He will give an overview of each side's organization of their naval forces during the Civil War. He will also present the principal commanders and the engineers who designed the various types of boats that vied for control of the Mississippi, Ohio, Tennessee, and Cumberland Rivers. In addition, Dr. McLaurin will tell the stories of the two most famous "ironclads" (the ancestors of today's battleship) that fought on western waters – the Federal's USS *Carondelet* and the Confederacy's CSS *Arkansas*. The extraordinary combat successes of these two ironclads, and other vessels like them, would spell doom for the conventional wooden warship, and would usher in a new era of naval warfare around the world.

## **Miscellaneous Announcements**

**Inclement Weather Plan:** Yes, it's that time of year when winter weather might force us to cancel a meeting. While that is unlikely, it has only happened two times in the last fifteen years, we wanted to provide you some options for getting last minute information on meeting day. If the weather turns bad, and the streets are difficult to travel, you can check the following sources to determine if the meeting is still on or if it has been cancelled.

1. Check the home page on our web site at [www.cincinnatiwrt.org](http://www.cincinnatiwrt.org). We will post a simple update informing the membership that the meeting has either been cancelled or it is still on.
2. Call the Quality Hotel & Suites at 513.351.6000 and inquire about the status of the meeting. If we decide to cancel, they will be the first to know and their front desk personnel will be informed.
3. Call John Linnenberg, President, at 513.607.4002 (business) or 513.922.3999 (home)
4. Call Bob Limoseth, Vice President, at 513.777.2160.

John and Bob will make the decision on the status of the meeting based on the condition of the roads, the safety of our members, the status of the speaker and the Quality Hotel's ability to serve us.

**Standing Reservations List:** If you are regular in your attendance and only miss one or two meetings a year you might want to consider the convenience of our Standing Reservations List. Members on the list don't worry about calling in each month to make a dinner reservation because they have already indicated "I'll be there." They only call when they can't make the meeting. If you are interested in having your name put on the list see Jim at the check-in table. He'll have you sign the enrollment form and no more last minute worries about forgetting to call in. As with all meals, if the standing dinner reservation is not cancelled prior to the Sunday cut-off date the week of the meeting, and the Round Table has to pay for the meal, the member will be billed for the cost of the dinner.

## **Civil War History Day at the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County**

In conjunction with the annual community-wide reading program hosted by the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton Co, a Civil War History Day will be held at the Main Library on Sunday, February 24, 2008. This year's title for On The Same Page is *Coal Black Horse* by Robert Olmstead, a novel that is set during the months leading up to the Battle of Gettysburg.

The following events are scheduled for February 24, from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.:

- 1:00: Civil War Era Music - Russ & Barb Childers
- 1:15: Albert Hallenberg: *Civil War Genealogy*

2:00: Vintage dancing with the Crossroads Dance Team  
2:15: Dr. James Ramage, NKU: *John Hunt Morgan: Folk Hero of the Civil War*  
3:00: Civil War Era Music - Warren & Judy Waldron  
3:15: James Bissland, author: *Blood, Tears, & Glory: How Ohioans Won the Civil War*

In addition, the Cincinnati Museum Center will be represented by costumed soldiers and sailors, and replica games and toys will be available for the public to test their skills. This event is free and open to the public. Further information is available on the library's website at: [www.cincinnati.org/samepage/](http://www.cincinnati.org/samepage/)

**Preservation Fund Update:** At the September meeting we announced that we are not going to start this campaign year with a Dedicated Preservation Project. We hope, however, that this will not stop our members from making individual contributions to the Preservation Fund. The Round Table remains committed to supporting preservation and educational activities related to America's great civil war. If something comes to our attention that warrants support we will bring a recommendation forward to the membership. In the mean time we would like to see the Preservation Fund balance grow so that we can make even more meaningful contributions during the sesquicentennial years beginning in 2011. Your continued support will be appreciated.

#### **Fort Beauvoir Update:**

After surviving hurricane Katrina in 2005, Beauvoir has been restored and returned to its historic look when President Jefferson Davis lived there (1870 – 1890). The re-opening ceremony will be at 10:00 AM on Tuesday, June 3, 2008, the occasion of Davis' 200th birthday. The CCWRT contributed \$500 toward Beauvoir's rebuilding.

#### **Membership:**

At the January meeting we welcomed back former member Bob Jones and welcomed new members Jim Dempsey and Christie and Mike Rogers.

#### **Sustaining Members:**

We wish to recognize and thank this year's Sustaining Members who have given generously to help further the objectives of the Round Table: Paul Busam, Jim Chaney, Albert Hallenberg, Dennis Harrell, Skip Jackson, Dan Kemble, Bob Limoseth, John Linnenberg, Dave and Dawn Mowery, Bill Newcomb, Dan Reigle, Jim Stewart, Geoff Strauss, Jeff Strottman, Pattie Waldbillig and Harriette Weatherbee.

#### **Preservation News:**

In December we sent \$220.00 representing contributions donated from the second half of our Dedicated Preservation Fund Raising Project to the Perryville Enhancement Project (Perryville Battlefield Preservation Association). We thank the following members for supporting this effort: John Hunter, Dave and Dawn Mowery, Vic Sandfoss, Anne Shepherd, Bill Smith and Jim Stewart

#### **From the Montgomery County Maryland Civil War Round Table Newsletter: Civil War Reenacting in America**

Civil War reenacting began during the centennial commemorations that took place from 1961 to 1965. The recreated battles and events drew a receptive audience, but the public interest in reenactments began to fade by the late 1960's. Popularity in living history events grew during the 1980's and 1990's due to the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Battle series (1986-1990), and the 130<sup>th</sup> Anniversary series (1991-1995). During the 140<sup>th</sup> Anniversary series (2001-2005) many historic battles and events were recreated.

A fairly sizable group of enthusiastic participants are drawn to reenactments. This group is willing to expend money, resources, and brave the elements in their efforts to duplicate the time period. Some go as far to take

classes, put on by event sponsors, in how to dress, cook, eat, and even die just like a real Civil War Soldier. For the most part, during non-anniversary years, the reenactments are relatively small, usually between about 100 to a couple thousand participants portraying Union or Confederate infantry, artillery or cavalry units. So far the largest reenactment to date was the 135<sup>th</sup> Anniversary re-enactment of the Battle of Gettysburg (1998). They recorded 41,000 reenactors and close to 100,000 spectators over three days.

Reenactors give a variety of reasons for participating. Some reenact because they're interested in getting a historical perspective on the Civil War time period, particularly if they have an ancestor who fought in the war. Mere escapism is a reason for others. At some events, if there are not enough Federals or Confederates, some will be asked to change sides for the event. They have become "galvanized Yankees or Rebels."

There are thought to be four types of Reenactors. They are called "Farbs", "Mainstreamers", "Authentic/Progressives", and the "Hard Core". The "Farbs" are reenactors who expend little time or money maintaining authenticity in regards to uniforms, accessories, or even period behavior. The attitude of "Good Enough" is usually pervasive among Farbs, although some causal observers would be able to pick out their flaws. Some think the origin of Farb comes from "Far be it from authentic." Some think an alternative definition is "Far Be it for me to question his impression."

"Mainstreamers" are somewhere between the Farbs and the Authentics. This is the largest group of reenactors.

The "Authentic/Progressive" reenactor tries to recreate Civil War life to the fullest. They research details of material goods and operations in their quest for accuracy. They constantly try to "progress" in their knowledge and other aspects of the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The last group is the "Hard Core" also known as "stitch counters." They sometimes take their participation to the extreme. They have a wealth of knowledge on the subject, and sometimes will not participate in battle scenarios because they can't get shot.

Civil War reenactments also fall into four main categories. These categories are living histories, public demonstrations, tactical battles, and scripted battles.

The living history presentation is meant entirely for the education of the general public. They are aimed at portraying the life and lifestyle of the average Civil War soldier or civilian, and may or may not include a mock battle. Occasionally, there may be a Civil War wedding, spy trial, or court-martial. More often than not these will include weapons and cooking demonstrations, songs and leisure activities, and lectures. These should not be confused with living history museums which use museum professionals and trained interpreters.

The public demonstrations are usually put on by a reenacting organization and/or private parties. They are put on as a way of educating the public how the people of the 1860's lived, and to show the public civil war battles. Often the battles are loosely based on an actual battle.

The tactical battles are generally not open to the public. These battles are fought just like the real thing with both sides coming up with strategies and tactics to beat their opponents. These battles have a tendency to follow pretty much the same course as the original.

The scripted battle is usually fought over the same terrain of the original battle, or at a location very similar. They also tend to be larger. Commanders from both sides meet and plan beforehand how the battle will go. This is done so that the actions of the companies and regiments will make the same actions that took place during the original battles.

There are many Civil War reenacting groups around the world. A few of these groups make the trek to the United States to participate in reenactments. Most hold reenactments in their home countries.



### **January Presentation, Summarized by Pat Homan :**



The Cincinnati Civil War Round Table was fortunate to have MAJ. Erik Bush, USAF, available to substitute on short notice. While we are looking forward to the eventual debate on Gen. Warren's relief from command, by Gen Sheridan, we were able to enjoy MAJ Bush for one last time before his transfer to Hawaii. His subject was Hampton Roads, VA, 1861-1862. Hampton Roads was the center of international attention for one brief moment during the War, but for most of the time it was little more than a footnote. MAJ Bush brought the area to the forefront, at least for one evening.

The area around Hampton Roads, named for the deep channel that separates Point Comfort, on the James Peninsula from Sewell's Point, on the south side of the Roads. Point Comfort has been the site of Fort Monroe, established in 1819 and still an active US Army post; and Sewell's Point is the site of the Navy's Norfolk Operating Base, established in 1917.

MAJ Bush started by explaining that the US managed to hold on to Fort Monroe, while losing much of the James Peninsula and the south side of the harbor to the Confederates. This key post offered a clear path to Richmond, until the Confederates established three defensive lines north of this post. This was under the Command of Gen J. B. Magruder, with 13,000 men. Ft Monroe was under the command of Gen. Benjamin Butler. It was at Fort Monroe that the term "contraband" was first used to describe a slave who had fled to Union lines for freedom. This term allows the former slaves to remain within the Union lines rather than be returned. The practical reason for this, pointed out by the speaker, is that the slaves were being used to build the earthworks of the Confederate lines.

On June 10, 1861, the Battle of Big Bethel occurred when a Union force attempted to probe the rebel lines near Newport News. While it was a very small skirmish, it lays claim to having the first Confederate killed in action of the war.

In addition to Fort Monroe, there was a smaller fortification in the center of the Roads, formerly known as Fort Calhoun in honor of the Senator from South Carolina but renamed Fort Wool. This post was built on a man-made reef and was needed as the guns from Fort Monroe could not reach or cover the south side of the entrance.

The Confederate forces captured the Naval Yard at Gross Point, which was a key installation. In addition to a large supply of ordinance came the hull of the USS Merrimack. The Merrimack had been a screw propelled vessel and was intact from below the water line. The ship was rechristened the CSS Virginia and became the worlds first ironclad. MAJ Bush pointed out that the major flaw of the vessel was that it was underpowered. The Confederates could not locate or build a large enough boiler to supply adequate steam to power the heavy ship. The Virginia steamed into action on March 8, 1862 and proved an immediate success, sinking two Union vessels, the Cumberland and the Congress. She retired for the evening, damaged but still able to fight. Her commander, Admiral Buchanan, former Superintendent of West Point had been wounded and was replaced by Captain Jones. As the Virginia sallies forth on March 9<sup>th</sup>, she is met by the USS Monitor. After a two hour battle the Virginia withdraws badly damaged but operational and never fights again. Later she is burned to prevent her capture. The Monitor sinks in a storm off Cape Hatteras in December 1862. A few pieces of the Virginia are on display in the Newport News Mariners Museum while the turret of the Monitor has been salvaged and is being restored for future exhibit at the same museum.

Meanwhile, on the northern bank, there were a series of actions as Gen McClellan began his move toward Richmond. MAJ Bush lamented the lack of time to adequately cover this but did mention three actions. First was the battle of Damn #1. The damming of streams and swamps to make the ground impenetrable was part of Magruder's defense. The attempt to breach the line resulted in 600 Union casualties and 75 Confederate. The line held.

The Battle of Yorktown, 5 April to 4 May 1862 was another siege, just as in 1781, this time with the Confederates in the former British line, and the Union attacking. While the Confederates held at Yorktown, they withdrew from this position as part of the general withdrawal ordered by Gen Johnson. He issued the order after a battle at Williamsburg on May 5. Williamsburg was the most substantial earthworks in the system. The Union forces under Gen W.S. Hancock, forced Gen Joe Johnson to decide to withdraw from a strong position to preserve his army. The speaker personally felt that this position, and the line, was strong enough that it could have been held for at least another six months. Johnson follows this practice later in the war of trading space and preserving his forces.

MAJ Bush pointed out that many of these fortifications are preserved to the credit of local and State authorities. Also preserved is Lee Hall, near the current Fort Eustice (Army) which was Gen Magruder's headquarters. I have to give MAJ Bush, soon to be LTC Bush, high marks for presenting an interesting talk on very short notice. I hope we can entice him back at some future date, and give him plenty of time to prepare his talk.

### **Book Review by** Thomas L. Breiner

*Plenty of Blame to Go Around: Jeb Stuart's Controversial Ride to Gettysburg* by Eric J. Wittenberg and J. David Petruzzi, Savas Beatie New York, NY, 2006, 428 pages, Hard cover \$32.95.

*Plenty of Blame to Go Around: Jeb Stuart's Controversial Ride to Gettysburg* by Eric J. Wittenberg and J. David Petruzzi is one of the most interesting and informative works that I have had the pleasure of reading. This was a book that I found that I just could not put down. The authors have created an extremely readable and well-researched version of the Confederate's Cavalry's involvement in the Gettysburg Campaign. While the events surrounding Jeb Stuart and his ride around the Army of the Potomac have been addressed in many other manuscripts, this work has added new information that has previously been overlooked in discussions of Stuart's actions. This new information provides evidence that Stuart attempted to follow the guidance in Lee's

orders concerning the movements of the Army of the Potomac.

The book starts with the best coverage of the Confederate Cavalry's ride to Gettysburg. During this portion of the manuscript, the authors provide all the necessary details relating to the trial and tribulations experienced by the cavalry. The new information that the authors provide sheds a new light on Stuart's actions and how he tried to meet the requirements of his orders. He sent vital information that did reach the War Department in Richmond but unfortunately never got to General Lee, either directly from Stuart's couriers or indirectly through the War Department. This coverage of the ride to Gettysburg is the most detailed account of the ride that I have ever read. The authors have done a fantastic job of gathering data and written an extremely well written and readable account.

The book then moves on to the controversy that began almost immediately after the end of the campaign. Here our authors start by reviewing the early detractors of Stuart and his command. They then address the early supporters of Stuart, mainly John S. Mosby's defense of his beloved commander. Next the controversy moves to how modern day historians have taken sides on the issue. The authors finish up with their own assessment of the events. As the title says, there was plenty of blame to go around and our authors are direct and to the point in identify all the parties involved.

As I stated before this work is probably the best account of the events and issues surrounding the Confederate Cavalry's involvement in the 1863 Pennsylvania Campaign. I found it to be exciting and literally could not put the book down. I read the work in a little over a day, reading at every opportunity. I can not give these authors enough praise for their efforts. This book is a definite must addition to the collection of anyone interested in the Gettysburg Campaign, Jeb Stuart, the cavalry in the Civil War or the Civil War in general. If you don't have a personal collection of Civil War books, then at least get a copy and read it. Even if you have no interest in the controversy that has grown up around Jeb Stuart and his command choices during the Gettysburg Campaign, the rich details and the first hand accounts of the cavalry actions are worth the time to read this book. It is the best account of the cavalry movements and actions that has ever been compiled. It is the most complete collection of the past and current views relating the controversy. So whether you are interest in the details of the campaign or in the views of Jeb Stuart's supporters and critics, this book is for you.

#### **NEWSLETTER DEADLINES:**

To facilitate the printing and timely distribution of the monthly newsletter, information for it should be submitted to the editor no later than the following dates:

February 29<sup>th</sup>, 2008

March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2008

April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2008

Information may be emailed to [waldbill@xavier.edu](mailto:waldbill@xavier.edu)

#### **FUTURE PRESENTATIONS:**

##### **2008 Programs**

March 20, 2008

Gary Q. Johnson, CCWRT: *The CSS Hunley, A Weapon Ahead of Its Time*

April 17, 2008

Raymond Mulesky: *Thunder From a Clear Sky: Stovepipe Johnson's  
Confederate Raid on Newburgh, Indiana*

May 15, 2008

Joseph Reinhart: *August Willich's Gallant Dutchmen: Bullets, Bayonets and Beer"*

September 18, 2008

John F. Marszalek: *Topic TBD*

October 16, 2008

Roger Billings, CCWRT: *Lincoln at the Civil War Battlefields*

November 20, 2008

Edwin C. Bearss: *Arlington, VA - Topic TBD*

## 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 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](mailto: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 \$25. 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 caterer will not be preparing food in the hotel kitchen, but will be transporting food from their facility to the hotel. Therefore, **Late Reservations** (after Sunday prior to 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 Sunday deadline means that CCWRT has guaranteed payment to the caterer 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 CCWRT's 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 or cancel will also be billed for the meal.

**Meetings** are held the third Thursday of the month at the Quality Hotel and Suites, 4747 Montgomery Road, Norwood, Ohio (**telephone 513-351-6000**). If traveling Interstate 75, exit at Exit #7, Ohio 562 (The Norwood Lateral) and travel east to the Montgomery Road exit. After exiting, "double-back" by turning left across the bridge, turning left again after the bridge and turning left at the light onto Montgomery. If coming from Interstate 71, also exit at Exit #7, Ohio 562 (The Norwood Lateral) and go west to the Montgomery Road exit. After exiting, continue straight to the light and turn left onto Montgomery. The Quality is on the right, and there is plenty of free parking.

## CINCINNATI CWRT OFFICERS:

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# Don't Forget to Bring a Friend!