

# The Outpost

**The Newsletter of the Salt Creek Civil War Round Table  
Vol. LIV No. 6 February 2016**



## **487th Regular Meeting**

**DATE:** Friday, February 19, 2016  
**PLACE:** Oak Trace, 200 Village Drive, Downers Grove, IL  
**TIME:** 8:00 p.m.  
**TOPIC:** “Women in Black: Mourning Customs during the Civil War”  
**SPEAKER:** Jill Silbert

Jill Silbert will present an overview of the mourning customs as they relate to the Civil War Era. She will discuss the origins of terms and who was responsible for the start of the mourning customs. She will delve deeper into each of the different customs and explore how they came about, what evolved over time, and which we still see actively being used today (hint--more of the customs are commonly used today than you think).

Was mourning the same for the North as it was for the South? Was a wealthy family more apt to ‘showcase’ the death than a modest family? Who gained the most from a death, who suffered the most? Were the customs gender-specific? Where did the words ‘wake’ and ‘widow’s weeds’ come from? How long did one stay in mourning? These and many other questions will be addressed.

Jill Silbert is an Army brat who grew up all over the country. She got her love of history from volunteering at General Grant’s home in Galena when she was 16, from there it kept growing. She has a BS degree in Bio-Chemistry from the University of Iowa and a Master’s degree in Chemistry from the University of Illinois. She lived in Gettysburg for a while, and her love of the Civil War grew. She enjoys speaking to groups about mourning customs in the Civil War as well as historical sewing and creating costumes that are as accurate as possible.

**Come a little early to help celebrate Joyce Clark’s 99<sup>TH</sup> Birthday!**

## **JANUARY MONTHLY SUMMARY BY ARTHUR FOLEY**

For those members who were unable to attend the January meeting, well, you missed a very interesting evening. Rob Girardi presented "The Real Warren Never Got In the Books". A play on the Walt Whitman's quote, "the real war will never get in the books", Rob's presentation described the continuing injustice and misapprehension of a great patriot, General Governor Kemble Warren. Drawing upon material that Rob and Paula Walker used in compiling their upcoming text on Warren, the calumny imposed on the Savior of Gettysburg by his superior, U. S. Grant, was exposed and examined. Relieved of his command at the moment of great triumph at Five Forks by Gen. Philip Sheridan, Girardi and Walker contend that the action, imposed with Grant's approval, was a malicious and illegal affront to a commander who consistently carried out his duties with great ability.

Detailing Warren's pre-war and war career, the general was an acknowledged man of superior abilities by his commanders and peers. In fact, until that fateful April 1865 day, Warren's stars shown brightly as a staff officer, commander of the II Corps and then the V Corps. But, (a fateful word indeed), Warren, a trusted advisor and protégé of General Meade, had a personal habit of being too vociferous in his views on operational procedures, (he was often correct, which can be regarded negatively), and loose-lipped of his views on his superiors' decisions. These predispositions earned him the enmity of Grant and Grant's military circle of familiars and hangers on. By the eve of Five Forks, the Union commander awaiting an opportunity to dispose of Warren, gave Sheridan carte-blanc

Warren rank prohibited loss of command without Presidential consent. The aggrieved commander had a short period to contend Sheridan's action on petition to Lincoln. He urgently requested a court of inquiry to exonerate him from the stigma of Sheridan's action. The Appomattox campaign and Lincoln's assassination intervened and afterwards numerous requests were ignored or refused until Grant retired from the presidency. President Hayes, (a Democrat), ordered a court of inquiry that convened in 1879 and, after hearing testimony from dozens of witnesses over 100 days, found that Sheridan's relief of Warren had been unjustified. Unfortunately for Warren, these results were not published until after his death, (from adult onset diabetes, not the deemed "broken heart"). Grant and Sheridan escaped any penalty with a pre-inquiry arrangement of immunity from prosecution.

Rob described to the membership opinions of Warren from his detractors. Always starting with very complimentary remarks on Warren's abilities -then the word "but" - afterwards disparaging qualifiers would appear. In examination of Warren's actions during the Overland Campaign and the siege of Petersburg the negatives attributed to him are not borne out. In fact Warren emerges as the "go to guy" in spearheading actions against the rebel forces. Assertion of the General's "not being reliable", and other biased notions / distortions, Girardi refuted and proved to be inconsistent with events. Warren was considered by many in the Army of the Potomac to be a very capable corps commander.

If these affront to Warren's character were not enough, Rob then delineated the continuing lapses historians have committed in accepting the views of the General's detractors in the face of events to the contrary. The track record of sloth involving discerning Warren's abilities is astounding. Even the author of Warren's biography, "Happiness Is Not My Companion", David M. Jordan, bought into this error of appraisal and assessment of character. Thank you Mr. Girardi for an interesting and thought provoking presentation. Huzzah!

## **PRESERVATION REPORT BY DAN JOSEPHS**

In this column in April of last year (2015), the battlefield preservation efforts at Brandy Station in Culpepper, Virginia were highlighted. The story about battlefield preservation at Brandy Station began with the Civil War Trust's predecessor organization, the Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites (APCWS) in 1987. At that time Historian Gary Gallagher was president and Clark Bud Hall was the Secretary of the APCWS. Mr. Hall had been a leading battlefield preservationist in the late 1980's and during the 1990's. The local Civil War preservation group, the Brandy Station Foundation, was founded in 1989 and helped the APCWS and later the Civil War Trust in their efforts to preserve the Brandy Station battlefield land.

This column in April traced the defeat of a commercial development of a corporate office park defeat of a Formula One race track. The APCWS and later the Civil War Trust purchased 7 tracts of land on the Brandy Station battlefield in order to preserve the battlefield from 1997 to early 2015. Most of these tracts of real estate are located on Fleetwood Hill, the location of much of the fighting occurred.

According to the Free Lance Star newspaper, issue dated September 16, 2015, the Civil War Trust entered into an agreement to purchase 10 ½ acres and a ranch home located on Fleetwood Hill. The article of this Fredericksburg newspaper indicated that the owners of the ranch home and the 10 acres of real estate were two of the founders of the local Brandy Station Foundation in 1989. Although this couple, the Mitchells, was offered considerable sums of money to sell to either of the two commercial developers, they had indicated that they would sell their home and land to the Civil War Trust. According to the newspaper article, the Civil War Trust has until the end of this month (February of 2016) to raise the funds to proceed with this purchase of the land and home owned by the Mitchells.

In the most current issue of the Blue & Gray magazine, there was an article focusing on the battlefield preservation of the Brandy Station battlefield. In this issue, which is issue number 6 Volume 31, (2015) there is an article written by Clark Bud Hall reviewing the Brandy Station battlefield preservation status. In this article Mr. Hall referred to an article he wrote that appeared in the October 1990 issue of the Blue & Gray about the Brandy Station battlefield preservation. Mr. Hall then discussed the current status of the preservation of the Brandy Station battlefield. He stated that the Civil War Trust owns 1,020 acres of land at Brandy Station and 164 acres of land located at the nearby Cedar Mountain battlefield.

As discussed in other columns, when the Civil War Trust preserves real estate adjacent to a National Civil War battlefield park, the Trust proceeds later to convey the real estate to the federal government to be added to the battlefield park. In the case of Brandy Station and Cedar Mountain, there is no adjacent or nearby National Civil War Battlefield Park. Mr. Hall in the article in the Blue & Gray magazine explained that the Civil War Trust works with the State of Virginia to create a state park which would encompass all of the preserved land at both battlefields. Prior to establishment of the new local Virginia State Park, the Civil War Trust would complete the interpretive trails. This new state park would contain recreational opportunities and would be used to promote tourism to the local area. This would include local management of the battlefield and recreational park. The Civil War Trust can then participate in preserving other Civil War battlefields. This also seems to be an appropriate solution for the local community.

## **UPCOMING CIVIL WAR EVENTS**

FEBRUARY 16, 2016

### **LINCOLN-DAVIS CWRT**

"Gone with the Wind and the Memory of the Civil War"

Speaker: Leslie Goddard

Country House Restaurant, Alsip, IL

[Lincolndavisroundtable@yahoo.com](mailto:Lincolndavisroundtable@yahoo.com)

FEBRUARY 25, 2016

### **SOUTH SUBURBAN CWRT**

"The 29<sup>th</sup> USCT"

Speaker: Jeff Kannel

sscwrt@gmail.com

MARCH 4, 2016

### **NORTHERN ILLINOIS CWRT**

"Patrick Cleburne"

Speaker: Lee White

Arlington Hts. Memorial Library

500 N. Dunton, Arlington Hts.

[northernilcwrt.org](http://northernilcwrt.org)

MARCH 8, 2016

### **McHENRY COUNTY CWRT**

"Lincoln & Seward"

Speaker: Tom Gavigan

Woodstock Library

[www.mchenrycivilwar.com](http://www.mchenrycivilwar.com)

MARCH 11, 2016

### **CHICAGO CWRT**

"Why the Civil War Made Our Modern Food"

Speaker: Bruce Kraig

Holiday Inn O'Hare

5615 N. Cumberland, Chicago

[dinnerreservations@chicagocwrt.org](mailto:dinnerreservations@chicagocwrt.org)

April 30, 2016 Joliet Junior College

### **CIVIL WAR SYMPOSIUM**

Speakers include:

Prof. Don Doyle on "The Cause of All Nations: The International Impact of CW" Rob Girardi on "Illinois in the Civil War"; Prof. Doug Hurt on "Agriculture, Food Production and the Civil War"; Prof. Ted Karamanski on "Chicago During the Civil War"; Prof. Nicholas Sambaluk on "Revolution in Technology during the Civil War".

## **ALL FOR THE UNION**

2016 membership renewal are due.

Send payment to Jan Rasmussen

or pay at the meeting.

Welcome New Member:

Muriel Zelmer

## **BACK IN HISTORY**

50 Years Ago: George and Dorothy

Cashman presented "They Live with Lincoln"

25 Years Ago: Peter Cozzens

presented

"The Battle of Stones River"

10 Years Ago: Larry Hewitt presented:

"How Lincoln Won the War"

## **FUTURE SCCWRT MEETINGS**

March 18, 2016

"The Siege of Petersburg, August 1864"

Speaker: John Horn

April 22, 2016 \*NOTE DATE CHANGE TO 4<sup>TH</sup> FRIDAY DUE TO CONFLICT\*

"Two Generals at Chickamauga:

Alexander

McDowell McCook and Daniel Harvey Hill"

Speaker: David Powell

## **THE SALT CREEK CWRT**

[www.saltcreekcwrt.org](http://www.saltcreekcwrt.org)

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