

# The Outpost

The Newsletter of the Salt Creek Civil War Round Table  
Vol. LVII No. 7 March 2019



## 521st Regular Meeting

**DATE:** Friday, March 15, 2019  
**PLACE:** Oak Trace, 200 Village Drive, Downers Grove, IL  
**TIME:** 8:00 p.m.  
**TOPIC:** Saving Antietam: A Century of Challenges Met and Lessons Learned  
**SPEAKER:** Dr. Mary Abroe

Based on the timing of the law that laid its foundation, Antietam predates all other federal Civil War battlefields but one: only Chickamauga-Chattanooga, which was established on August 19, 1890--eleven days before Antietam--is older. Later in the 1890's, three other sites--Shiloh, Gettysburg, and Vicksburg were set aside for preservation at national expense. Together, those first five constitute the nucleus of our national Civil War park network and, in a larger sense, they set the precedent for all national historic parks of whatever type period. So Antietam, like the other four battlefields singled out during the 1890s, is special, one of the premier historic properties in the entire National Park System.

When we think "Antietam" or "Sharpsburg", we think "quintessential killing ground"—and so it was. But over time, as men and women lived, worked, and remembered there, layers of human motives and actions also shaped the space. So it has plenty to reveal about Americans' understanding of the Civil War and their resulting urge to preserve its sites as memorials, patriotic symbols, and documentary evidence. The battlefield is also full of stories about a small community in western Maryland whose people, through no choice of their own, became witnesses to history and neighbors of the place where it happened.

This presentation focuses on what the modern battlefield reveals about its meaning and its preservation to those who, over the century between the advent of federal presence there and the 1990's, forged that landscape.

Mary Munsell Abroe holds a BA in history from St. Mary's College, Notre Dame, Indiana and a PhD from Loyola University Chicago. Her dissertation "'Profound Scenes': Federal Preservation of Civil War Battlefields, 1861-1990," is a social and cultural history of Civil War battlefield preservation under federal auspices in Civil War history. She has taught on the high school, college, and university levels. Since 2005, she has been teaching history at the College of Lake County in Grayslake, Illinois.

Dr. Abroe has commented on, and given presentations related to her interest in the Civil War era and preservation at professional gatherings and cultural/historical institutions, including the Kenosha Civil War Museum, Wilmette Public Library, Wilson's Creek National Battlefield, and meetings of the Illinois State Historical Society, Ohio Valley History Conference, National Conference on Public History, and Organizations of American Historians. Her articles and reviews have appeared in *Civil War History*; *Mid-America: An Historical Review*; the *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*; the *Journal of Southern History*; and *Cultural Management* (later *CRM: The Journal of Heritage Stewardship*), a publication of the National Park Service. In 2011-12 she was project scholar for "Let's Talk About It: Making Sense of the American Civil War", co-sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities and Library Association.

Dr. Abroe is past trustee of the American Battlefield Trust and a director of Save Historic Antietam Foundation and National Museum of Civil War Medicine. She is also a past president of the Civil War Round Table of Chicago.

## **FEBRUARY MEETING UPDATE**

At the February meeting David Keller presented "Five Factors Impacting Confederate and Union Prison Camps During the Civil War". David is the Managing Director of the Camp Douglas Restoration Project. The information presented was the result of a study David conducted which was funded by the National Park Service/Andersonville POW Research Program.

David is the author of *The Story of Camp Douglas, Chicago's Forgotten Civil War Prison*. In his research for his book, David identified five factors that significantly affected conditions at Camp Douglas. These five factors 1) Lack of strategic plan for prison development and management before and in the early stages of the Civil War; 2) Inadequate plans for longterm incarceration of prisoners of war; 3) Poor selection, high turnover, and lack of training of camp command; 4) Lack of training of camp guards; and 5) Failure to provide individual soldiers information on how to behave as POW's.

During the early period of the Civil War the extensive use of parole and prisoner exchange resulted in both sides ignoring the possibility of holding prisoners for an extended time. Neither the Union nor the Confederates had a plan for prisoners. The lack of planning severely affected the conditions of the prison camps. The Union was able to use existing military facilities. The Confederates used jails and abandoned warehouses. A lack of a code of conduct for the prisoners also had a significant impact. Morgan's Raiders were an example of a group that fared better due to their adherence to the chain of command. The results from David's study will be in an upcoming publication.

**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.**

## **PRESERVATION REPORT BY BRIAN CONROY**

Back in January, our Preservation report talked about the fight to preserve 18 critical acres on Seminary Ridge at the battle of Gettysburg. We are now happy to announce that, as of the end of February, after a long, hard fought campaign, the Civil War Trust declared that 18 critical acres of hallowed ground at Seminary Ridge will now be forever protected.

The newly preserved 18 acres have been part of the United Lutheran Seminary since it moved to its current site in 1832. The land is adjacent to the original Mary Thompson House, where General Robert E. Lee set up headquarters after the first day of the Battle of Gettysburg (and which the Trust preserved and restored in 2015). Hundreds of soldiers, both Union and Confederate, fell on this very ground that fateful July 1 in 1863.

The ferocious and deadly battle for Seminary Ridge was detailed in historian Harry Pfanz's book, *Gettysburg – The First Day*. The main combatants over this hallowed land were the Union Iron Brigade along with one New York and six Pennsylvania regiments, attempting to hold back North and South Carolinians in Alfred Scales and Abner Perrin's brigades. There were also four Union batteries crowning the Ridge, including six fearsome Napoleon guns posted directly on a portion of these 18 acres, which fired over the heads of the Union infantrymen with devastating effect on the advancing Confederates.

Pfanz writes that members of the unfortunate 34th North Carolina – the regiment directly in front of these guns – later reported that “of the 1,400 Tarheels who had begun the charge, only 500 were able to go on.”

A captain of the Iron Brigade recalled later that infantrymen fired so fast their rifles became hot, and the smoke was so thick that it was as dark as night. Many wounded fell rapidly on both sides.

In his book, *The Iron Brigade*, Alan Nolan writes that after regrouping, “Confederates from Heth's, Pender's, and Rodes's divisions, on both sides of the pike, again striking obliquely against both flanks as well as the front of the Iron Brigade's position” advanced on three sides of the Union defensive line, which eventually gave way under so much pressure.

The Iron Brigade's 7th Wisconsin was ordered to be the rear guard for the Union retreat down the pike and through the town. “When the 7th left the ridge,” Pfanz writes, “a body of South Carolinians fired into its right. Another line from Rodes's division shot into its left. While running this gauntlet, the 7th suffered its greatest losses of the day.” During the entire day of fighting, the Iron Brigade lost more than 60 percent of its men and was never the same.

The preservation of Seminary Ridge illustrates just how important preservation is to our history and heritage, and those that love and have a great passion for passing them on to future generations still have a lot of work to do.

## **UPCOMING CIVIL WAR EVENTS**

MARCH 19, 2019

### **LINCOLN-DAVIS CWRT**

"Under the Crescent Moon with the 11<sup>th</sup> Corps"

Speaker: Jim Pula

Country House Restaurant, Alsip, IL

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

MARCH 28, 2019

### **SOUTH SUBURBAN CWRT**

"Wisconsin During the Civil War"

Speaker: Ron Larson

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

APRIL 5, 2019

### **NORTHERN ILLINOIS CWRT**

"General Longstreet"

Speaker: Dan Patterson

Arlington Hts. Memorial Library

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

APRIL 9, 2019

### **McHENRY COUNTY CWRT**

"Civil War Medicine"

Speaker: Trevor Steinbach

Woodstock Library

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

APRIL 12, 2019

### **CHICAGO CWRT**

"Maps of Fredericksburg"

Speaker: Brad Gottfried

Holiday Inn O'Hare

5615 N. Cumberland, Chicago

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

APRIL 16, 2019

### **LINCOLN/DAVIS CWRT**

"Generals of Shiloh"

Speaker: Jim Pula

Country House Restaurant, Alsip, IL

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

## **ALL FOR THE UNION**

The SCCWRT website is back.

It is still a work in progress.

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

April 27, 2019 DuPage Co. Fairgrounds  
Chicagoland Civil War & Militaria Expo

## **BACK IN HISTORY**

**50 Years Ago:** Joseph Eisendrath presented: "Camp Douglas"

**25 Years Ago:** Dan McCarthy presented: "The 83<sup>rd</sup> Illinois Volunteer Regiment"

**10 Years Ago:** Ron Carlson presented: "The Significance of the Trans-Mississippi Civil War in American History"

## **FUTURE SCCWRT MEETINGS**

April 19, 2019

"Sherman's Working Battery: History of the 1<sup>st</sup> Illinois Light Artillery—Battery H"

Speaker: John Matuszek

May 17, 2019

"Wisconsin: The Hotbed of Secession?"

Speaker: Jerry Allen

## **THE SALT CREEK CWRT**

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

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