



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



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# THE CANISTER

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Monthly Newsletter of the Cincinnati Civil War Round Table

Cincinnati CWRT P. O. Box 621082 Cincinnati, Ohio 45262 <http://www.cincinnatiwrt.org>

October, 2011 Issue

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Meeting Date: October 20, 2011

**Place: The Drake Center**

**(6:00) Sign-in and Social**

**(6:30) Dinner**

**(7:15) Business Meeting**

**(7:30) Speaker**

**Dinner Menu: Southern fried chicken, mashed potatoes & gravy,  
mixed greens & dinner roll, warm bread pudding w/vanilla sauce**

**Vegetarian Option: Available upon request**

**Speaker: Frank J. Williams, Providence, RI**

**Topic: Abraham Lincoln: The Evolving Commander-in-Chief**

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**Reservations:** 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 Tom Breiner at 513-984-3101 (h); or email: [tbreiner@fuse.net](mailto:tbreiner@fuse.net). If you are making a reservation for more than yourself, please provide the names of the others. Please note that **all reservations must be in no later than 8:00 pm Wednesday, October 12, 2011.**

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## About our October Speaker:

Author, historian, and state Supreme Court justice Frank J. Williams will make his debut appearance in front of the Cincinnati Civil War Round Table at the October meeting. Williams was born and raised in Cranston, Rhode Island, and received his A.B. degree in government and history from Boston University in 1962. Upon graduation, Williams served for almost five years in the United States Army, rising to the rank of Captain. During his military service, he served in Germany on the East/West border and in Vietnam, receiving many awards and decorations (Bronze Star, three Air Medals, an Army Commendation Medal, two Vietnamese Campaign Medals, and a Combat Infantryman's Badge). He was also decorated by the Republic of Vietnam with, among other honors, the Gallantry Cross with Silver Star for Valor.

Returning to Rhode Island after his discharge, he entered Boston University School of Law, and graduated with a J.D. in 1970. He was admitted to the Rhode Island Bar in 1970 and to the U.S. Supreme Court Bar in 1976. After serving for five years as Associate Justice of the Superior Court, Williams was appointed Chief



**Frank J. Williams**

Justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court by Governor Lincoln Almond and unanimously confirmed by the Rhode Island General Assembly in January 2001. He served as Chief Justice until retiring in 2008. On December 30, 2003, President George W. Bush, through the Secretary of Defense, invited Chief Justice Williams to be a member of the then Military Commissions Review Panel for tribunals to be held in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, with the rank of Major General. The Military Commissions Act of 2006 created the Court of Military Commission Review on which Williams serves as Chief Judge. Williams is also presently an adjunct professor at Roger Williams University School of Law and the U.S. Naval War College.

Chief Justice Williams is also one of the nation's leading scholars on the life and times of Abraham Lincoln. In August 2000, he was appointed to the U.S. Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission by the U.S. Congress. Williams now serves on the board of directors of its successor, the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial

Foundation and is Chair of the Rhode Island Civil War Sesquicentennial Commemoration Commission. In addition, he is a major collector of Lincoln artifacts and memorabilia, a lecturer before Lincoln and Civil War groups, and a scholar whose books include, with Edna Greene Medford and Harold Holzer, *The Emancipation Proclamation: Three Views* (2006), and with William D. Pederson, *Lincoln Lessons: Reflections on America's Greatest Leader* (2009).

Chief Justice Williams will present to us a view of President Abraham Lincoln's prowess as Commander in Chief of the Federal armies during the Civil War. Most people believe President Lincoln was, at first, woefully inadequate as our nation's commander-in-chief. While he did not have the experience of his Confederate counterpart, Jefferson Davis, Lincoln did possess invaluable experience from his stint as militia captain in the Black Hawk War and by his intuitive and common sense. While learning on the job, his partake ways made him a great civilian military leader. His ingenuity and the necessities of running a war led to the creation of the first Joint Chiefs of Staff and the expansion of the war powers under the U.S. Constitution.



## President's Report

..... **Pat Homan**

We had a good meeting to start the year and an interesting presentation on the 28<sup>th</sup> Ohio Infantry. Our speaker concentrated on the actions of the Regiment at Chickamauga, where they took more casualties than in all the other battles they had participated in during their term of service. That helps to bring home the intensity of the fighting during that engagement. This is one of the main reasons I joined the Round Table years ago as I am always learning something new. The best part is there is so much more to learn.

At the meeting, the years' preservation project was announced. We have an ambitious goal, to raise a total of \$2300 to have a metal sign made and placed on Third St, near Vine to mark the location of the Burnet House. This project has taken a lot of work already by our Preservation Chair, Alan Berenson, who met with the building manager, explained the project so the owner's permission could be obtained to place the marker. We were delighted to learn the owner was quiet pleased with the project and has given his approval. There is a lot of work left to be done, but the biggest part is to raise the funds. The officers have agreed to match up to \$1000 of donations from the Preservation fund, which is a larger amount than we normally do.

The Burnet House, which was considered one of the world's finest hotels when build, played a significant role in the Civil War. As most of you know, Mr. Lincoln stayed there on his way to the inauguration in 1861. Generals Grant and Sherman met there in early 1864 to plan the conduct of the war and a number of civil war veterans organizations started and regularly met there for years after the War. There is some interesting data and photos on the website of Cincinnati Hotels. As this is a strictly local project, that we will be able to see our handiwork for many years, I am shamelessly asking all to donate something. We will keep you up to date on the project at the meetings.

October promises to be another blockbuster meeting. One of our new members from last year as already recruited three other new members. I am told one of them is 12 years old and already quite a buff. Well done, Missy McPhearson. Now, the rest of us to go out and get at least get one new member this year.

See you at the meeting.



## Items of Interest:

**Field Trip 2012:** Mark you calendars for the Cincinnati Civil War Round Table spring field trip. The dates are April 20, 21, 22, and 23. The destination is Richmond, VA. The battlefield is the Seven Days. The tour guide is Bob Krick of the NPS. Tour coordinator is Dan Bauer. Additional details to follow.

**Michael J. Colligan History Project:** The fall Lecture Series includes a couple of lectures of interest to Civil War buffs. The Civil War brought major changes to American life, among them the dynamic growth of railroads, manufacturing and business. This series considers both the beginnings of national conflict and one of its central postwar legacies, industrial development of the Miami Valley.”

- Tuesday, October 18<sup>th</sup> – *Railroads, Civil War & The Making of America* by William G. Thomas
- Wednesday, November 2<sup>nd</sup> – *The Civil War As A Technological Event...An Alternative View* by Merritt Roe Smith

The lectures will be held at the Harry T. Wilks Conference Center at the Hamilton Campus of Miami University. Both start at 7:30 pm with a reception to follow.

**2011-2012 Cincinnati Civil War Preservation Fund Campaign:** On 15 Sep. 2011 the Round Table's Board of Directors voted to erect a marker commemorating the site of the Burnet House, one of the most important Civil War era landmarks in our area's history. This project has been an unfulfilled wish by our group for a number of years and when the management of the site's current building (the 4th/Vine Tower, formally the Central Trust Tower) enthusiastically granted us permission to formally mark the place with a plaque the wheels began to turn. We expect to install on a prominent outside wall a 33X43 inch aluminum plaque which will have space adequate for substantial copy as well as a visual of the formerly described "finest hotel in the world."

Funding will begin immediately; all donations up to the first \$1000 will be matched by the Round Table's Preservation Fund, an amount unprecedented in our fund raising history. As if additional motivation is needed for this significant memorial marker we have been very fortunate in having a generous member contribute a framed print as a raffle prize of Keith Rocco's famous depiction of Generals Longstreet and Pickett just moments before the former gives the order for the latter to initiate his famous charge at Gettysburg. Each donation will receive as many raffle tickets as the amount of his/her donation is divisible by \$25, but any size donation will be gratefully welcomed. The raffle will be conducted at our May 2012 meeting.

Income tax deductible donations can be given to me or our treasurer, Jim Stewart, or made out to Cincinnati CWRT Preservation Fund, P.O. Box 621082, Cincinnati, Ohio 45262. We all look forward to finally seeing that this important local landmark receive the public recognition that has long been overdue. Alan Berenson, Preservation Chairperson.

**It's Time to Pay Your Re-Enlistment Fee:** Membership dues for the 2011 – 2012 campaign year are now due. As you know we have two levels of membership: **Sustaining** and **Regular**. The **Sustaining** level of membership is \$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 CCWRT. **Regular** memberships are \$25 (single). If you are able to do so, we encourage you to become a Sustaining Member.

**Follow the Civil War Sesquicentennial On-line:** If you have access to the Internet, you can follow the events each day of what happened 150 years ago in both the New York Times and the Washington Post. Both of the papers are offering great articles on the Civil War and these are absolutely free. The New York Times web site is [www.Nytimes.com](http://www.Nytimes.com) and just click on Opinion then Opinionator and Disunion and you will find a listing of the articles. The Washington Post web addresses is [www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com) and then go to A House Divided.

## **We Who Study Must Also Strive to Save!**

# September Presentation:

... submitted by Andy Simmons

In September, the Cincinnati Civil War Round Table was proud to have Jeffrey A. Hill from Hilliard, Ohio, give a presentation, entitled *The 26th Ohio Veteran Volunteer Infantry: An Overview of the Groundhog Regiment's Service*. Mr. Hill is the descendent of nine Union soldiers, including two veterans of the 26th



**Jeffrey A. Hill**

OVI and has spent the past eight years researching and writing the history of the regiment referred to by William S. Rosecrans as the “Old 26th.” Mr. Hill’s great, great grandfather, Jessie Mason, was a musician in Company C, and was captured at Lookout Mountain. Finding out about Jessie Mason’s and the absence of a regimental history were Mr. Hill’s chief inspirations in writing the book.

The 26<sup>th</sup> Ohio Volunteer Infantry was known as the “Groundhog Regiment.” Samuel F. Robinson, secretary for the veteran association after the war, clarified the origin of the nickname, stating that “from the facility with which the regiment could bury itself with a bayonet or half a canteen or a spoon and the expedition with which it could construct a line of elaborate fieldworks or the frequency with which it was called upon to do so caused the boys to liken themselves to groundhogs and finally to call the regiment with some pride ‘The Groundhog Regiment.’”

Mr. Hill gave an overview of the major events from the initial recruiting phase in May – July of 1861, through the Battle of Chickamauga, where Jessie Mason was captured. Mr. Hill noted that over the entire service time of the regiment, one hundred twenty-two were killed in action, thirteen died in prison and eighty-five died of disease, which was not in line with the usual ratio of men killed in action to men dying of disease. The regiment ranked 12<sup>th</sup> of all Ohio units in men lost to enemy fire, losing 11% of its men that way. The regiment marched through eight Confederate States, leaving dead in every one of them, and traveled over 10,600 miles, with over 3,000 miles on foot, 4,000 by rail, 2,800 by river, and 1,000 on the Gulf of Mexico. The 26<sup>th</sup> was one of the first regiments formed, and one of the last to be mustered out, seeing service with Phil Sheridan in Texas.

The 26<sup>th</sup> fought in many of the Western Campaigns, including Western Virginia, Shiloh, Corinth, Perryville, Stones River, Tullahoma, Chickamauga, Chattanooga, Missionary Ridge, Knoxville and Northeast Tennessee, Northern Georgia, including Rocky Face Ridge, Resaca, Adairsville, New Hope Church, Pickett’s Mill, Kennesaw Mountain, Peachtree Creek, Atlanta, Jonesboro, Lovejoy Station, Columbia, Spring Hill, Franklin, Nashville and Southeastern Texas.

Mr. Hill the focused his presentation on the battle in which the 26<sup>th</sup> Ohio had its most significant involvement: Chickamauga. On September 9, 1863, General Bragg determined to vacate Chattanooga and move south into Georgia. The 26<sup>th</sup> Ohio was dispatched to deal with the rear guard and scaled Lookout Mountain. Eventually, the 26<sup>th</sup> Ohio was the first federal infantry unit to enter Chattanooga. General Rosecrans determined to follow and split his army to pursue. General Bragg then stopped along the Chickamauga Creek, expecting to receive reinforcements.

On September 19<sup>th</sup>, when the battle began, the regiment was located near Jay’s Mill. From there, the 26th moved to reinforce the federal forces at the Viniard Field, where they were ordered to fix bayonets and lay down. At this point, their line was enfiladed, and the regiment ordered to retreat to a fence line. The regiment was being hit by fire from three sides and from friendly fire in the rear. A retreat into a ditch was

followed by another into the woods to the west. Lieutenant Colonel Young, the commander of the 26<sup>th</sup> at Chickamauga, then began to move the 26<sup>th</sup> east again, until they were past their original position. Federal reinforcements then arrived, followed by two more charges, No significant ground was gained, and the 26<sup>th</sup> retired for the night. Sixty members of the 26<sup>th</sup> OVI were killed that day.

On September 20, the 26<sup>th</sup> was moved back along the Dry Ridge Road into reserve near General Rosecrans' headquarters. About mid-morning, the 26<sup>th</sup> OVI took up position in the Brotherton Field. General Longstreet, who had arrived with reinforcements on the 18<sup>th</sup>, arranged his troops into an eight-brigade deep line, one-third of a mile long. Through a miscommunication, General Wood received an order to close up on General Reynolds. However, General Brannon was already there. Nevertheless, General Wood moved his division and left a gap in the federal line, directly across from General Longstreet's battering ram. The federal lines were overrun, and they were routed. The 26<sup>th</sup> OVI was among the last ordered to leave. Thirty-nine members of the 26<sup>th</sup> were captured, including Jessie Mason.



A monument now stands where the 26<sup>th</sup> OVI made its last stand. The front relief shows a figure representing peace over broken weapons of war. On the back, there were crossed battle flags. The veterans wanted a groundhog on the very top, but the monument commission refused. The veterans were nevertheless appeased, but years after the war, they always remembered their days as a groundhog.



## Future Presentations:

- November 17, 2011 Peter Cozzens, Rockville, MD  
*Cahaba: The Forgotten Prison*
- January 19, 2012 Gary Q. Johnson, CCWRT  
*The Squeeze in the Anaconda Plan; America's First 600 Ship Navy*
- February 16, 2012 Jill Holt, CCWRT  
*Women Soldiers in the Civil War*
- March 15, 2012 David L. Mowery, CCWRT & OCWTC  
*America's Longest Cavalry Ride: Morgan's 1863 Raid Around Cincinnati*
- April 19, 2012 Thomas R. Flagel, Columbia State Community College  
*Appomattox: The Place of Lee's Surrender and a National Resurrection*
- May 17, 2012 Lesley J. Gordon, University of Akron  
*So Much Suffering: The 16<sup>th</sup> Connecticut Infantry Volunteers in War and Memory*
- September, 2012 Charles Bracelen Flood, Richmond, KY  
*Ulysses S. Grant's Final Victory*
- October, 2012 W. Hunter Lesser, Elkins, WV  
*The First Campaign: Western Virginia, 1861*

# September Quiz:

## Questions:

1. The battle of the Wilderness, the opening event of the Overland Campaign, ended in a draw in the spring of 1864, but the 26 Jan. 2011 version of that battle had a definite winner and a gracious loser. Name them.
2. Why was it required that John Roebling's Cincinnati suspension bridge be constructed in such a way that it did not align its southern Scott St. entrance to the existing Cincinnati street grid?
3. Offer one word that accounts for the "evacuation of Corinth (Ms.)" in 1862.
4. What did these 4 Union brigadier generals have in common: Kenner Garrard, William Lytle, A. Sanders Piatt and John Slough? (Thanks to Ray Leen for offering this question)
5. Slain on the battlefield, my body was guarded, honored and buried by my killers. Better known amongst them for my writings than my military leadership, my claim to fame was a poem entitled \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Examine the image enclosed in the lucite holder on your table. The date is 14 July 1863. What is the name of the Hamilton County community depicted in Mort Kunstler's painting?



## Answers:

1. Winner: The Civil War Trust (Assoc. for the Preservation Of Civil War Sites)  
Loser: Walmart. Ref.: Hallowed Ground, Spring 2011, From the Trenches, p.6
2. To prevent direct access to escaping slaves to primary Cincinnati escape routes and to comply with the requirement that the bridge's charter company be financially responsible to southern slaveholders for any escaping slaves. Ref.: Ohioans Resisted Suspension Bridge, Cincinnati Enquirer 17 Jan. 2011, p.C6, Rutledge
3. Diarrhea Ref.: Battle Cry of Freedom, McPherson, p.488
4. They were all from Cincinnati Ref.: Wikipedia
5. Anthony and Cleopatra Ref.: Lecture, Cold Spring, Ky. Library, General Wm. H. Lytle, 9 Mar. 2011, Mike Rhein
6. Montgomery, Ohio Ref.: Personal communication, Mort Kunstler

## **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](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 \$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.

## **CINCINNATI CWRT OFFICERS:**

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**Don't Forget to Bring a Friend!**