

The War Correspondent

Newsletter of the Ray Fawcett Chapter of the Central Ohio Civil War Roundtable

October 2011

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<http://centralohiocwrt.wordpress.com>



General-in-Chief's Report by Tim Maurice

Hello, Everyone,

As all of us know, our country's economy has been struggling for some time now, and there does not appear to any relief in sight for the foreseeable future. With this in mind, myself and the other officers of the roundtable are ever vigilant with our roundtable's resources and finances. Every speaker that is presented to our membership is carefully considered on a cost-benefit basis prior to our entering into an agreement to have them speak. There are some speakers we would very much like to book for our roundtable that are unfortunately outside of our budget.

I feel the "bang for the buck" that comes with a twenty-five dollar, one-year membership is quite substantial, and we intend to keep it that way even in these uncertain economic times. Please be assured

that every membership dollar and every raffle dollar we collect is put to good use in making the Central Ohio Civil War Roundtable one of the premier roundtables in the country. That will always be our mission, and I thank every member for his or her support of this wonderful organization.



Raffle

With your support, we raised \$30 from the September book raffle!
Thank you!

Adjutant General's Report September 14, 2011 by Sheryl Taylor

In Homer's epic poem, *The Odyssey*, creatures called Sirens sing a song so beautiful that it causes sailors to steer their ships toward dangerous rocks and certain death. To navigate these dangerous waters and continue his journey, Odysseus, hero of *The Odyssey*, tells his men to put wax in their ears so they won't hear the Sirens' song. During the Civil War, the music Nashville made was as a siren's song to the Confederate army. But unlike Odysseus's crew, the Confederates did not put wax in their ears and were torn to shreds by the Union defenses surrounding the much-coveted city.

Tennessee and the cities within it were a military target from the outset of the war as it was the only Confederate state from which an army had access to all three

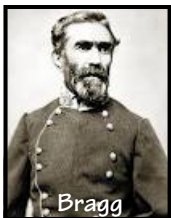
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THIS MONTH'S MEETING

DATE:
Wednesday, October 12, 2011
TIME:
7:00 P.M.
LOCATION:
Ohio Health Building
300 Polaris Parkway
Westerville, OH 43082
SPEAKER/TOPIC:
John Hoptak—Battle of South Mountain

theaters. To get anywhere, you almost always had to go through Tennessee. In addition, the state had significant supplies in the form of foundries, crops, hogs, horses, mules, and more importantly, railroads that ran *through* cities so these supplies could be distributed throughout the Confederate army.

By February 1862, the battles of Fort Henry and Fort Donelson had been fought as Union troops moved along the Tennessee River on their way toward Nashville. As our speaker put it, “not one spade of dirt was turned” to protect Nashville, so the city quickly fell to General Don Carlos Buell’s army, and the Federal occupation that would last the remainder of the war began. The loss of their state capital was a blow to Tennessean morale, but the Confederate army also suffered a loss of supplies, which would affect them in their next battle at Shiloh. And although the rebels fell back to Corinth, Mississippi, after their



defeat at Shiloh, they still heard Nashville’s call. General Braxton Bragg regrouped in Mississippi, gathering reinforcements and rebuilding his army.

His plan was to join Kirby Smith, who was tangling with Buell in Kentucky, and along the way to recapture Nashville by maneuver. But this part of Bragg’s plan failed, and the city slipped through the Confederate fingers again.

Bragg tried once more to recapture Nashville in December 1862, but this time he ran into General William Rosecrans, who



had replaced Buell after the Union loss at Perryville. Rosecrans was with the Army of the Cumberland in Nashville. While he was rebuilding the army, he also built a huge supply depot and the largest earthen fort in North America that became known as Fort Rosecrans. Rosecrans intended to push Bragg out of Tennessee. Bragg pushed back in Murfreesboro, and the bloody fight at Stones River resulted. But Bragg was unable to break through the strong Union lines and retake Nashville.

Almost two years later, the sirens of Nashville called again, this time to

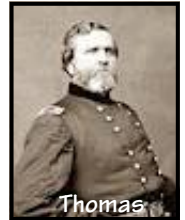


John Bell Hood, who was now in command of the Army of Tennessee. Sherman’s army was in Atlanta, and Hood’s plan was to cut Sherman’s supply

line throughout Tennessee by tearing up rail lines and harassing Federal troops from the depots in Chattanooga all the way to Nashville. Hood skirmished his way north with some success but met with great resistance when he ran into the combined armies of Generals John Scofield and George Thomas on November 30, 1864, in Franklin, Tennessee, fifteen miles south of Nashville. On that day more than nine thousand men fell. Hood’s casualties were more than three times those of his enemy.

Two weeks later the sirens of Nashville finally lured the Army of Tennessee to its death. After the Battle of Franklin, Federal troops had withdrawn to the safety of the former capital of Tennessee. In spite of Hood’s defeat, he marched what was left of his battered army those

last few miles to what was now a fortress, the Union-occupied city of Nashville. Hood was unprepared for the fortifications the Federals had built around Nashville, and he ordered his men to dig defensive trenches. Union General Thomas watched and waited and eventually attacked them, and by the end of the battle essentially destroyed the Army of Tennessee. How, I wonder, might the war have been affected had the Confederates only put wax in their ears?



Booth Escape Tour

Follow the entire escape route of John Wilkes Booth from Ford’s Theater to the Garrett farm in a day-long guided tour sponsored by the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust. On November 5, 2011, Michael W. Kauffman, author of *American Brutus*, will guide the tour to numerous sites, including the Surratt, Mudd, and Peyton Houses. For more information, visit the CVBT website at www.cvbt.org/Booth_Escape_Tour_2011_Event.

Answer to the September Puzzler

Puzzler: Who surrendered Fort Donelson to U.S. Grant?

Answer: Simon B. Buckner



***Historian General's
Report***
by
Mike Peters

John David Hoptak is a lifelong student of the American Civil War and currently works as an Interpretative Park Ranger at Antietam National Battlefield. He also teaches courses in American history and Civil War history as an adjunct professor at American Military University. Hoptak is the author of several books, including *First in Defense of the Union: The Civil War History of the First Defenders* (2004), *Our Boys Did Nobly: Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania, Soldiers at the Battles of South Mountain and Antietam* (2009), *The Battle of South Mountain* (2011), and *Antietam: September 17, 1862* (2011).

Hoptak is active in the preservation and promotion of local history and recently completed a nationwide effort to restore the 48th Pennsylvania Monument at Antietam Battlefield. Hoptak also blogs on the Civil War at www.48thpennsylvania.blogspot.com.

In October, Hoptak will speak to the roundtable about The Battle of South Mountain. This battle has long remained in the shadows cast by the larger and far bloodier battle fought three days later along the banks of the Antietam Creek in western Maryland. Yet South Mountain was in itself a significant battle, for it was there that Robert E. Lee's first invasion of the North was met and initially repulsed. It was also the first major battle fought north of the

Potomac River, and the Union victory at South Mountain did much to restore confidence in the Union ranks, which aided them three days later at Antietam.

Hoptak, who recently published a history of South Mountain as part of the History Press's Civil War Sesquicentennial Series, will speak of the importance of the battle of South Mountain by placing it within the larger context of the Maryland Campaign. He will describe the actions at Fox's, Turner's, Frostown, and Crampton's Gap and offer the reasons South Mountain was a significant battle.

"Civil War Reflections"

The public is invited to a free performance of "Civil War Reflections" on Sunday, December 4, at 6:00 P.M. in Gray Chapel on the Ohio Wesleyan University campus.

"Civil War Reflections" is a multimedia choral presentation conceived and directed by roundtable member Carolyn McQuattie's friend Jason Hiester, Professor of Music at OWU. The production is divided into four sections (preface to war, call to arms, horrors of war, loss and healing) and will include projected images, selections performed by OWU's Choral Art Ensemble and Chamber Singers, dramatic readings, historic speeches, and letters written by battle-worn soldiers.

Gray Chapel is located in University Hall, at 61 S. Sandusky Street in Delaware. Carolyn will be attending the performance, so please see her if you need further information. Thanks, Carolyn!

**2011-2012 COCWRT
CALENDAR**

November 12, 2011

★ **Gail Stephens**—The Shadow of Shiloh: Major General Lew Wallace in the Civil War

Decemberr 14, 2011

No meeting

January 11, 2012

COCWRT Discussion

February 8, 2012

★ **Harold George**—Custer's Last Stand

March 14, 2012

★ **Chris Kolakowski** — Tullahoma Campaign

April 12, 2012

★ **Frank O'Reilly**—Malvern Hill

May 9, 2012

★ **Peter Cozzens**—1862 Valley Campaign

June 13, 2012

★ **Eric Wittenberg**—Battle of White Sulphur Springs



Unless otherwise noted, all meetings are held at

7:00 P.M.

at the Ohio Health Building,
300 Polaris Parkway,
Westerville, OH 43082.

Dates and speakers are subject to change.