

The Outpost

The Newsletter of the Salt Creek Civil War Roundtable
Vol. LII No. 4 December 2013



465th Regular Meeting

DATE:	Friday, December 20, 2013
PLACE:	Oak Trace, Downers Grove IL 60516
TIME:	8:00 p.m.
TOPIC:	“Richard Yates: An Appraisal of his Value as the Civil War Governor of Illinois”
SPEAKER:	Roger Bohn

Richard Yates was the Governor of Illinois during Civil War. He was an outspoken opponent of slavery. When the war broke out Yates sent more troops to aid the Union than any other state. The day after the attack on Fort Sumter he took military possession of Cairo stopping all shipments of goods through Cairo to the South. He also sent Illinois troops to St. Louis to support the federal garrison at the arsenal. Yates gave U. S. Grant his first recognition as a soldier in the Civil War by appointing him as mustering officer for the state and afterward, Colonel of the 21st Illinois Regiment. He was also instrumental in setting up a training camp in Chicago which later became the prisoner of war encampment known as Camp Douglas. Yates also gave Lincoln needed supported for his Emancipation Proclamation.

In January of 1865, Yates was elected to the U.S. Senate. He served only one term. With all his war-time accomplishments, one would think Yates would have had a long successful political career. The reason for his lack of continued political success was his reputation for being a drunkard. Roger will attempt to determine if the “classification” is justified as he explores the value of Governor Yates in the Civil War.

Roger Bohn is a graduate of Elmhurst College. He is a businessman retired from Montgomery Ward and Commonwealth Edison. He is past-president of the Salt Creek CWRT and the CWRT of Chicago. He is a long-time student of the Civil War, with a special interest in naval aspects. He is involved with the 1st Michigan Engineers, assisted in the creation of the Bureau County Historical Society’s Civil War exhibit, and has done book research for Admiral Frank Allston and for Robert Girardi. He co-edited a book on the 2nd Ohio Volunteer Cavalry with Girardi, as well. He also does living history presentations for various groups and for a wide range of scholastic levels.

The SCCWRT takes great pride in welcoming our long-time member, former officer, jack-of-all-needs, and friend to its podium.

NOVEMBER REPORT BY ARTHUR FOLEY

The November meeting, held in partnership with the Glen Ellyn Historical Society, brought over seventy people, numerous book sales, some new members and a delightful presentation from our esteemed friend Robert Girardi.

Rob shared with the audience the efforts of the Union Engineers at the Battle of Fredericksburg. A campaign planned by Ambrose Burnside, against the misgivings of President Lincoln, depended on speed to beat the rebels. Initially all went according to plan but was soon disrupted by the tragic lack of communication involving the logistics concerning the pontoon trains. Everything that could go wrong did so, amounting to the pontoons only becoming available *after* R. E. Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia established fortifications above and in the town of Fredericksburg.

The Engineers started the construction of the crossings above, directly across and below the town, under the cover of night and a thick fog. While the bridges above and below the municipality were constructed quickly, the experience was not shared with the bridges directly across from Fredericksburg. Citing several first person sources, notably that of Captain Wesley Brainard of the engineers, the Union troops began to take heavy casualties from the troops under William Barksdale's command of Mississippians and Floridians. These men were stationed within the buildings and environs of the town. This defense halted construction and ultimately spurred a crossing by the 7th Michigan, 19th and 20th Massachusetts, and 89th New York Regiments amongst other Union infantry forces. The crossing was preceded by a bombardment by Union artillery which heavily damaged the still inhabited town. These troops made the crossing and moved into the town forcing the Confederates back and initiating severe and vicious urban combat.

While this fighting was in process, the Engineers completed their work. Thereafter the Union army slowly moved up and eventually forced the rebel troops out of the town and back to their main line. Upon taking Fredericksburg, property was looted and destroyed by the enraged Union soldiers.

After the tragedy of the Fredericksburg debacle, the Engineers were then called upon to dismantle the crossings, in the process almost stranding the rear guard under command of Gen. G. K. Warren. Command shake ups occurred after the campaign, however the Engineers continued to faithfully carry out their roles for the rest of the war. Rob provided a PowerPoint display throughout his talk that not only contained photos and artwork depicting the Fredericksburg area but also the pontoons and the particulars of their construction.

Of particular note Rob interrupted his presentation to announce an honor given to our fellow member and esteemed friend William Hupp, for his efforts in the preservation of the Fleetwood Hill land at Brandy Station, Virginia.

All in all it was a delightful evening so let us join in a rousing round of Huzzahs not only for Rob Girardi, but for Bill Hupp, Vice President Rick Zarr - for spearheading the arrangements with the Glen Ellyn Historical Society; and finally to that worthy organization for inviting us to share our meeting at their facility. HUZAZH! HUZAZH! HUZAZH!

PRESERVATION REPORT BY LEN OVERCASH SR.

(Richmond, Va.) - Governor Bob McDonnell announced today that Wal-Mart has donated to the Commonwealth of Virginia more than 50 acres of land in Orange County associated with the Civil War battle of Chancellorsville and most notably the battle of the Wilderness.

Henry Jordan, Senior Vice President, Eastern Seaboard Wal-Mart said, "Wal-Mart is extremely pleased that we have both found a home for our new store in Orange County while donating the property at the originally proposed site to the Commonwealth. In this way, we have been able to give back to the community and serve the needs of our customers."

Virginia's Department of Historic Resources, will receive and steward the donated land, they have worked quietly with Wal-Mart to complete the donation documents and its acceptance. Those documents are now final and will be record by Wal-Mart. The department holds or co-holds numerous easements on thousands of acres of privately-owned battlefield lands throughout the commonwealth, easements that protect the lands from future development.

"With this donation, Wal-Mart successfully fulfils the commitment made in 2011 to choose an alternate site and work to set aside the original location," said Jim Lighthizer, president of the Civil War Trust. "The Commonwealth and Virginia's Department of Historic Resources are ideally suited to be stewards of this resource, safeguarding its integrity for future generations of Americans to visit and study. We deeply appreciate Wal-Mart's gift and the Commonwealth's willingness to facilitate this important milestone in the protection of battlefield lands."

The Civil War Trust and its members have saved **36,641 acres** in 20 states!

Alabama 119 Acres	Florida 110 Acres	Georgia 1,869 Acres	Kansas 326 Acres
Kentucky 2,193 Acres	Louisiana 464 Acres	Maryland 897 Acres	Minnesota 240 Acres
Mississippi 13,355 Acres	Mississippi 3,355 Acres	New Mexico 2 Acres	North Carolina 2,172 Acres
Oklahoma 167 Acres	Pennsylvania 929 Acres	South Carolina 117 Acres	
Tennessee 3,193 Acres	Texas 3 Acres	Virginia 18,605 Acres	West Virginia 1,184 Acres

(Washington, D.C.) – For the fifth consecutive year, the Civil War Trust, the nation's largest nonprofit battlefield preservation organization, has earned a coveted 4-star ranking from Charity Navigator, America's leading charity evaluator.

The Trust continues earning accolades for its sound fiscal management and commitment to top-notch donor relations. Only four percent of charities assessed by Charity Navigator have earned this consistent level of recognition. After evaluating recent financial and other documents, the watchdog group gave the Trust an overall rating of 65.87 on a 70-point scale.

This is only the most recent accolade acknowledging the accountability and integrity of the Trust. In October, Great Nonprofits, the leading provider of user reviews about nonprofit organizations, named the Trust a Top-Rated 2013 Nonprofit.

As 2013 comes to a close, the Civil War Trust has the unique opportunity to save 1,573 acres at eight battlefields in three different states: Missouri, North Carolina, and Virginia. These are battles in the east and west, in every year of the war, fought by men under the command of Lee, Sherman, Early, Longstreet, Hancock the list goes on. It's very rare we have a chance to save so much important land in so many different places. Source: Civil War Trust

ALL FOR THE UNION

Congratulations to Rob Girardi on the release of his new book:
"The Civil War Generals: Comrades, Peers and Rivals in Their Own Words"

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:
Brian Conroy and Jon Fritz

Thanks to those who attended November meeting at the Glen Ellyn History Center. Besides the excellent program, the book sale took in over \$300 which will be used for Battlefield Preservation.

2014 Membership Renewals are due in January.

UPCOMING CIVIL WAR EVENTS

DECEMBER 17, 2103
LINCOLN-DAVIS CWRT
"The Roads That Lead To Lincoln"
Speaker: Dave Clark
Country House Restaurant Alsip, IL
Lincolndavisroundtable@yahoo.com

DECEMBER 19, 2013
SOUTH SUBURBAN CWRT
Holiday Party at Aurillios
sscwrtd@gmail.com

JANUARY 3, 2014
NORTHERN ILLINOIS CWRT
"Lincoln the Lawyer"
Speaker: Wayne Rhine
Arlington Hts. Memorial Library
500 N. Dunton
northernilcwrtd.org

JANUARY 10, 2014
CHICAGO CWRT
"The Murder of 'Bull' Nelson"
Speaker: Robert Girardi
Holiday Inn Mart Plaza Chicago
350 North Orleans Street
chicagocwrtdinner@earthlinl.net

FUTURE SCCWRT MEETINGS

January 17, 2014
"Two Years Before the Paddlewheel:
Charles F. Gunther, Mississippi River Confederate"
Speakers: Bruce Allardice & Wayne Wolf

February 21, 2014
"General George Thomas"
Speaker: Jerry Kowalski

March 21, 2014
"The Holy Cross Sisters During the Civil War: From Teaching to Nursing"
Speaker: Cindy Intravartolo

THE SALT CREEK CWRT
www.saltcreekcwrtd.org
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