

THE CANISTER

Monthly Newsletter of the Cincinnati Civil War Round Table



PO Box 621082 • Cincinnati, OH 45262 • www.cincinnati-cwrt.org
Serving the Tri-State area of Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana since 1956

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October 16, 2025 Program

Stopping Hood: The U.S. Navy in the Tennessee Campaign

Presented by

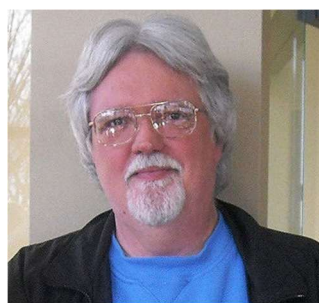
Greg Biggs

The Cincinnati Civil War Round Table will be hosting Greg Biggs on October 16, 2025, when he speaks about “Stopping Hood: The U.S. Navy in the Tennessee Campaign.”

Confederate General John Bell Hood’s Tennessee Campaign of October-December, 1864 is remembered today because of its land battles. Allatoona Pass, Decatur, Columbia, Spring Hill, Franklin and Nashville are the aspects most often studied by modern historians of the campaign. The U.S. Navy’s role in the campaign is mostly glossed over or left out entirely. And yet the warships and transports of the Mississippi River Squadron played vital roles at Gunter’s Landing and Decatur, Alabama as well as at Nashville. Their presence on the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers forced the Confederates to place their pontoon bridges where they did at Tusculum, AL, and prevented Hood from crossing north of

Nashville via the Cumberland River. Veteran naval commanders and gunboats, including ironclads, were the backbone of the fleet that helped assist the Union defense of Middle Tennessee as well as transporting the Right Wing of the XVI Corps to Nashville itself from Missouri. These ships were also very much part of the pursuit of Hood’s defeated army. This program will examine these naval aspects and bring them more into the discussion of this campaign.

This will be Greg’s 9th presentation to the Cincinnati CWRT. His first was in 1993 and his most recent was in 2018. Greg Biggs is former



Associate Editor of Blue & Gray Magazine, past President and current Program Chair, Clarksville, TN CWRT and the Nashville CWRT. He has published over a dozen articles for Blue & Gray Magazine on various subjects regarding the war in the western theater and Civil War flags. He has also led dozens of Civil War tours.

Submitted by Dan Bauer, Program Chair

Greg Biggs Also Speaking in Hamilton on October 15

Greg Biggs, Cincinnati CWRT's speaker this month will be speaking to Hamilton's Civil War Round Table on Wednesday, October 15. His topic that evening will be "Nashville: Siren's Song of the Western Confederacy." You are welcome to attend.

The meeting will be held at The Golden Dragon Buffet, 86 N. Brookwood Ave., Hamilton, Ohio 45013 in a room at the rear of the restaurant. Parking is directly in front of the restaurant off the street.

The meeting begins about 6:45 pm. Many people arrive about 5:30 – 6:00 pm to eat first. The Buffet is \$15-\$20 per person depending on a chosen drink. There is no charge to attend the meeting and one doesn't have to eat dinner at the buffet.

President's Letter

Our September presenters were Steve and Lisa Ball of Columbus, Ohio. They sang songs from the Civil War era, with Steve playing an 1860



vintage guitar and Lisa playing a double bass, often referred to as a stand-up bass. In addition to their music, Steve told interesting and humorous stories about the songs. The two also encouraged our members to sing

along with several well-known songs including the "Battle Hymn of the Republic." They also played several varieties (different lyrics) of the song, "Dixie." The most common version, which was informally adopted by the

Confederate forces, contains lyrics that can be interpreted as favorable to slavery ("I wish I was in the land of cotton, old times there are not forgotten" and "In Dixie Land I'll take my stand to live and die in Dixie"). The lyrics of a Union version, however, presents the opposite view ("Away down south in the land of traitors, rattlesnakes and alligators" and "Each Dixie boy must understand, that he must mind his uncle Sam"). Steve remarked that someone in the audience in Cambridge, Ohio once threw a dinner roll at him when they played the latter version. Fortunately, that didn't happen at our meeting.

Some of you may remember Richard Fuchs, a former member of our round table. Richard was a teacher and coach for 42 years at Roger Bacon High School and later at LaSalle High School. He didn't attend very often after the pandemic, and, unfortunately, he passed away last April. His wife, Karen, contacted me about donating his Civil War books to us, and I picked up two boxes several weeks ago. There will likely be more coming, as Karen said her children wanted to look at the rest first, but she was confident that she would have more to donate. Please keep Richard and Karen in your thoughts.

Here's a recent news story related to the Civil War that may be of interest. In 2020, following the George Floyd incident, the Shenandoah County (Virginia) School Board voted to rename Stonewall Jackson High School in Quicksburg to Mountain View High School. In May 2024, however, the board, with some new members, voted to restore the Stonewall Jackson name with "Generals" as the school mascot. Following that action, the local NAACP filed suit in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Virginia alleging that the restoration violated the First Amendment rights of Black students. On September 9 Judge Michael Urbanski agreed, finding that requiring Black students to wear uniforms with "Stonewall Jackson" and/or "Generals" constituted compelled speech in violation of the amendment. The case remains pending, and the school's name remains as changed in

2024 as Judge Urbanski has yet to rule on several other claims asserted by the plaintiffs that present different legal theories.

Interestingly, this litigation does not include the board's decision, also in 2024, to rename Honey Run Elementary School to Ashby-Lee Elementary School, its pre-2020 name.

Civil War events in October:

- October 4, 1861. President Abraham Lincoln observed a balloon ascension by Professor Thadeus Lowe. Lowe rose approximately 500 feet over the White House and sent a brief telegraphic message to the president while in flight. Although not commissioned as an Army officer, Lowe's aeronautical services were used by the Union army through 1862, for which he received colonel's pay. The picture shows Lowe going up to observe the Battle of Seven Pines or Fair Oaks during the Peninsula Campaign in 1862.
- October 8, 1862. The Battle of Perryville is sometimes referred to as the Battle of Chaplin Hills in Kentucky. Although Confederate forces under the command of General Braxton Bragg won a tactical victory, Bragg retreated from the battlefield, which ended the campaign and left Kentucky under Union control for the remainder of the war.
- October 15, 1863. The Confederate submarine, *H. L. Hunley*, failed to surface after a practice attack in Charleston harbor, killing its eight crewmen. Those lost included Horace Lawson Hunley, the boat's inventor and namesake (pictured). The Confederate Navy salvaged the vessel and returned her to service. In February 1864,



Hunley sank *USS Housatonic*, killing five of that ship's crew, but *Hunley* failed to return, again resulting in the loss of its crew of eight, and its wreck would not be found for over 100 years.

- November 25, 1864. To disrupt New York City's economy and damage Northern morale, Confederate operatives, acting under orders from superiors in Canada, attempted to burn much of the city by setting fires in 10 hotels, including the Belmont, Metropolitan, Saint James, and Astor House as well as two theaters and one museum. The original plan was to do so on November 8 and disrupt that day's presidential election, but they were not



ready until later. None of the fires did serious damage, and all were quickly extinguished. The plot was led by Captain Robert Cobb Kennedy (pictured) and eight others; all escaped to Canada, although Kennedy was later caught, tried, and executed. The would-be arsonists used a chemical concoction dubbed "Greek fire" that was supposed to ignite when jars containing it were opened and exposed to air. The attempted arson failed because the conspirators didn't get their chemistry right – Greek fire needed a continuous supply of oxygen to burn and spread, but the Confederates closed the doors and windows of the rooms in which they spilled the compound, which effectively starved the fires of oxygen and prevented the flames from growing.

Please join us at our meeting on October 16th when Greg Biggs from the Clarksville, Tennessee CWRT will be our speaker.

Submitted by Tom Robisch, President

Cincinnati CWRT Meeting Details

Location	Raffel's Evendale Banquet Center, 10160 Reading Rd., Evendale, OH 45241
Date	Thursday, October 16, 2025
Time	5:30 Sign-in and Social 6:30 Buffet Dinner 7:15 Business Meeting 7:30 Speaker
Dinner 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, October 12, 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.

New Reservations and Payment Process

As explained in the September Canister, beginning this month we are **no longer taking dinner reservations and payment online**. We now have a dedicated email address for making your reservations, and payment will be made at the door.

Email your dinner reservation request to

CinCWRTreservations@gmail.com

Please include your name and the names of any dinner companions if you are making a reservation for more than yourself. It's as simple as inserting "October meeting" in the subject area and writing, for example "Please make a dinner reservation for me (or me and my wife Julia). U.S Grant."

In addition to cash or check as before, you may now make your payment by credit card at the door. Credit card payments will include a small processing fee equal to the amount the CWRT is charged. For example, the dinner charge will be \$28.00 cash or check, or \$28.91 credit card.

You may still make a reservation as before by calling or texting V.P. Jeff Mikutis directly. Only members will be able to make dinner reservations for themselves and their guests. However, the after-dinner meeting and program is still open to members and nonmembers alike. If you have any questions about the process, please contact the Treasurer, Dave Stockdale.

Quiz

There was no Quiz at the September meeting. If you would like to try your hand at putting together a quiz for a future meeting, please contact one of the officers.

Future Speakers for Cincinnati Civil War Round Table

November 20, 2025 **The Saga of the 35th Ohio Volunteer Infantry**, Presented by Brian Smith

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

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

Meetings are always the 3rd Thursday of the month. Future 2026 meetings are March 19, April 16 and May 21.

Book Review

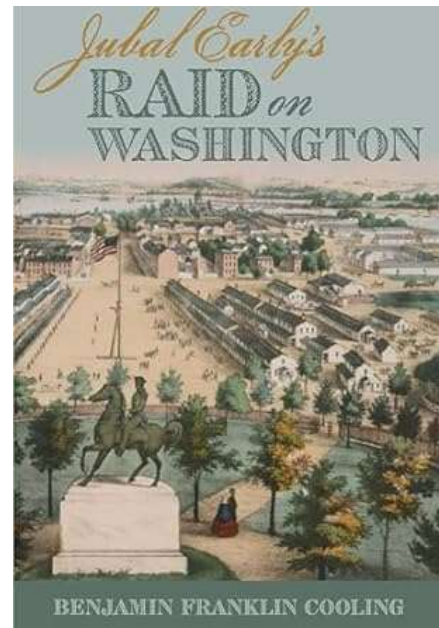
Submitted by Eric W. Gutttag

Jubal Early's Raid on Washington

by Benjamin Franklin Cooling, The University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, 1989,
344 pages, hardcover/\$35.00
(paperback/\$22.95)

Jubal Early's Raid on Washington describes the one serious attempt by the Confederacy to take the Union capital in the summer of 1864. On July 9 Lew Wallace, of *Ben Hur* fame, and his greatly outnumbered Union force succeeded in delaying Early's "reborn" Army of the Valley for a single but critical day at the Battle of Monocacy near Frederick Maryland. That allowed a scrambling Union command to reinforce its greatly depleted fortifications and batteries protecting Washington, D.C. Even so, as aptly observed by Cooling, the "defenses of

Washington literally presented a scruffy, unkempt, ill-prepared bulwark that July weekend."



Early's main Union adversary that extremely hot July weekend was Christopher C. Augur, the commander of the Department of Washington. Much of his military force (the XXII Corps) was of dubious combat readiness. It included around 2800 "convalescents and men from hospitals, organized into a provisional brigade composed of men from nearly every regiment of the Army of the Potomac." That brigade manned Fort Stevens, one of the principal fortifications to the north of the Union capital. Augur was also assisted in his defense of the Union capital by two former corps commanders (Quincy Gillmore and Alexander McCook) whose military careers (like Wallace's earlier in 1862) had plummeted abruptly.

On July 11, Early rode up to this fortified Union defensive line to make his own personal assessment of its strength. Having become aware of the arrival of Horatio Wright's VI Corps, and after weighing the pros and cons of an assault on this line, Early stated: "I therefore, reluctantly determined to retire." Nevertheless, on the following day (July 12), there was a vigorous, yet inconclusive fight at Fort Stevens near where I used to live. Indeed,

President Lincoln visited Fort Stevens that day and was reported to have mounted the “forward parapet and took position as marked today by a simple bas-relief and stone.” But as suggested by a skeptical Cooling, the oft told tale of Old Abe (presenting a fairly tall and inviting target) being strenuously urged by then Captain (later Supreme Court Justice) Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. to “get down you fool” is most likely yet another apocryphal Civil War story.

Cooling’s book on Early’s aborted attempt to take the Union capital in the fourth summer of the Civil War is an informative yet entertaining read and is most likely the seminal account on this topic.

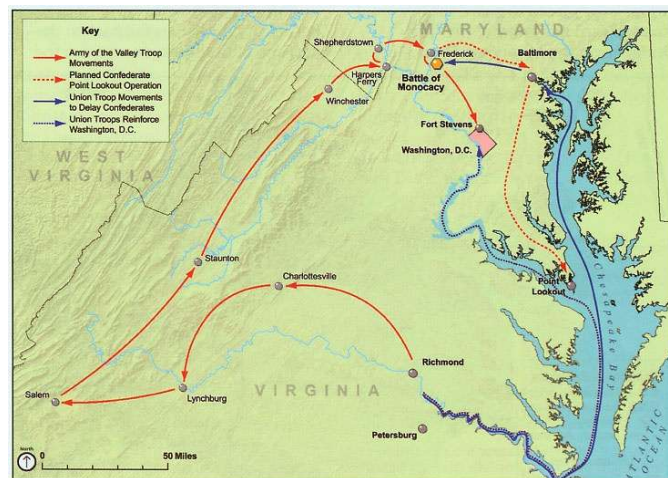
Submitted by Eric Gutttag, Publicity & Membership



Captain Oliver Wendell Holmes telling President Lincoln, who was observing the fight at Fort Stevens, to “get down you fool.”



GENERAL EARLY.



Map Outlining Jubal Early’s Raid on Washington

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.*