

The Outpost

The Newsletter of the Salt Creek Civil War Round Table
Vol. LIV No. 7 March 2016



488th Regular Meeting

DATE: Friday, March 18, 2016
PLACE: Oak Trace, 200 Village Drive, Downers Grove, IL
TIME: 8:00 p.m.
TOPIC: “The 39th Illinois at Petersburg, August 1864”
SPEAKER: John Horn

The nine month siege of Petersburg was the longest continuous operation of the Civil War. A series of large-scale Union “offensives”, grand maneuvers that triggered some of the fiercest battles of the war, broke the monotony of static trench warfare. Grant’s Fourth Offensive, August 14-25th, 1864, was the longest and bloodiest operation of the campaign. The 39th Illinois Infantry, organized in Chicago with most of its recruits from Cook and Will Counties, had seen little action until May of 1864. Once Grant’s Overland Campaign brought the Armies of the Potomac and James to break the siege of Petersburg, the 39th Illinois would experience its fiercest fighting.

A native of Illinois, John Horn received a B.A. from New College, Sarasota, FL and a J.D. from the Columbia Law School. He has practiced law in the Chicago since graduation, occasionally holding local public office. John lives in Oak Forest with his wife and law partner, H. Elizabeth Kelley, a native of Richmond Virginia. He and his wife travel to the Old Dominion each year to visit relatives, battlefields and various archives. He has published articles in *Civil War Times Illustrated* and *America’s Civil War*. His books include *The Destruction of the Weldon Railroad*, *The Petersburg Campaign*, and *The Siege of Petersburg: The Battles for the Weldon Railroad, August 1864* (a revised and expanded edition of *The Destruction of the Weldon Railroad*).

FEBRUARY MEETING SUMMARY by JAN RASMUSSEN

Prior to the start of the program, members helped longtime member Joyce Clark celebrate her 99th birthday. After a rousing chorus of Happy Birthday, the cake was cut and served. Joyce was then presented with a certificate stating that the Salt Creek CWRT has donated \$1000 to the Civil War Trust in her honor. The project designated was the Slaughter Pen Farm and Mead's Breakthrough at Fredericksburg with a \$24.09 to \$1.00 match.

The program for the evening was Women in Black: Mourning Customs during the Civil War by Jill Silbert. Mourning is the process of grieving the death of a loved one. Middle and upper-class Americans observed an elaborate set of rules that governed behavior following the death of a spouse or relative. The enormous rate of death during the Civil War often hindered the mourning process, but heightened the women's public role in mourning. After the death of her husband, Prince Albert in 1861, Queen Victoria set the standard by publically mourning her husband until her death in 1901. Elaborate and structured customs were established especially for women. Widows were expected to respect a minimum of 2 and one half years in mourning. For 1 year and a day the widow was in deep or heavy-mourning in which she was compelled to wear only black clothing and keep her face concealed with a black veil. This practice was followed by full-mourning, during which she wore black, but no veil. Lighter shades of lace and cuffs were allowed. Full-mourning lasted 9 months to 1 year. The final stage was half-mourning where the widow was permitted to wear solid-colored fabrics of lavender, gray and some purples. Mothers mourned a child for 1 year. A child would mourn a parent for 1 year. A child under 17 never went into deep mourning. Widowers mourned for 6 months by wearing black arm bands or badges.

As the war progressed, the increasing economic hardships restricted the women's ability to observe the strict mourning rituals of dress and appearance especially in the South. The Victorian era has superstitions associated with death. When there was a corpse in the house all the mirrors were covered. When someone died in the house, the clock in the room would be stopped at the death hour to prevent bad luck or another death. Clothing was not the only part affected during mourning; widows had to avoid social functions and were only to wear appropriate jewelry (usually jet black or from woven hair from the deceased). Wakes and funerals served as a ritual allowing survivors to honor the deceased and express their grief in the presence of friends and the community. The song The Vacant Chair, by George S. Root was written in remembrance of the loss a soldier during the Civil War.

We thank Jill for her enlightening program.

BATTLEFIELD PRESERVATION REPORT

In 2015 the Salt Creek CWRT made the following donations:

\$1000 to the Civil War Trust for the Chickamauga-Chattanooga Project that helped to save 42 acres at Brown's Ferry and Reed's Bridge. The project was a \$5.73 to \$1.00 match.

\$1000 to the Civil War Trust for the Maryland Campaign Project that helped to save 49 acres at Antietam and South Mountain. The project was a \$3.29 to \$1.00 match.

THANK YOU for your support at the meeting book drawings and book sales.

BATTLEFIELD PRESERVATION REPORT BY DAN JOSPEHS

In this column during 2015 many Civil War Trust campaigns to preserve Civil War battlefield land were highlighted. It is amazing to report that during 2015 alone, the Civil War Trust preserved historic Civil War battlefield historic real estate in 13 different states across the country. On their website, the Civil War Trust reported that approximately 1700 acres of Civil War battlefield real estate was preserved in 2015.

The Civil War Trust worked with many partners in raising the funds to preserve the Civil War battlefield real estate. Among these partners were various local governments such as towns, cities and counties including Franklin Tennessee, Chattanooga, and Bentonville, North Carolina. Also, states such as Colorado, Georgia, Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Louisiana also worked with the Civil War Trust to preserve Civil War battlefield property located within each state's borders.

Besides governmental bodies, there have been many local volunteer organizations that have worked with the Civil War Trust, especially providing local contacts, such as the Gettysburg Foundation, the Save Historic Antietam Foundation, the Manassas Battlefield Trust, Mill Springs Battlefield Association, Petersburg National Battlefield Association, Richmond Battlefields Association, Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Association, Brandy Station Foundation, Friends of Shiloh National Military Park, and Friends of Vicksburg National Military Park and Campaign.

Last but not least are the individual members of the Civil War Trust who constantly make donations to the trust to fund their preservation efforts. The Civil War Trust just concluded a four year capital campaign at the end of 2015. The total amount of funds that the Civil War Trust raised during this capital campaign was approximately \$52.5 million dollars. This total amount of funds exceeded the Civil War Trust's goal of the capital campaign by 30%. I used to work for a charitable organization in their fundraising efforts. Unfortunately, the charity was not able to meet the goals of the campaign. The question always was how to cover the deficits in the campaign. They normally resulted in smaller budgets, etc. The individual members of the Civil War Trust deserve much of the credit for the incredible successful results of the capital campaign. The Civil War Trust was able to preserve over 10,000 acres of Civil War historic real estate during these four years. All of this historic Civil War real estate has now been preserved for future generations to enjoy and learn. The Civil War Trust has compiled an incredible record in preserving Civil War historic real estate. During its existence the Civil War Trust has preserved over 42,000 acres of Civil War historic battlefield land located in 23 states.

Last year I reported on the efforts to purchase Robert E Lee's headquarters at Gettysburg Battlefield Park. The Civil War Trust reported on its website that the purchase was completed and the headquarters has been permanently preserved. I also discussed in a couple of columns the efforts of the local foundations and the Civil War Trust to preserve the Brandy Station battlefield site. The Civil War Trust reported that the preservation and the restoration of the 56 acres of land (including the elimination of the post –Civil War residence) has been completed. Next month I will describe other battlefield preservation efforts.

UPCOMING CIVIL WAR EVENTS

MARCH 15, 2016

LINCOLN-DAVIS CWRT

"The Civil War in Illinois"

Speaker: Tom Emery

Country House Restaurant, Alsip, IL

Lincolndavisroundtable@yahoo.com

MARCH 24, 2016

SOUTH SUBURBAN CWRT

"Wheaton College and Abolitionism"

Speaker: David Maas

sscwrt@gmail.com

APRIL 1, 2016

NORTHERN ILLINOIS CWRT

"The Tally War"

Speaker: Dave Jackson

Arlington Hts. Memorial Library

500 N. Dunton, Arlington Hts.

northernilcwrt.org

APRIL 8, 2016

CHICAGO CWRT

"Nashville: Siren's Song of the Confederacy"

Speaker: Gregg Biggs

Holiday Inn O'Hare

5615 N. Cumberland, Chicago

dinnerreservations@chicagocwrt.org

APRIL 12, 2016

McHENRY COUNTY CWRT

"Battery H, 1st Illinois Light Artillery"

Speaker: Dave Oberg

Woodstock Library

www.mchenrycivilwar.com

April 30, 2016 Joliet Junior College

CIVIL WAR SYMPOSIUM

Speakers include:

Prof. Don Doyle: "The Cause of All

Nations: International Impact of

The Civil War"; Rob Girardi on "Illinois in the

Civil War"; Prof. Doug Hurt: "Agriculture, Food

Production and the Civil War"; Prof. Ted

Karamanski: "Chicago During the Civil War";

Prof. Nicholas Sambaluk: "Revolution in

Technology during the Civil War".

ALL FOR THE UNION

2016 membership renewals are due.

Send payment to Jan Rasmussen

or pay at the meeting.

Welcome New Member:

Bill Kovacs

BACK IN HISTORY

50 Years Ago: Ralph Newman presented:

"Reading, Writing and Rebellion"

25 Years Ago: Bill Thomas presented:

"The Confederate Postal Service"

10 Years Ago: Gale Pewitt presented:

"Confederates in Canada"

FUTURE SCCWRT MEETINGS

April 22, 2016 *NOTE DATE CHANGE

"Two Generals at Chickamauga:

Alexander McDowell McCook & Daniel

Harvey Hill"

Speaker: David Powell

May 20, 2016

Centralia "massacre" in Missouri, 9-27-1864

Speaker: Frank Crawford

June 17, 2016 ANNUAL BANQUET

"Civil War Medicine Hollywood Version:

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly"

Speaker: Gordon Dammann

THE SALT CREEK CWRT

www.saltcreekcwrt.org

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