

The Outpost

The Newsletter of the Salt Creek Civil War Round Table
Vol. LVII No. 8 April 2019



522nd Regular Meeting

DATE: Friday, April 19, 2019
PLACE: Oak Trace, 200 Village Drive, Downers Grove, IL
TIME: 8:00 p.m.
TOPIC: “Sherman’s Working Battery: History of the 1st Illinois Light Artillery—Battery H”
SPEAKER: John V. Matuszek

Illinois portrayed a prominent role in the American Civil War. Men from all parts of the state stepped forward and enlisted. This is the history of one of the more famous artillery batteries that Illinois sent into battle. Follow along as you learn of Battery H’s baptism by fire, their travels down the Mississippi River where they assisted Sherman and Grant in the capture of Vicksburg. They then headed north to Chattanooga and down to Atlanta. From Atlanta via Sherman’s March to the Sea they traveled to Charleston. Then you will find out why South Carolina will never forget them.

John Matuszek graduated from SIU-Carbondale with a degree in Zoology. He is presently employed at Brookfield Zoo and has authored several papers on invertebrate husbandry. At the age of three he wore his first artillery shell jacket and has been since. He is an active member of the North-South Skirmish Association and competes in Civil War marksmanship through out the eastern half of the United States.

If you need assistance parking during construction, please ask at the front desk or call the On-Site Transportation & Security Service at 630-401-6699. There are plenty of parking spaces available.

MARCH MEETING UPDATE by Art Foley

The March meeting hosted the presentation “Saving Antietam: A Century of Challenges Met and Lessons Learned” by Dr. Mary Abroe. Antietam, the second oldest Civil War battlefield set aside by the Federal government, differed in its composition from the other nucleus parks of the system, (Chickamauga-Chattanooga, Shiloh, Gettysburg and Vicksburg), by the organizational plan imposed. While the other sites comprised purchase of important areas of those fields, the Antietam site consisted of roadside right-of-ways and land for roads and other easements. Upon these areas, interpretive signs, unit markers and memorials were situated while leaving the bulk of the battlefield under private agricultural use. Antietam also differed from the other sites due to lack of mentorship by veteran groups, clout heavy politicians and its lying in the border state of Maryland. This perceived lack of interest modified many of the changes to the landscape, (the number of monuments, private businesses abutting the field, tourist attractions, etc.)

This system of limited governmental intrusion that achieved the dual goals of memorialization and education while remaining cost effective, was applied to other various historical sites acquired by the government from the 1890’s through the pre-World War II period. The War Department managed the battlefield until its transfer to the National Park Service in the years following the World War. While the plan worked to satisfaction prior to the 1930’s, the changes in the nation with road expansion, increased tourism and the onset of urban growth from the Washington D.C. area heralded the need for a more inclusive preservation plan. The Park System was granted in the post-war years the ability to purchase historically important ground for fair market price, and important acreage began to be set aside.

Interpretation of the park has also evolved over the years depicting the history of park enhancements, (towers, memorials, signage, etc.). The restoration of landscape features of the September 1862 period has also been a part of the Park Systems mission.

Dr. Abroe gave a concise overview of the hundred plus year period of governmental stewardship over the battlefield. She also gave interpretation to current events and some future considerations involving Antietam. The membership enjoyed her information packed overview, masterly conceived and executed. Huzzah!

APRIL 2019 PRESERVATION REPORT BY BRIAN CONROY

Happy Spring! In this month's preservation report, we have an extraordinary chance to build on past successes at the Shiloh battlefield in Tennessee and the South Mountain battlefield in Maryland.

A total of 73 key acres at the two April 1862 Civil War battlefields — land worth \$709,500 — is available for just \$103,000. The Trust and other preservationists have already saved many acres of land at both of these battlefields, but development is a real and present threat that could compromise all that others have worked so hard to protect.

After the fall of Forts Henry and Donelson, Confederate General Albert Sidney Johnston sought to surprise the Union army under General Ulysses S. Grant near the Shiloh Meeting House on the morning of April 6, 1862. But Johnston would not live to see sunset that day, bleeding to death at 2:30 pm on the battlefield after being shot in the leg. Still, his men made great advances against the Union line and by day's end many of the generals around Grant counseled retreat. Echoing words spoken by Johnston the previous day, Grant declared, "Retreat? No! I propose to attack at daylight, and whip them."

During the rainy night that followed, Federal reinforcements arrived, and Union gunboats relentlessly lobbed shells into the Confederate lines. When dawn broke on April 7, it was the Union army's turn to push the Southern soldiers back on their heels.

At the end of those two April days, nearly 24,000 casualties — killed, wounded, missing, or captured — made Shiloh the bloodiest battle in all American history up to that point in time. No one had ever experienced anything like it until September of that same year, when the bloodiest single-day battle in all of American history would occur along the banks of Antietam Creek.

Three days before that fateful September 17th, Union General George B. McClellan was pursuing General Robert E. Lee's Confederates through the passes at South Mountain.

Having found a copy of Lee's campaign battle plans, Special Orders No. 191, several days previous, McClellan was roused to uncharacteristic aggression. Vowing, "if I cannot whip Bobbie Lee, I will be willing to go home," he pursued the scattered Confederate divisions to the three main passes through the South Mountain range, at Crampton's, Fox's, and Turner's Gaps.

The fight at Crampton's Gap, where the 18 acres currently at risk are located, was the most important of the three. Union General William Franklin was given the assignment of taking the gap. Displaying some of his boss' former lethargic tendencies, Franklin took at least three hours deploying his 12,000-man force to attempt to dislodge a few hundred Confederate defenders. One southerner quipped that Franklin's preparations resembled a "lion making exceedingly careful preparations to spring on a plucky little mouse."

Eventually the lion prevailed, and the Federals gained control of all three passes. Yet the stubborn resistance on the part of the Confederates bought Lee precious time to begin the process of reuniting his army, setting the stage for the Battle of Antietam three days later.

UPCOMING CIVIL WAR EVENTS

APRIL 16, 2019

LINCOLN-DAVIS CWRT

"The Generals at Shiloh"

Speaker: Larry Tagg

Country House Restaurant, Alsip, IL

lincolndavisroundtable@yahoo.com

APRIL 25, 2019

SOUTH SUBURBAN CWRT

"Mexico and the Civil War"

Speaker: Phil Angelo

Smokey Barque, Frankfort, IL

www.southsuburbancwrt.com

MAY 1, 2019

KANKAKEE VALLEY CWRT

"Civil War Corps Command"

Speaker: Rob Girardi

Kankakee Public Library

MAY 3, 2019

NORTHERN ILLINOIS CWRT

"Damn the Torpedoes: Hi-Tech
Rebs & Their Infernal Machines"

Speaker: Bruce Allardice

Arlington Hts. Memorial Library

www.northernilcwrt.com

MAY 10, 2019

CHICAGO CWRT

"The Petersburg Regiment in
the CW: the 12th Virginia"

Speaker: John Horn

Holiday Inn O'Hare

5615 N. Cumberland, Chicago

dinnerreservation@chicagocwrt.org

MAY 16, 2019

SOUTH SUBURBAN CWRT

"Illinois Regiments at Gettysburg"

Speaker: Dennis Doyle

Smokey Barque, 20 Kansas St.

Frankfort, IL

www.southsuburbancwrt.com

ALL FOR THE UNION

The SCCWRT website is back.

Brian Conroy has taken over the Salt Creek
CWRT Facebook Page.

April 27, 2019 DuPage Co. Fairgrounds

Chicagoland Civil War & Militaria Expo

Volunteers needed. Contact Jan

630-830-7614 or jrbarns@sbcglobal.net

The next SCCWRT Board Meeting will be

May 7th at 7:30pm at Oak Trace.

BACK IN HISTORY

50 Years Ago: Elmer Brinkman presented:

"General John Logan"

25 Years Ago: Jerry Feinstein presented:

"Chicago's Civil War Monuments"

10 Years Ago: Charlie Banks presented:

"The Lincoln Funeral Train"

FUTURE SCCWRT MEETINGS

May 17, 2019

"Wisconsin: The Hotbed of Secession?"

Speaker: Jerry Allen

June 21, 2019 Annual Banquet

"From Unwanted to Indispensable:

The Real Nurses of the Civil War"

Speaker: Pamela Toler

THE SALT CREEK CWRT

www.saltcreekcwrt.org

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