

# The Outpost

The Newsletter of the Salt Creek Civil War Roundtable  
Vol. XL IX No. 9 May 2010



## 431<sup>st</sup> Regular Meeting

DATE: 21<sup>st</sup> May 2010

PLACE: Fairview Village, Downers Grove, IL. 60532

TIME: 8:00 p.m.

SPEAKER: Tony Cichank, Len Overcash, Brian Ruxton and Don Sender

MODERATOR: KURT CARLSON

TOPIC: "WHAT WAS THE TURNING POINT OF THE CIVIL WAR?"

The question "What Was the Turning Point of the Civil War" has been discussed and argued by many civil war scholars. The wide variety of opinions range from Fort Sumter to Appomattox. Bringing back a long overdue Round Table tradition of panel discussion/debate, this month's meeting will feature five prominent members discussing what they consider is the Turning Point of the Civil War.

Each speaker will present his choice with a brief explanation. Former president Kurt Carlson will serve as moderator. After the presentations, the question will be opened to the floor for discussion.

Former Salt Creek president Tony Cichank will discuss his choice: The Battle of the Wilderness, May 5-6, 1864.

Longtime member and current board and newsletter staff member Len Overcash will discuss his choice: The Campaigns for Forts Henry and Donaldson, February 1862.

Former Salt Creek president Brian Ruxton will discuss his choice: The Atlanta Campaign, July 1864.

Former Salt Creek president Don Sender will present his choice: The Fall of Vicksburg, July 1863.

Come prepared to listen to the presentations and to express your own views. Historically, the panel discussions are our most provocative and entertaining events in the true spirit of Civil War Round Table movement.

## **APRIL MEETING BY RICK BENSON**

On Friday April 16, 2010 Brian Seiter gave an in-depth presentation on Ole' Rosy. It covered his pre Civil War military career, Civil War, & post-Civil War career. Wm. Starke Rosecrans was born on Sept. 6, 1819 North of Columbus, Ohio. His family had military connections back to the Revolutionary War. His father had a military presence about him. Rosecrans had a personality trait, whereby he told you truthfully, exactly how he felt about anything. This proved to be a blessing and a curse during his career. Rosecrans father had a tavern, & could not afford to send him to college. Rosecrans showed personal initiative by going 50 miles to interview with a Senator for a West Point appointment. Senator Harper was so impressed with Rosecrans that he gave him the appointment versus giving it to his own son. He graduated 5<sup>th</sup> in his class of 1842. He got one promotion - to 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. - in the 11 years he served in the Army prior to the Civil War. After graduation, he went to West Point as an Engineering Instructor. He married in 1843. In 1846-48, The Mexican War broke out. However, as he was an instructor @ West Point, he was withheld from this war. With the low Army pay, he resigned in 1853, and went into the refinery business. In 1861 the Civil War breaks out. Rosecrans goes to Columbus to apply to get back into the military. He serves initially there with George McClellan. Rosecrans commands 4 regiments.

Rosecrans is sent to Mississippi. He will serve under Halleck. Rosecrans is in charge of a wing of the Army just East of Iuka, MS, facing Confederate General Sterling Price. Rosecrans defeats Price. Rosecrans now attacks Corinth, MS, which is defended by his old West Point classmate, Gen. Earl VanDorn. Rosecrans defeats VanDorn, and starts to pursue him & his army toward Vicksburg, in October, 1862. Grant tells Rosecrans to stop the pursuit. This sours Grant's feelings toward Rosecrans.

Rosecrans is now transferred to Nashville to be in charge of the newly reorganized Army of The Cumberland. Lincoln is now pressuring the Union armies for aggressive attacks. On December 26, 1862 Rosecrans marches his army down to Murfreesboro, TN – just South of Nashville, TN. - for what becomes the Battle of Stone's River.

All this time, Grant has been busily invading Mississippi, burning Jackson, and getting ready to besiege Vicksburg. Lincoln, Stanton, & Halleck have been attempting to get both Grant's Army of Tennessee & Rosecrans Army of The Cumberland aggressively moving. On June 23, 1863 Rosecrans moves toward Chattanooga in the Tullahoma Campaign. It is a masterful campaign, as he literally flanks Bragg out of Middle Tennessee all the way back to Chattanooga, and then finally out of Chattanooga too. In September of 1863, Jefferson Davis & Robert E. Lee detach Longstreet to Bragg in Northern Georgia for the Battle of Chickamauga. This tips the scales in Bragg's Confederate Army in favor against Rosecrans Army. This could be the major factor in Rosecrans totally losing favor within the Union hierarchy. Stanton sends a gentleman by the name of Charles Dana to Rosecrans allegedly as an "observer", whose mission is allegedly "to assist" Rosecrans with "whatever the Government could do". Rosecrans is livid, expresses these feelings. This is just prior to Chickamauga. On September 20, 1863, one of Rosecrans Division Commanders by the name of Thomas Wood, under Thomas Crittenden, is in line of battle. A Union Staff Officer by the name of Kellogg rides up and thought that one of the Union Commands was out of line. Rosecrans writes a letter (orders) to Wood, "to close up on Reynolds". Wood knew that he was not out of line. However, roughly 90 minutes earlier Rosecrans had given Wood a severe verbal dressing down in front of all Wood's officer staff. Hence Wood had no love lost for Rosecrans, and allegedly said something to the effect that when he got the order to close up on Reynolds, "I have a written order from that Papal SOB that will hang him". Longstreet attacks through this void in Rosecrans line, and Braxton Bragg wins a major Confederate victory at Chickamauga. Meanwhile Dana is continuing to telegraph Stanton,

Halleck and Lincoln are receiving that "Chickamauga is as big a disaster as Bull Run". Later that same day Dana sends another telegram that "things are not as bad as initially stated". However, the initial report is in the published newspapers, and this is what is remembered. Dana then casts dispersions against Rosecrans leadership of The Army of The Cumberland, and relates that perhaps only Thomas of Grant "could keep this Army safely in its place". Stanton then has Dana talk with Thomas about becoming the General of the Army of The Cumberland. Thomas refuses. Dana sends another telegram to Stanton that "his (Rosecrans) imbecility appears to be contagious". "There is practically no discipline for superior officers". The next day – October 19, 1863 - Rosecrans receives a telegram advising him that he is being relieved of command. In spite of Rosecrans victories @ Corinth, Iuka, Stones River, the Tullahoma Campaign, & Chattanooga, he is out. Rosecrans ends up serving in Missouri in 1864, and does a good job in chasing Sterling Price out of Missouri.

Brian Seiter felt that Rosecrans was a very well qualified Commander, but may have been his own worst enemy by directly responding to individuals that were his superiors with his unabashed feelings.

### **PRESERVATION REPORT BY LEN OVERCASH, SR.**

The Civil War Preservation Trust CWPT has put together a series of transactions that will turn every \$1 donated into \$7.35 and save 97.44 acres... at THREE battlefields:

1. REAM'S STATION, VIRGINIA: The CWPT can multiply support here \$6-to-\$1 by utilizing federal and state grants, putting just \$27,500 into a \$165,000 transaction to save 70 more acres, adding dramatically to the 96 acres we already preserved. The historic land at Ream's Station gets a step closer to complete preservation of this August 25, 1864 battlefield and preserves a key Confederate artillery site that joins with a parcel previously saved by CWPT. (For information on Ream's Station, please go to [www.civilwar.org/reamsstation](http://www.civilwar.org/reamsstation)).

2. DAVIS BRIDGE, TN: Working with the State of Tennessee and, again, utilizing a grant from the federal Civil War Battlefield Protection Program, CWPT agreed to put the "last money in" – just \$5,000 – into the total \$107,700 transaction, saving an additional 20.44 key acres at this site where 643 acres were saved in 2009. This means we can multiply every \$1 of your support and turn it into \$21.54! This October 5, 1862 struggle is the final significant action of the operations around Corinth, Mississippi ... in one of the most neglected theaters of the entire war. Once we get this parcel, there isn't going to be too much more land we will need to acquire to declare this battlefield saved. (For information visit [www.civilwar.org/davisbridge](http://www.civilwar.org/davisbridge)).

3. GLENDALE, VIRGINIA: This tract, even at just 7 acres, will make a huge difference in the on-going effort to complete this battlefield, where 576 acres have already been preserved. The parcel is on the highly threatened northern part of the battlefield, and we are putting up \$17,430 to secure – yet again -- \$87,147 in federal and state matching grants, meaning that for this effort, your \$1 is multiplied in \$5.43! (For information visit [www.civilwar.org/glendale](http://www.civilwar.org/glendale)) 97.44 total acres worth a combined \$367,312 – and you and I can save them all for \$49,930. That is a combined multiplier of \$7.35 for every \$1 you give today!

CWPT needs to have the funds raised for all of these transactions as soon as possible, because there are several other major projects in our "pipeline." Plus – and this is very important – we need to close these deals ASAP to show Congressional appropriators that we can raise enough funds to keep matching these generous grants. (*The source for the above article is: The Civil War Preservation Trust*)

## UPCOMING CIVIL WAR EVENTS

South Suburban CWRT  
Thursday May 27, 2010  
Group Participation  
"Civil War Family Feud"  
National City Bank of Frankfort  
Time: 7pm  
[pw279@sbcglobal.net](mailto:pw279@sbcglobal.net)

Northern Illinois Civil War Roundtable  
Friday June 4, 2010  
Annual Banquet  
Speaker: Jim Ogden  
Chickamauga Battlefield Military Park  
[www.nicwrt.freehostia.com](http://www.nicwrt.freehostia.com)

McHENRY COUNTY CWRT  
Tuesday June 8, 2010  
Speaker: Ed Urban  
"McHenry County in the Civil War"  
Time: 7:30  
McHenry Co. Historical Museum  
Union, IL  
[www.mchenrycivilwar.com](http://www.mchenrycivilwar.com)

Chicago Civil War Round Table  
Friday June 11, 2010  
Speaker: John V. Quarstein  
"The Battle of the Ironclads"  
Holiday Inn Mart Plaza  
Chicago, IL  
5:30 Dinner  
7:30 Presentation  
1-630-460-1865  
[www.thecwrt.org](http://www.thecwrt.org)

### ALL FOR THE UNION

Thanks to Roger Bohn, Rick Zarr, Rick Benson, Barney Bucholtz, Cindy Heckler, Paula Walker, Jerry Allen, Bruce Allardice and Jan Rasmussen for their participation at the Midwest Civil War Collector's Show.

On May 18th Rob Girardi will speak on "General Impressions of the Civil War" at the Lincoln Douglas CWRT at the Country House in Alsip.

The SCCWRT Annual Banquet is Friday June 18, 2010. The speaker is Dan Weinburg, owner of the Abraham Lincoln Book Shop. He will be presenting: Dealing in History: Adventures Through Historical Artifacts. The flyers are out. Please get your information into Paula Walker by May 31st, 2010.

### FUTURE MEETINGS

#### 2010 (3rd Friday of the month)

June-Banquet (Dan Weinburg: "Dealing in History: Adventures Through Historical Artifacts")  
Sept-Paula Walker ("A Whitman's Sampler: A Sampling of Poetry From the War Years")  
Oct-Roger Bohn/Zebulon B. Vance: South Carolina Blockade Runner  
Nov-Glen Ellyn History Center Auction  
Dec-Memorabilia/Show and Tell Night

### THE SALT CREEK CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

[www.saltcreekcwrt.org](http://www.saltcreekcwrt.org)  
President: Jan Rasmussen  
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