

The Outpost

The Newsletter of the Salt Creek Civil War Round Table
Vol. LXIII No. 6 March 2026



588th Regular Meeting

DATE: SATURDAY, March 21, 2026
PLACE: Glen Ellyn History Center at Stacy's Corners
800 N. Main St., Glen Ellyn, IL (NW Corner of Main & Elm Streets)
TIME: 11 a.m.
PROGRAM: "Earl Van Dorn: The Terror of Ugly Husbands"
SPEAKER: Ed Urban

Earl Van Dorn, of Mississippi, was the beau ideal of a soldier and a man. Van Dorn graduated from West Point in 1842. He served in the Mexican War, winning two brevet promotions, and then fought Indians on the Western Plains. At the beginning of the Civil War, Van Dorn led Mississippi State troops. After brief service in Virginia, he was appointed to commands in the Trans-Mississippi Theater. Van Dorn was defeated at Pea Ridge in March 1862 and at Corinth in October 1862, but his capture of Grant's supply depot at Holly Springs thwarted Grant's initial drive on Vicksburg.

Van Dorn was as active off the field as on it, and this led to his demise. Earl Van Dorn was a philanderer. According to his biographer, he was associated "with gay living and improprieties hardly becoming the honor of a husband and father." Van Dorn's fondness for drinking and carousing with fine-looking ladies led Dr. George B. Peters, of Spring Hill, to shoot and kill the general who had been paying undue attention to the doctor's wife. This month, we look into the details of this incident.

Ed Urban is retired after more than thirty years in law enforcement. He has had an avid interest in history, and the American Civil War, since his days in grade school. Ed has been a member of the McHenry County Civil War Round Table since its founding in 1997 and continues to serve on the board. He's also Vice President of the McHenry County Historical Society and Museum board. Additionally, he sits on the Friends of the Old Courthouse board. For ten years, Ed wrote "*Pondering the Past, Tales Lost in Time*," a popular local history column for the Marengo-Union Times.

ALL FOR THE UNION

Thanks to those who renewed their memberships. Please renew if you have not.

Mark Matranga was winner of the free membership drawing for paying before February 1st.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Matt Savage and Barbara Mientis

UPCOMING CIVIL WAR EVENTS

Check with the organization sponsoring the program for meeting status.

March 6, 2026 **Northern Illinois CWRT** will feature Civil War Trivia.

Arlington Hts. Historical Museum or Arlington Hts. Library northernilcwr.org

March 8, 2026 at 2pm

Northwest Indiana CWRT will feature Bruce Allardice presenting "*Aloa Oe! Hawaii and the Civil War.*" Crown Point Community Library Northwest Indiana CWRT on Facebook

March 13, 2026

Chicago CWRT will feature Clifford Roberts presenting "*Castle Pickney and the Siege of Charleston.*" Blossum Café, 8349 W. Lawrence Avenue, Norridge, IL chicagocwr.org

March 10, 2026

Waukesha CWRT will feature Robert I. Girardi presenting "*Civil War Engineers.*"

March 17, 2026

Lincoln/Davis CWRT will feature James Pula presenting "*Dan Butterfield.*"
Country House Restaurant, Alsip, IL lincolndavisroundtable@yahoo.com

March 19, 2026

McHenry Co. CWRT will feature Charlies Banks presenting "*The Battle of South Mountain.*"
Woodstock Library mchenrycivilwar.com

March 26, 2026

South Suburban CWRT will feature Bruce Allardice presenting "*Damn the Torpedoes! Hi-Tech Rebs and Their Inferno Machines.*"
Aurielio's Pizza, 19836 Wolf Road, Mokena, IL. South Suburban CWRT on Facebook

April 1, 2026

Kankakee Valley CWRT will feature Gordon Ramsey "*Hot Air Balloons in the Civil War.*"
Bradley Public Library Kankakee Valley CWRT on Facebook

April 3, 2026

Northern Illinois CWRT will feature Laurie Schiller presenting "*Civil War Cavalry.*"
Arlington Hts. Historical Museum or Arlington Hts. Library northernilcwr.org

April 6, 2026

Rock River Valley CWRT will feature Laura Keyes presenting "*Mary Lincoln's Photo Album.*"
Veterans Memorial Hall, 211 N Main Street, Rockford

The Civil War Round Table of Chicago's 2026 Tour will be "Charleston and Savannah" April 29-May 2, 2026. For itinerary and registration information see www.chicagocwrt.org

Kenosha Civil War Museum features **Second Friday Lectures at Noon.**

On March 13, 2026, Rachel Mellon will present "*From Camp Douglas to Vicksburg: Civil War Letters of William J. Kennedy, 55th Illinois Infantry, 1861-63.*"

Free and Open to the Public and No Prior Registration is Required.

FUTURE SALT CREEK CWRT MEETINGS

Check us out on Facebook and at saltcreekcwrt.org

Apr. 25, 2026 Charlie Banks will present "*General Nathaniel P. Banks.*"

May 15, 2026 Brian Seiter will present "*To Wilson's Creek.*"

June 19, 2026 Annual Banquet: Mark Pohlad will present "*Lincoln Leaves the Windy City for the Last Time: His Chicago Funeral.*"

BACK IN HISTORY

50 Years Ago: Patricia Nicholson presented "*The Medical Service in the Civil War.*"

25 Years Ago: Annette Baldwin Kolasinski presented "*The Vindication of Elizabeth Van Lew.*"

10 Years Ago: John Horn presented "*The 39th Illinois Infantry at Petersburg, August 1864.*"

THE SALT CREEK CWRT

President: Robert I. Girardi

Vice-President: Jan Rasmussen

Secretary-Treasurer: Jan Rasmussen

Board Members: Brian Conroy, Rick Zarr, Dan McCarthy, Nancy & Jon Fritz

Historian: Cindy Intravartolo

Newsletter Staff: Jan Rasmussen, Rob Girardi, Brian Conroy

Facebook and Website Editor: Brian Conroy

March 2026 Preservation Report
by Brian Conroy

On April 29, 2024, the Appomattox-Petersburg Preservation Society marked a significant milestone by assuming ownership of the Appomattox Station Battlefield located just miles from the site of General Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox Court House. This 46-acre tract of land, previously under the stewardship of the ABT, holds poignant historical significance.

In April 1865, Confederate General Robert E. Lee and his Army of Northern Virginia were in a race against time. With the Confederate Capital of Richmond and the major supply center of Petersburg now in Federal hands, the last hope for Lee's Army was to unite with Confederate General Joseph E. Johnston's Army of Tennessee in North Carolina. With their combined forces, Lee was hopeful that he and Johnston could defeat Union General William Sherman's armies marching north through the Carolinas. Once Sherman was defeated, they could then turn their attention towards General Ulysses S. Grant on the Virginia/North Carolina border.

By April 8, Lee's Army was in the vicinity of Appomattox Station. Here, Lee's Army stopped to collect supplies that had been dispatched from Lynchburg, Virginia, one of the few major Virginia cities still under Confederate control that had been largely spared the ravages of war. While unloading supplies, Federal cavalry under General George A. Custer launched repeated attacks against the Confederate supply hub and artillery park stationed nearby. Taken by surprise, the Confederate defenders offered dogged resistance, but ultimately, the Federals prevailed, seizing critically needed supplies, taking 1,000 prisoners, and capturing 25 cannons. The capture of Appomattox Station effectively cornered Lee at Appomattox, setting the stage for the subsequent surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia at Appomattox Court House the very next day.

As stewards of this hallowed ground, APPS is committed to not only preserving its historical integrity but also to fostering a deeper understanding of its significance. To this end, APPS will embark on initiatives to develop a trail system, providing visitors with immersive experiences that connect them to the events that unfolded here. Additionally, the society plans to host educational and public events throughout the year, inviting individuals to engage with this pivotal chapter of American history.