

HISTORY OF THE COLUMBUS BARRACKS CWRT

Just over forty years ago, a few people got together one evening in a Clintonville bookstore to discuss battles and leaders and other issues about the American Civil War. What would soon come to be known as the Columbus Barracks Civil War Round Table held its first meeting in October 1982 at Larry Cosner's Heritage Book Store at 4145 North High Street to start something that is still going on today.

So just what is a Civil War Round Table? It is a group of people who get together to present, discuss, study and sometimes even debate the military, political and social history of the American Civil War. There are hundreds of them throughout the United States (the oldest such group in the United States is the Civil War Round Table of Chicago, which was founded in December 1940 and is still meeting today) and even some in other countries. The Ohio Civil War Round Tables website lists at least thirty-two active ones in our state.

So where did the Columbus Barracks Civil War Round Table get its name? In 1864, during the American Civil War, the Columbus Arsenal was constructed on about seventy acres to receive, store and issue arms and equipment to the Union troops. In 1875, it was converted to a recruiting intake and training facility and renamed the Columbus Barracks and in 1922, it was renamed Fort Hayes, in honor of President Rutherford B. Hayes from Ohio. And, finally, when the Federal government abandoned Fort Hayes as a military base in the late 1980's, it was purchased by the Columbus Public Schools and became the Fort Hayes Metropolitan Education Center of today. Since Larry Cosner was a big World War I enthusiast and was also hosting this group at his bookstore, it is likely that he suggested Columbus Barracks (which the base was known as during that war) for the name for our Civil War round table group and we have kept using this name ever since.

The Columbus Barracks Civil War Round table continued meeting at the Heritage Book Store for the next few years until Larry Cosner sold it and he then hosted the group at his house for several more years until he moved out of state. Over the following years, we continued meeting at some of our members' homes, a few local churches, the Ohio History Center, and several local libraries. Eventually, we were able to hold most of our meetings at the Upper Arlington Library until the COVID-19 pandemic caused it to be closed for several months in 2020. To stay safe, we took a long furlough before we resumed our meetings last September at the Old Worthington Library.

Unlike most Civil War round tables, the Columbus Barracks Civil War Round Table does not charge any membership dues. So, all of our meetings are free and open to the public. Most of our presentations over the years have been made by our members or their friends. We have even had a few professional speakers and some published authors. A couple of our members were also Civil War reenactors who shared their interests and experiences with us. Our programs have covered most of the major Civil War battles and campaigns and many Civil War

military, political and civilian personalities, and issues on both sides. We are an open-minded group.

We are currently holding our meetings (except in December) at the Old Worthington Library in Worthington, Ohio on the third Wednesdays of each month from 7:00 P.M. to 8:30 P.M. If our meeting room is available. We would like to invite you to join us. So if you are interested in learning more about the American Civil War and attending any of our meetings, please give me a call at **614-267-4168** or send me an e-mail at jfyoung182@spectrum.net so I can confirm the date and time and let you know what the topic will be for that meeting. I hope to see some of you there soon.

John F. Young
Meeting Coordinator
Columbus Barracks Civil War Round Table