

The Outpost

The Newsletter of the Salt Creek Civil War Roundtable
Vol. XLVI No. 10 June 2009



422nd Regular Meeting

DATE: 19th June 2009

PLACE: Lisle-Hilton, 3003 Corporate West Drive, Lisle, Il. 60532

TIME: 6:30 PM-Cocktails, 7:30-Dinner, 8:30-Presentation

SPEAKER: Donna Daniels

TOPIC: "MTL: The Last Years of Mary Todd Lincoln"

This program explores the tragic 17 years of Mary Lincoln's widowhood, including her trial for insanity in 1875. It is written and performed by Donna Daniels of Wheaton, Il. It was commissioned by the Batavia, Il. Heritage Committee and received its "world premiere" in 1990. While not a particularly happy story, the program is very informative about many of the lesser-known details in the life of this much-maligned First Lady. For instance, many people are under the impression that she died in a mental institution, which is untrue! Mary Todd Lincoln has gotten a very bad reputation over the years, but with this program, the audience will finally get to hear her side of the story!

Donna Daniels, and husband Max, have been portraying President and Mrs. Lincoln since 1988, and are widely recognized throughout the Midwest as being among the best of the Lincoln presenters. They are past Vice-Presidents of the National Association of Lincoln Presenters, and were the first recipients of its award for "Best Abraham and Mary Lincoln team" in 1994. They have been featured on the C-Span Cable Network in the Lincoln-Douglas Debate Series, the "Someone You Should Know" program on ABC-7, in Chicago, and the "Investigating History" series on The History Channel. They research and write their own original scripts and make over 200 appearances each year at re-enactments, schools, libraries, and other organizations (especially this year!-Ed.). They take pride in "bringing history to life" for audiences of all ages. The SCCWRT is honored and privileged to have Donna Daniels presenting at our annual banquet meeting.



MAY MEETING

BY

RICK BENSON

On May 1st, Len Overcash gave a detailed presentation on the movements and experiences of the 45th Mississippi/ 3rd Battalion. His wife, Mary Fran, then presented a very interesting personal story about her great-grandfather. Len began with the secession of Mississippi on January 9, 1861. When Ship Island was captured by the Union forces in the fall of that same year, Gov. Pettis called for 10,000 volunteers and asked them to bring their own guns.

Aaron B. Hardcastle was a 1st Lieutenant, originally from Mississippi, who was Mustering Officer for Tennessee Gov. Isham Harris. In Dec. 1861 he was transferred to Vicksburg to recruit. He succeeded in recruiting the 3rd battalion, Mississippi Infantry. The unit was promptly split up with Cos. A, B, and C sent to Bowling Green, Ky., and D, E, and F to New Orleans. After the fall of Forts Henry and Donelson, the unit was re-united at Corinth, MS. The 3rd was present at Shiloh, fought on both days and suffered their first casualties, including Lt. Hardcastle, who was wounded but did not report it.

On April 16, Mississippi ordered all white males between the ages of 18 & 35 into service for three years or

the war. At this time, 3 companies were added giving the unit regimental status. At this time also, due to his fractured leg, Hardcastle relinquished command to Richard Charlton for 1 year.

The next action seen by the unit was in Bragg's Kentucky Campaign. In this capacity they participated in the Battle of Perryville, Ky. After the Confederate retreat, Bragg renamed the army the Army of Tennessee and the 3rd was now re-designated the 45th Mississippi still under the command of Charlton.

In December of 1862, part of the command was sent to Vicksburg under the direct command of Patrick Cleburne, while the balance fought at the Battle of Stones River. They were then consolidated with the 32nd MS at Tullahoma. They participated in that campaign, including the Battle of Chickamauga, and the various battles around Chattanooga. While at Chattanooga, they did picket duty on Missionary Ridge and Hardcastle was returned to command. The 45th was one of the units that covered the retreat from the ridge. They were now eligible for release from duty. They were offered a 25 day furlough if they re-

enlisted. They did so almost to a man.

In the Atlanta Campaign, the 45th fought as rearguard at Adairsville and Cassville and in the line at Pickett's Mill and Kennesaw Mountain. In the midst of this they were re-designated the 3rd MS again. After they reached Atlanta, they were consolidated with the 5th MS and fought at Jonesboro. They were later part of Cleburne's Division at Franklin, where they suffered heavy casualties. They were also involved in the debacle at Nashville.

On December 31st, the 3/5 was again designated the 45th MS and sent to Joe Johnston in North Carolina. They arrived just in time to be surrendered at Bennett Place on April 26.

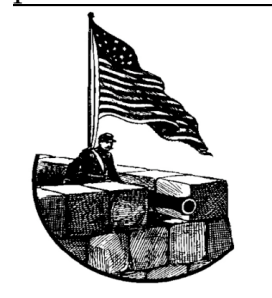
After Len concluded, Mary Fran related the story of her great-grandfather, the Rev. Charles Henry Oetkin, Chaplain of the 45th MS. After the Battle of Chickamauga, Rev. Oetkin noticed a note attached to a fence post which stated, "I am not dead". Upon investigation, he discovered Capt. John Henry Sloan, who had been left for dead after a cannonball had carried off his lower jaw and the lower part of his face. Sloan was an officer of the 45th and Oetkin took him to the field hospital where he lay for two days without being treated as the doctors thought he couldn't be saved. Rev. Oetkin became furious at this as he was a man of, "great determination and had an explosive temper". He went to Ringgold, GA to hire a private surgeon to do the work. The Captain's life was saved.

Capt. Sloan had more than courage; he had a formidable faith in life and a strong determination to live. After the war, he had an artificial chin made and lived on a liquid diet. The only impediment was that you had to listen closely when he spoke. He held the office of Chancellery Clerk for 18 years and died at the age of 68 in 1897. His life is a perfect example of the adage, "A man is not defeated until he gives up!"

Capt. Sloan wrote Rev. Oetkin a letter each year on the Chickamauga anniversary thanking him. On the dedication of the National Park there, Capt. Sloan attended with two friends. Based on his memory and landmarks, Capt. Sloan went to the spot where he believed he was wounded and found by Rev. Oetkin. He then checked the ground and found three front teeth which he believed to be his! (Another reason for battlefield preservation!-Ed.)

Mary Fran then read a poem, as she is the keeper of her family legacy, to show subsequent generations that their ancestors were honorable people. A nice personal touch to a truly remarkable story!

The Salt Creek Civil War Roundtable extends its heartiest thanks to Len and Mary Fran Overcash for this most involving presentation!





ALL FOR THE UNION

It's not too late! You can make reservations for the banquet until June 17th! Just call Paula Walker at 708-429-5781 or Jan Rasmussen at 630-830-7614 with your choice of entrée and the number in your party. There will be a silent auction of some really neat stuff to support battlefield preservation! See you there!

The Civil War Collector's Show was its usual success! Many Thanks to Roger Bohn, Rick Benson, Cindy Intravartolo, Rick Zarr, Carolyn Reichrath, Cindy Heckler, Jean Cairns, and Jan Rasmussen for all their efforts!

A big SCCWRT welcome to new members: Neil and Marilyn Rienquist of Glen Ellyn, and James Stebbings of Naperville. We hope to see much of you, pards!

A memorial service for our dear comrade James Soens will be held at Arlington Cemetery in Elmhurst on Sunday, July 19, noon to 2:15 PM. There will be rifle and cannon salutes, memorial wreaths, and benedictions. All are welcome to attend.

The board has approved a donation of \$500 to Stones River National Battlefield to help repair recent tornado damage.

EDITOR'S NOTES

The next board meeting will be at the Fairview Village private dining room on 09/01/09 at 7:30 PM. Call Jan at 630-830-7614 with any questions.

As I think you all know, this is my last newsletter. To: Cindy Intravartolo, Rick Benson, Jan Rasmussen, Len Overcash, Rick Zarr, Bill Hupp, Paula Walker, and all of you who were always ready with a kind word, THANK YOU! I now leave it in the hands of the talented and capable Jennifer Warner who, I am sure, will hit the heights! Rob; I don't know how you did it! Kudos!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

September 4-Art Foley-The Five Civilized Tribes in the Civil War

THE SALT CREEK CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

www.saltcreekcwr.org

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