

THE CANISTER

Monthly Newsletter of the Cincinnati Civil War Round Table



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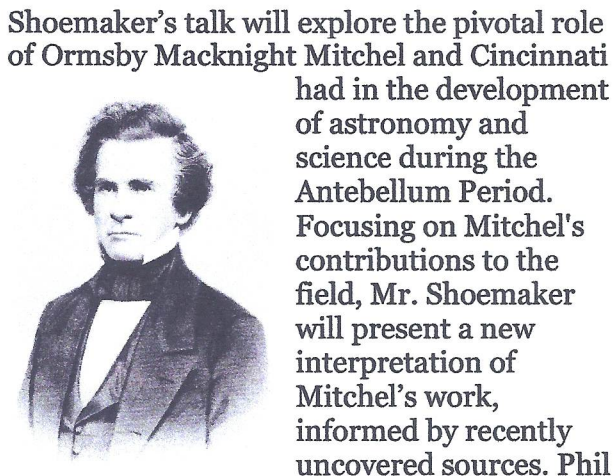
April 16, 2026 Program

Discovering Ormsby Macknight Mitchel

Presented by

Phil Shoemaker

The Cincinnati Civil War Round Table welcomes Phil Shoemaker, Ph.D. on April 16 as he gives a presentation on General Ormsby Macknight Mitchel.



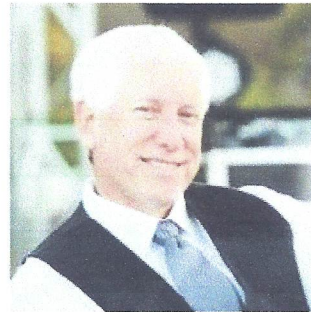
Shoemaker's talk will explore the pivotal role of Ormsby Macknight Mitchel and Cincinnati had in the development of astronomy and science during the Antebellum Period. Focusing on Mitchel's contributions to the field, Mr. Shoemaker will present a new interpretation of Mitchel's work, informed by recently uncovered sources. Phil

will discuss Mitchel's involvement in the Civil War and his influence in advancing scientific knowledge and shaping the course of

American astronomy before the war. Mr. Shoemaker will speak to the Hamilton round table the night before our meeting.

For the Hamilton talk, Phil will focus on Mitchel's work on the Ohio and Mississippi Railroad and his subsequent utilization of that knowledge during his advance on Huntsville, AL.

Phil Shoemaker has a doctorate in the history of science from the University of Wisconsin. Since 2015 he has been the director of The Polymer Center in North Carolina. Over the past six years, Phil has focused on writing Mitchel's biography, a project that has led to presentations, publications, and growing recognition of Mitchel's historical significance.



*Submitted by Dan Bauer,
Program Chair*

President's Letter

The 27th annual U.S. Grant Days will be held in Georgetown, Ohio from April 23 – 26, 2026.

Ulysses S. Grant was born in Point Pleasant, Ohio on April 27, 1822, and the events of this long weekend celebrate his 204th birthday. It begins on Thursday April 23 with a presentation by Chris Burns on "The Life and Legacy of Ulysses S.

Grant," and on Saturday Dr. Curt Fields, portraying Grant, will tell the general's "Seldom Told Stories" at the Gaslight Theater. There will also be tours of the Grant home, schoolhouse, murals, and statue. Visit www.thelandofusgrant.org for more information. Sounds like a good time.

On April 27, as part of the celebrations of the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, Joyce Lovins Browning, portraying Martha Washington, will appear at the Faith Lutheran Church, 8265 Winton Road, Cincinnati. In addition to learning about Martha Washington and how she set the standard for future first ladies, there will be refreshments including cheesecake and brownies, which means that there are several good reasons for attending this event.

On April 16 Phil Shoemaker, Ph.D., University of Wisconsin – Madison, will speak to our Round Table on "Discovering Ormsby Mitchel." Mitchel, a West Point graduate (classmate to Robert E. Lee and Joseph E. Johnston), served several years in the Army but later moved to Cincinnati and became an attorney. He earned national renown, however, as an astronomer – he taught that subject at Cincinnati College, now the University of Cincinnati. He returned to the Army during the Civil War, achieving the rank of major general. He held several important positions in the early years of the war but, unfortunately, passed away due to yellow fever in Beaufort, South Carolina in late 1862 before he could assume command of X

Corps and the Department of the South at Hilton Head, SC. Please join us for what promises to be a very interesting presentation about a man with a strong connection to Cincinnati.

Also, mark your calendars for our meeting on May 21. Dr. Peter Mansoor, Ph.D., Ohio State, will speak concerning "Union and Confederate Cavalry Operations in the Gettysburg Campaign." He is a West Point graduate (first in his class) and his military career included several armored cavalry assignments, including command of the 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division in Second Gulf War. He is the General Raymond E. Jr. Chair of Military History at Ohio State University and recently published *Redemption*, concerning General Douglas MacArthur's generalship in the Philippines in WWII. Dr. Mansoor's military experience and expertise makes his presentation of cavalry operations in the Gettysburg Campaign original and informative and should not be missed.



May 21 will also be our annual meeting. We will elect a slate of officers for next season and consider some other organizational business. There will probably be an opening or two on our board, so anyone interested in serving in some capacity should contact me or any of the other board members for more information. There will be more information in next month's newsletter.

Notable Civil War events in April:

- 19 April 1861 – One week after Confederate batteries in Charleston, SC began firing on Fort Sumter, a pro-Southern mob attacked the 6th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment in Baltimore. The regiment had arrived in the city via the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore railroad line at the President Street Railway Station but had to march 10 blocks through the city to the Camden Station to take the Baltimore and Ohio

Railroad further south to Washington, D.C. (At that time, these two lines were not



connected by rail.) The attack occurred during this march. Five soldiers were killed or mortally wounded with 36 other members of the regiment wounded. At least 12 civilians were killed, and it is unknown how many others were wounded. Also on this day, the same mob that attacked the 6th Mass. wrecked the offices and equipment of the *Baltimore Wecker*, a German-language newspaper that supported the Union cause.

- 5 April 1862 – In the Peninsula Campaign, the Siege of Yorktown began and lasted



until 4 May. The Union army, consisting of approximately 100,000 men (later increased to 121,000) and commanded by Major General George B. McClellan, began establishing siege lines instead of assaulting the Confederate defenders, which initially numbered about 13,000 but later increased to around 56,000 by late April. McClellan erroneously believed the Confederate strength to be much greater than it was because, in part, the Southern commander,

Major General John B. Magruder, deceived him by marching his troops about in plain view, having them cheer as if reinforcements were arriving, and having train whistles blow to simulate the coming of troop trains. The siege ended around midnight on May 3 when the Confederates withdrew to previously prepared positions at Williamsburg, a few miles up the Peninsula from Yorktown. Casualties were light: 182 Union and 300 Confederate killed or wounded.

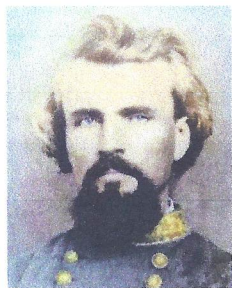
- 24 April 1863 – President Lincoln issued Union General Orders No. 100 (*Instructions for the Government of the*



Armies of the United States in the Field), popularly called the “Lieber Code” in honor of its author Francis Lieber (pictured). Gen. Order 100 was the military law that governed the wartime conduct of the Union army by defining and

prohibiting crimes against humanity, establishing command responsibility for war crimes committed by subordinates, and setting forth the duties and potential liabilities of Union soldiers fighting in the Civil War. Among other topics, the orders defined military necessity; differentiated between combatants (soldiers) and civilians; established rules for treating enemy prisoners of war and enemy property; prohibited pillage, waste, and poisoning; and required payment or receipts (to facilitate later payment) for private property taken for military use. The Lieber Code influenced the development of military and international law for decades after the Civil War and became the model for the Hague and Geneva Conventions, which are still in effect today. The U.S. Army’s current Law of War Manual, updated in 2023, refers to the Lieber Code.

- 12 April 1864 – Fort Pillow, Tennessee. Confederate commander Major General Nathan Bedford Forrest sent a note to the



Union garrison demanding surrender, promising to treat Union soldiers as prisoners of war but also saying that if surrender was refused, he would not “be responsible for the fate of your command.” The

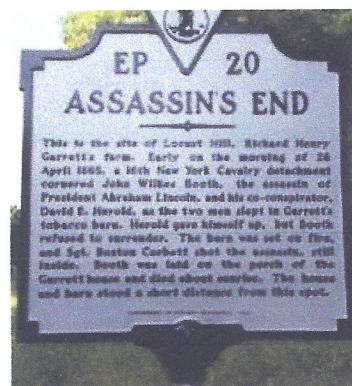
fort contained about 600 Union soldiers, divided equally between Whites and Blacks. Union Major William Bradford refused to capitulate. The rebels, who outnumbered the Union soldiers by about four to one, launched a hard-hitting attack. After a brief resistance, the garrison fled for the presumed safety of a bluff near the Mississippi River, where they thought a federal gunboat could protect them. The vessel, however, had closed its gun ports because of Confederate sharpshooters and did nothing. The fleeing soldiers were subject to firing from multiple directions. Almost 300 Union soldiers were killed and up to 130 wounded. Only 20% of those taken prisoner were Black soldiers. Although Confederate sources alleged Forrest’s men fired in self-defense, U.S. Army reports maintained that the rebels continued to fire after Union soldiers had surrendered. A Confederate sergeant wrote



to his sister several days later that “the slaughter was awful ... the poor deluded negroes would run up to our men fall on their knees and with uplifted hands scream

for mercy but they were ordered to their feet and then shot down.” The incident became big news in the North. Although several members of his cabinet recommended retaliation against Confederate prisoners, President Lincoln ordered no reprisals. The illustration above appeared in *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper* on May 7, 1864, with the caption, “The war in Tennessee: Confederate massacre of black Union troops after the surrender of Fort Pillow.”

- 26 April 1865 – The manhunt for John Wilkes Booth ended. About 2:00 AM on this date, Federal troops surrounded a tobacco barn on the Garrett farm north of Bowling Green, Virginia where Booth and Davey Herald, one of the conspirators, were hiding. Herald surrendered, but Booth refused. Hoping to draw Booth out, the Union commander ordered the barn to be set on fire. While it was burning, SGT Boston Corbett shot Booth, mortally wounding him. He died shortly thereafter on the porch of the Garrett farmhouse. The farm no longer exists; its site is now in the median of U.S Hwy 301 near the intersection of U.S Hwy 17. Nothing remains of the



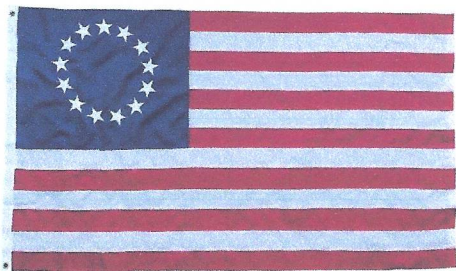
farmhouse or barn. There is a historical marker on only one side of the divided highway. Booth’s body was taken to Washington for an autopsy and was buried in the Arsenal Penitentiary. In 1869 his body was released to his family and was reburied in Green Mount Cemetery in Baltimore. There is a Booth family plot in this cemetery, but the specific location of his gravesite is not marked.

Submitted by Tom Robisch, President

Future Speakers for Cincinnati Civil War Round Table

May 21, 2026 **Union and Confederate
Calvary Operations in the Gettysburg
Campaign**, Dr. Peter Mansoor

Dessert with Martha Washington



Meet Martha Washington, as interpreted by Joyce Lovins Browning. On the 250th anniversary of the founding of the Republic we'll hear from our 1st First Lady about the Revolutionary War years and more!

Monday, April 27th, 2026
Faith Lutheran Church
8265 Winton Road
Cincinnati Ohio 45231

Call for reservations 513-931-6100.

\$10 per adult includes a
Cheesecake & Brownie Bar
and the Presentation.
\$4/child 3-10, under 3 free

Doors open at 6:00 PM;
Program begins at 7:00PM

Cincinnati CWRT Meeting Details

Location	Raffel's Evendale Banquet Center, 10160 Reading Rd., Evendale, OH 45241
Date	Thursday, April 16, 2026
Time	5:30 Sign-in and Social 6:30 Buffet Dinner 7:15 Business Meeting 7:30 Speaker
Time Reservations	You MUST make a reservation if you would like Dinner . Please Email reservations to: CinCWRTreservations@ gmail.com Or Call, or text Jeff Mikutis, Vice President: 937-623-4879 Reservation Deadline Sunday, April 12, 2026
Cost	Dinner, meeting and speaker – \$30.00 Meeting and speaker only – \$7.00 . No reservations are required.
Cancellations	We are charged for the number of dinners called in to Raffel's after the deadline. You will be charged if you do not cancel by the reservation deadline, unless a late- comer can be substituted.

Quiz

1. Richard Enderlin of Chillicothe, Ohio, a native of the Grand Duchy of Baden, enlisted as a musician in the 73rd Ohio



Vol. Inf. He was awarded the Medal of Honor for extraordinary heroism in the Battle of Gettysburg. The citation states "Musician Enderlin

voluntarily took a rifle and served as a soldier in the ranks . . . Voluntarily and at his own imminent peril [he] went into the enemy's lines at night and, under sharp fire, rescued a wounded comrade." Who was the comrade?

2. Hubert Dilger, a native of the Grand Duchy of Baden, was a lieutenant in the Grand Duke's Horse Artillery. He sailed



to the U.S. at the outbreak of the Civil War, then made his way to Cincinnati where he was appointed captain of Battery I, 1st Ohio Light Artillery. Battery

I served in the Army of the Potomac until September 1863 when it was assigned to the Army of the Cumberland. In 1893 Dilger was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions in what Civil War battle?

3. On March 13, 1863, a massive explosion at the Confederate States Laboratory, a munitions factory near Richmond, Virginia, killed 69 workers. What was remarkable about the makeup of the workforce at the factory and hence the casualty list?
4. He founded a Presbyterian academy for boys, which Ulysses S Grant attended in 1838. When Henry Ward Beecher was asked after the war "Who abolished

slavery?" he answered, "Reverend _____ and his sons did." What was his name?

5. Four days after the May 15, 1864, Battle of New Market, Virginia, the general who had commanded the Union forces was relieved of command. Who was he?
6. On July 1, 1863, this Union general found himself wounded and riding through the town of Gettysburg



desperately trying to avoid capture by the advancing Confederates. With his horse shot from underneath him, he realized that he would not make it back to the Union lines. He quickly sought shelter under a drainage ditch cover behind the Garlach home. Under cover of darkness, he moved out from the cover and squeezed himself between a wood pile and a hog swill barrel. Mrs. Garlach soon discovered him and managed to discreetly supply him with food and water until the Confederates retreated on July 4th.

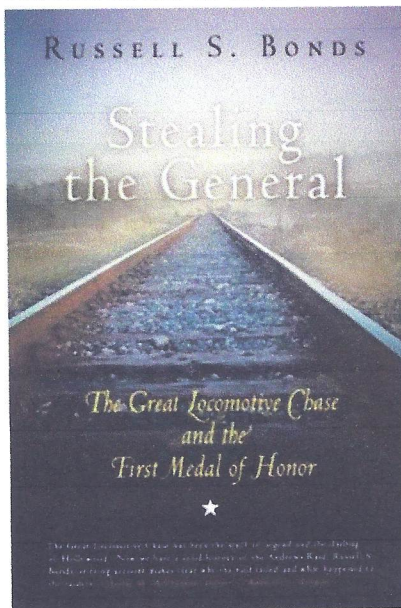
7. He was the highest-ranking officer in the U.S. Army to resign his commission to join the Confederacy.
8. Who said, "We are on the brink of destruction. It appears to me that the Almighty is against us, I can see no ray of hope"?

Book Review

Stealing the General: The Great Locomotive Chase and the First Medal of Honor

By Russell S. Bonds, Westholme Publishing,
Tuscaloosa, AL, 2008, 464 pages, paperback
29.95/ebook \$28.00

You may be familiar with the 1956 Disney version of the *Great Locomotive Chase* starring



Fess Parker as the gallant Union spy and leader (James Andrews) of this famous train heist in our American Civil War. While this Disney movie may be long on suspense and even shorter on factual accuracy, Russell Bonds's book is most

definitely the *factual* telling of this amazing story about Andrews's Raid.

On April 12, 1862 Andrews, along with twenty or so Union volunteers, hijacked *The General* when it stopped at Big Shanty (current day Kennesaw) just north of Marietta, Georgia, for breakfast. They then headed north on the Western & Atlantic Railroad in their commandeered locomotive. They also attempted to damage or destroy as much track, telegraph wire, and so forth as they could before crossing over the Tennessee River and back to the safety of the Union lines near Chattanooga.

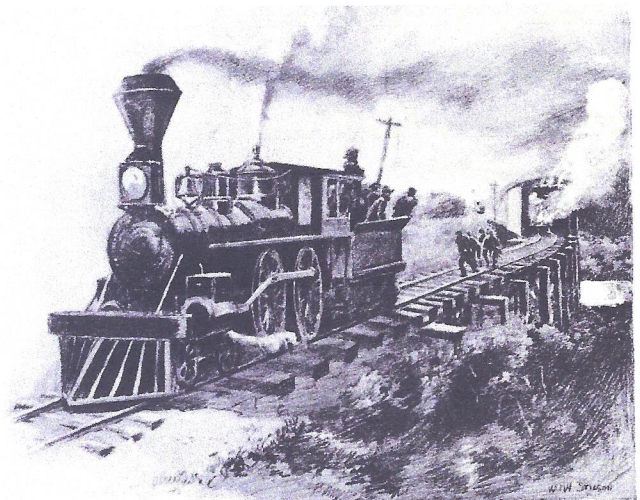
Pursued doggedly by *The General's* conductor, William Allen Fuller, its engineer,

E. Jefferson Cain, as well as the foreman of the rail line, Anthony Murphy, these Union raiders sadly found out just how fickle the "very crooked" Western & Atlantic could be. They were delayed for upwards of an hour or so on a siding at the station in Kingston. The pursuing Confederates finally caught up with them as the stolen *General* ran out of steam north of Ringgold and just 18 miles from reaching succor in Chattanooga. For all the mayhem they caused, Andrews and seven of his fellow raiders who were caught were later executed in June as spies

Besides describing The Great Locomotive Chase, Bonds reveals another, less well-known story: the creation of the Medal of Honor. Jacob Parrott and five other raiders were jailed but escaped execution. They were later freed during a prisoner exchange. Parrott (a young, former farm boy) then became the first recipient of this Medal of Honor, along with his five freed comrades.

Bonds gives a riveting and detailed account of the Andrews' Raid, the creation of the Medal of Honor, and its awarding to these six surviving members from that raid. And unlike the Disney tale, what Bonds tells is the true story of this "boldest adventure of the Civil War."

Submitted by Eric Guttag,
Publicity & Membership



Quiz Answers

1. George Nixon, the great-grandfather of President Richard M. Nixon. George Nixon succumbed to his wounds seven days later and is buried in the National Cemetery at Gettysburg.



2. The Battle of Chancellorsville. Dilger's Medal of Honor citation states that he "fought his guns until the enemy were upon him, then with one gun hauled in the road by hand he formed the rear guard and kept the enemy at bay by the rapidity of his fire and was the last man in the retreat."
3. The workforce was predominantly female. Thus 63 of the 68 workers killed were female.
4. Rev. John Rankin of Ripley, Ohio.



5. Franz Sigel. Like Hubert Dilger, he was a native of Baden, attended the Karlsruhe Military Academy, and served as a lieutenant in the Grand Duke's Army, before emigrating to the United States.
6. Alexander Schimmelfennig. Born in Bromberg in the Grand Duchy of Posen,

Prussia (now Bydgoszcz, Poland), he was an officer in the Prussian army. He became



radicalized while garrisoned in Cologne and was active in the 1848 Revolution. He was sentenced to death in absentia by the Palatine government while in exile in Switzerland. He emigrated to the U.S. in 1854 and worked in

the War Department before the War.

7. Joseph E. Johnston.



8. Lincoln shortly after the Union defeat at Fredericksburg in December, 1862.

*The Quiz and the Quiz Answers
were all written by
Dave Stockdale, Treasurer*

Cincinnati Civil War Round Table

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*The **CANISTER** is regularly published eight times per year, in January, February, March, April, May, September, October, and November; sometimes more often, if we have a lot to say to our members.*