

THE CANISTER

Monthly Newsletter of the Cincinnati Civil War Round Table



Serving the Tri-State area of Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana since 1956

Volume 70 – Number 3

November 2025

November 20, 2025 Program

The Saga of the 35th Ohio Volunteer Infantry

Presented by

Brian Smith

We welcome Brian Smith to the Cincinnati



Civil War Round Table on November 20, 2025. Mr. Smith was originally scheduled to present this topic to us in February 2025, but canceled due to illness.

“When the Storm Broke Upon Us: The Saga of the 35th Ohio Volunteer Infantry” follows the regiment also known as “The Butler Boys” and the “Persimmon Regiment” from its formation in the summer of 1861 until its mustering out in the fall of 1864. Though the rank and file came mostly from Butler County, companies in the 35th also were recruited from Warren, Preble and Montgomery counties.

Intermingling regimental specific history, general Civil War information, and personal

narratives of 35th soldiers, the presentation details the regiment’s slow start and lack of action early in the war to its important role at battlefields such as Chickamauga and Missionary Ridge.

Submitted by Dan Bauer, Program Chair

Notice of Special Meeting

In accordance with Article V(C) of the Constitution and By-Laws of the Cincinnati Civil War Round Table, the president and trustees have called a special meeting of the membership, to be held November 20, 2025, at 7:15 p.m., in conjunction with the regular November meeting at Raffel’s, 10160 Reading Rd., Evendale, OH. The purpose of the special meeting is to consider an amendment to Article VIII to increase the annual membership dues.

President's Letter

Please join us on November 20 when our speaker will be Brian Smith, Executive Director of the Butler County Historical Society. Mr. Smith will tell us about the 35th Ohio Volunteer Infantry Regiment, which was organized in Hamilton in September 1861 and consisted primarily of men from Butler County. This regiment fought at Mill Springs, Perryville, Stones River, Chickamauga, Missionary Ridge, and in General Sherman's Atlanta Campaign. Approximately half of its number were killed or wounded. Mr. Smith's account of this regiment promises to be quite interesting, and we will undoubtedly learn some noteworthy details about the honorable service of men from our area.

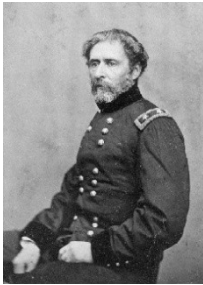
Mr. Smith may also say something about the Butler County Soldiers, Sailors and Pioneers Monument, which is located on Monument Avenue in downtown Hamilton on the banks of the Great Miami River. It contains a nice collection of Civil War weapons and swords and has exhibits on other American wars as well. I have visited there and recommend it.

Demonstrating that our Civil War isn't always in the past, a statue of former Confederate General Albert Pike, which was torn down and set on fire by protesters in 2020, was reinstalled in Judiciary Square in Washington D.C. in October 2025. The National Park Service stated that the restoration and return of the statue was consistent with



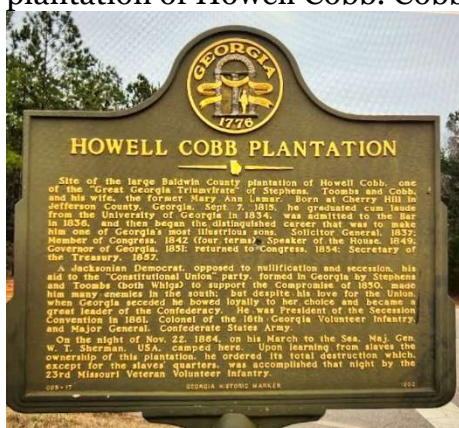
federal preservation law and an executive order issued by President Trump. Congressional Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton issued a statement condemning the action. Pike, born in Boston, settled in Arkansas in 1833 and became a lawyer. He was commissioned a Brigadier General in the Confederate Army and served in the Indian Territory. The statue in Washington D.C. portrays him as a private citizen and honors his contributions to Freemasonry.

Notable Civil War events in November:

- November 1, 1861. After one of the most lengthy and illustrious careers in U.S. military history, Lieutenant General Winfield Scott retired. Scott was aged, obese, and ailing, and had been under pressure to step down. He was succeeded as the Commanding General of the Union Army by Major General George B. McClellan.
- November 2, 1862. Major General John C. Fremont, who had been assigned as the Commander of the Department of the West by President Lincoln in July 1861, received the president's order relieving him of that command. Lincoln's action followed Fremont's feuding the Blair family, who were powerful in Missouri politics, reports of incompetent administration of his department, and Fremont's refusal to rescind his emancipation order, which Lincoln thought to be premature and harmful to the then-current state of border politics.
- November 4, 1862. This was election day. Democrats made sizable gains in Northern state and congressional elections, especially in New York where Democrat Horatio Seymour was elected Governor. Strong Democratic gains were also made in New Jersey, Illinois, and Wisconsin. The Republicans maintained control of the House of Representatives through strong showings in New England, California, Michigan, and the border states.
- November 6, 1862. The promotions of James Longstreet and Thomas J. Jackson to Lieutenant General and command, respectively, to the 1st and 2nd Corps of the Army of Northern Virginia were announced.
- November 19, 1863. A crowd of 15,000 attended the dedication ceremony for the military cemetery at Gettysburg and heard

the main speaker, Edward Everett, deliver a two-hour historical discourse on the battle, followed by President Lincoln who delivered what he called “a little speech” that contained only 10 sentences and lasted only few minutes. The president considered his Gettysburg Address “a flat failure,” but history proved him wrong.

- November 22, 1864. During the March to the Sea, the left wing of Sherman’s army, under the command of Major General Henry Slocum, entered Milledgeville, Georgia, the then-capital of the state. Slocum’s men held a mock ceremony in the capital building and ransacked the state archives, leaving a paper mess more than a foot deep.
- Also, on November 22, 1864. General Sherman camped, by coincidence, on the plantation of Howell Cobb. Cobb had served



as Speaker of the U.S House of Representatives, Georgia Governor, Treasury Secretary in President

Buchanan’s cabinet, and was one of the founders of the Confederacy. Even though the plantation lacked military value, Sherman ordered it to be burned, which it was, all except the slave quarters.

Hope to see you on November 20, for our final event of 2025 for what promises to be an interesting presentation with local interest.

Submitted by Tom Robisch, President

Cincinnati CWRT Meeting Details

Location	Raffel’s Evendale Banquet Center, 10160 Reading Rd., Evendale, OH 45241
Date	Thursday, November 20, 2025
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, November 16, 2025
Cost	Dinner, meeting and speaker – \$28.00 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.

Future Speakers for Cincinnati Civil War Round Table

January 15, 2026 **Abraham Lincoln:
Servant Leader**, Presented by Kim Villalva

February 19, 2026 **Conducting Slaves to
Freedom: The Underground Railroad**,
Eric Gutttag, CCWRT

March 19, 2026 **German Heritage in
Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky**,
Don Heinrich Tolzman

April 16, 2026 **Discovering Ormsby
Mitchel**, Phil Shoemaker

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

October Meeting

Twenty-nine members and guests attended the October meeting. Program chairman Dan Bauer chaired the meeting in the absence of our president and vice-president.

Millie Henley, who has attended several of our meetings recently, is our newest member. Millie has made historical presentations, in period costume, to numerous organizations throughout the Greater Cincinnati area. Welcome Millie! We also welcomed guests John Haid from the Hamilton Round Table and Teresa Rivera.

Treasurer Dave Stockdale reported that the new dinner reservation system is working well. Dinner reservations are required and may be made to a dedicated email address CinCWRTreservations@gmail.com.

Simply include your name and the names of any other dinner companions if you are making a reservation for more than yourself. The new system will save us over \$1700 per year. Once we get the website back in shape, we hope to be able to reinstitute on-line payments. Meanwhile, payment will be accepted at the meeting in cash, by check, or by credit card.

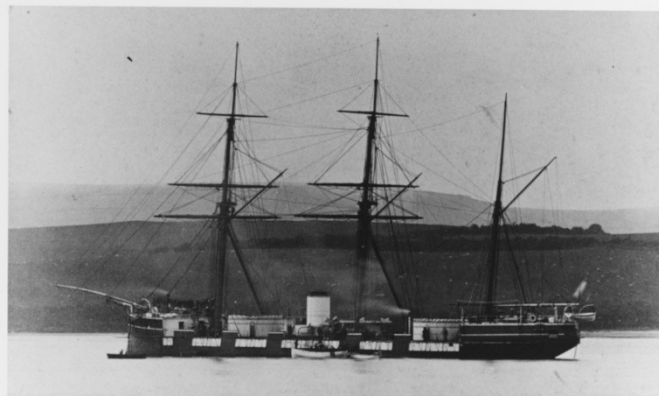
In another cost-saving measure, the board has decided to relinquish our post office box, which costs \$248 per year. As the Canister is no longer printed and mailed, and very little mail is now received at the box, it was decided that mail should be sent care of the president or the treasurer. More on that later.

Quiz

1. A captain, and second in command under Maj. Robert Anderson at Ft. Sumter, he aimed the cannon that fired the first shot in defense of the fort. He saw his last major action at Gettysburg as a major general of volunteers. Who was he?
2. To what command and location was Robert Anderson assigned after Ft. Sumter?
3. This Marylander, a Roman Catholic, considered slavery to be an evil practice and freed the slaves whom he inherited from his father. His 1833 nomination by President Jackson to be Secretary of the Treasury was the first cabinet nomination ever rejected by the Senate. The Senate adjourned without acting on his 1834 nomination to the Supreme Court. But after the Democrats took control of the Senate in 1835, his nomination to a different Supreme Court seat was approved. The first Catholic to serve on the Court, he remained there until his death on 12 October 1864, the same day Maryland voters adopted a new constitution abolishing slavery. President Lincoln

nominated Salmon P. Chase to succeed him. Who was he?

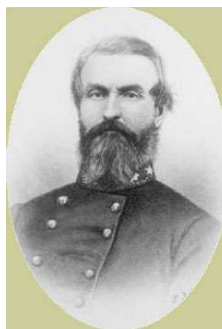
4. In 1863 the U.S. Ambassador to the Court of St. James's notified Britain's Foreign Secretary, John Russell, that the U.S. knew that two armored double-turreted rams were being built for the Confederacy at the Laird & Co. shipyards, ships that potentially



The HMS Wivern, originally built for the Confederate Navy.

could break the Union blockade. Russell was intimately aware of the project as he had discussed it with the Confederate agent who placed the contract. His government having already incurred the wrath of the United States by allowing the *Alabama* to leave Laird's shipyard despite vigorous U.S. protests, and not wanting to provoke the U.S. into a declaration of war, Russell privately ordered the rams held. Unaware of the order, the U.S. ambassador sent Russell a diplomatic note two days later objecting to the rams' release: "It would be superfluous in me to point out to your Lordship that this is war." It was indeed superfluous. Name the U.S. ambassador and the Confederate agent.

5. Brig. Gen. Paul Jones Semmes, cousin of Adm. Raphael Semmes, CSN, was mortally wounded in battle and died eight days later in Martinsburg, WV. What was the name of the battle?



Paul Jones Semmes

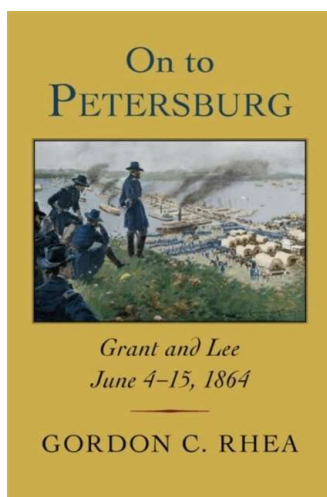
6. Confederate guerilla William Clark[e] Quantrill, who died on 6 June 1865 after having been shot in an ambush by Union cavalry, reportedly is (or parts of him are) buried, in Ohio, Kentucky, and Missouri. At least there are grave markers for him in each of those states. Where did he die?
7. What railroad line generally ran the length of the terrain covered in Sherman's 1864 Atlanta Campaign, essentially from Chattanooga to Atlanta?
8. This Union major general lost his left arm in the Battle of Churubusco in the Mexican War, and his life in the Battle of Chantilly.

Book Review

Submitted by Eric W. Gutttag

On to Petersburg: Grant and Lee June 4-15, 1864

by Gordon C. Rhea, Louisiana University Press,
2017, 512 pages, hardcover/\$28.98
(paperback/\$23.60)



As noted in last month's review, many books have been written on Petersburg and the fighting that took place there. Having previously written four separate books on the Overland Campaign, Gordon Rhea wrote a fifth book, *On to Petersburg*, that transitions from that campaign to the beginning of the siege at Petersburg.

Initially, Rhea's fifth book describes the deadlock at Cold Harbor, as well as Grant's and Meade's failed effort to reenergize the Union offensive there. It then discusses Grant's new plan to break that deadlock by crossing the Union army over to the south side of the James River. That included a feint by Warren's V Corps further north to disguise the main Union movement much further south. A key component of that movement was a long waterborne journey by "Baldy" Smith's XVIII Corps on June 14 to reach the north bank of the James River near Petersburg.

While "Baldy" Smith's men were being transported, Rhea also describes the frustrating effort to get Hancock's II Corps across the James River to assist. Amongst its many problems was the failure to timely deliver 60,000 rations to Hancock's men which may have cost them upwards of a crucial five-hour delay in reaching Petersburg.

Rhea then describes "Baldy" Smith's force (which included several African American USCT units) crossing over to the south side of the James River on June 15. It finally reached the fortified Dimmock Line surrounding Petersburg by late afternoon. Later that evening, Smith's men broke through the Dimmock Line, creating a breach at least a mile and half in length. Hancock's men (after many delays and missteps) also finally arrived at Petersburg to potentially assist in taking the Cockade City. *William "Baldy" Smith*



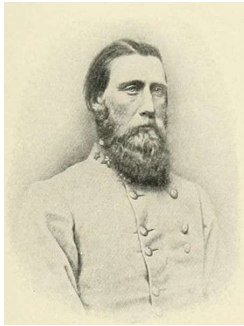
Even with darkness rapidly approaching, the ultimate prize of Petersburg beckoned before the Union force there, and a potential end to the bloody conflict. But it was not to be. The ever-cautious Smith later said he believed any further Union advance "involved more hazard than was warranted by any hope of success to be gained." Meanwhile, Confederate reinforcements arrived to close this breach in the Dimmock Line. The long and bloody siege of the Cockade City would now begin.

Like Rhea's books on the Overland Campaign, this one on the transition to the siege at Petersburg is well-researched and very readable, with many informative maps on the movements of the respective combatants. The maps were prepared by George F. Skoch who also prepared the maps for Rhea's earlier books.

*Submitted by Eric Gutttag,
Publicity & Membership*

October Presentation

Our old friend Greg Biggs graced the podium this month for *only* the 9th time. His talk this time was about the U. S. Navy and its role in thwarting Confederate General John Bell Hood and his Tennessee Campaign of October through December of 1864.



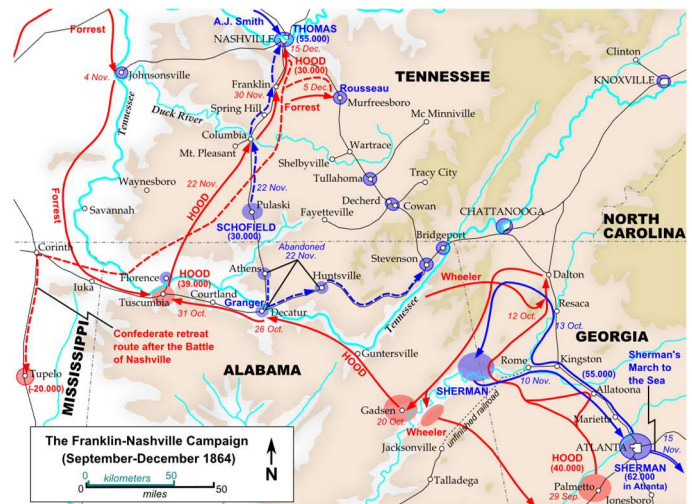
Greg began with an illustration of the river system in the western theater, specifically the Mississippi, Ohio, Cumberland, and Tennessee rivers, and their importance to the Confederacy. He continued with a whirlwind history of the development of the brown water navy and the various types of vessels that were built, including timberclads, tinclads, and ironclads. The Western Gunboat Flotilla, although commanded by naval officers, was created in 1861 as part of the Union Army, because the Navy had no expertise in supporting riverine operations. Civilian pilots had to be hired because no naval personnel knew the rivers.

Following the success of Adm. Foote and Gen. Grant at Forts Henry and Donelson, the flotilla was transferred to the Union Navy and designated as the Mississippi River Squadron. First based in Cairo, IL, it was later transferred up the Ohio river to Mound City, IL, which became the largest naval base in the war. The squadron supported operations on the western rivers at the battles of Island No. 10, Memphis, and Vicksburg. It patrolled the rivers, provided protection for troops and materiel being shipped to Nashville and other locations, and guarded the many fords to prevent Confederate crossings.

Following the fall of Atlanta, Hood determined to follow Sherman's route in reverse, along the Western & Atlantic RR, destroying the Union's supply and communications lines and forcing Sherman to fall back to Tennessee. Hood not only failed in his objective but Sherman forced him into Alabama, after which Sherman

returned to Atlanta to commence his March to the Sea leaving Thomas and Schofield to contend with Hood. Hood then planned to move into Tennessee, hoping to capture Nashville and then move east to Louisville, Cincinnati, and beyond. He aimed to cross the Tennessee River at Decatur, AL, where the Union had built a pontoon bridge but was repulsed by the Union forces there with the assistance of Union gunboats. He then headed to the Muscle Shoals where he succeeded in crossing.

Thomas was massing all the Union forces he could at Nashville and requested Porter to have gunboats patrol the Cumberland as far east as Waterloo. Meanwhile, N.B. Forrest, tasked with destroying Thomas's supply line, set his sights on the Union supply depot at Johnsonville TN on the Tennessee River. With his artillery, Forrest succeeded in capturing a Union tinclad and a transport at Ft. Heiman, and two other boats at Paris Landing, using them in attacking Johnsonville. Union gunboats at Johnsonville along with others that had been dispatched from Paducah under Lt. Cmdr. LeRoy Fitch, engaged Forrest's navy and artillery. His navy was destroyed as were the Johnsonville gunboats but the Confederate artillery was able to fend off Fitch's flotilla and Forrest completely destroyed Johnsonville.



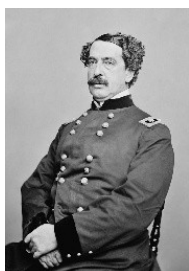
Fitch's flotilla steamed back down the Tennessee to the Cumberland to reinforce patrols to the south and west of Nashville. Then the winter weather set in. Ice hampered Union boats on the Cumberland west of Nashville.

Meanwhile Forrest's cavalry moved west of Nashville to interdict Union supplies coming up the Cumberland. His artillery chief, David C. Kelly, placed his guns on the heights above the Cumberland and succeeded in stopping some of the transports. Fitch's gunboats used naval grapeshot but had difficulty firing on the artillery on the banks above them because they could not elevate many of their guns sufficiently. Moreover, the Union could not zero in on the artillery pieces because Kelly kept moving them over a ten-mile distance along the river. The artillery was finally driven off by Union cavalry when Thomas launched his attack.

Having been repulsed at Nashville, Hood retreated south with the intention of crossing the Tennessee at Bainbridge. Not only was he pursued by Wilson's cavalry, but also by elements of Gen. A.J. Smith's troops who were put on transports and sent down the East Fork.

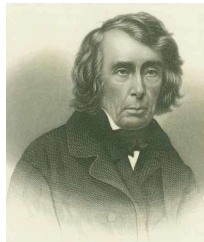
Quiz Answers

1. Abner Doubleday.



2. The Department of Kentucky at Cincinnati (or Covington).

3. Roger B. Taney.



4. Charles Francis Adams (son of Pres. John Quincy and grandson of Pres. John Adams) and James Bulloch (uncle of Pres. Teddy Roosevelt).
5. Gettysburg.
6. Louisville, KY
7. Western & Atlantic Railroad.



8. Philip Kearny.

The Quiz, Quiz Answers, the October Meeting, and the October Presentation 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.*