

# The utpost

The Newsletter of the Salt Creek Civil War Roundtable  
Vol. XLVIII No.3 6 November 2009  
425<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting

DATE:	Friday, November 6, 2009
PLACE:	Glen Ellyn History Center, 800 N. Main St. Glen Ellyn, IL.
VIEWING:	7:00 p.m.
BIDDING:	7:30 p.m.
SPEAKERS:	various
TOPIC:	Annual Auction for Battlefield Preservation

Don't Miss It, our Annual Book Auction and other collectible items. We will have several good items to bid on. Please note the auction viewing is at 7:00 p.m. half hour earlier than last year and the auction itself will begin at 7:30 p.m. instead of 8:00 p.m. Please get there early so you can look at everything before the bidding begins. Battlefield Preservation is very important to our American History and the children. Whatever money we raise at this auction will benefit the battlefields. So the battlefields are preserved for future citizens of this great nation. The benefits will lie, a little, in material gain but more in the spiritual benefit to be gained from realizing that your contribution will be looked upon with gratitude by those who come after.

## OCTOBER MEETING BY RICK BENSON

On October 2, 2009, Rick Benson presented, "Captain Wirtz." Henry Wirz was born on the 25<sup>th</sup> of November 1823. Henry was educated in elementary and secondary schools in Zurich. He continued training in Zurich and Torino, Italy. He wanted to be a doctor; his family wanted him to be a minister. His family could not afford to send him to medical school. They all compromised and he went on "Commercial" education. He married Emilie Oschwalda in 1845. They had two children Paul and Louisa. He was employed in the textile industry in Zurich. In April 1849 he immigrated to New York City. Emilie divorced Henry in 1853, reason was abandonment. In early 1854 he married Elizabeth Wolf. Elizabeth was a widow with two daughters. They had Cora in 1854.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of June 1861 he enlisted in the Louisiana 4<sup>th</sup> (Madison) Infantry as a Private. He arrived in Richmond after 1<sup>st</sup> Manassas on the 21<sup>st</sup> of July 1861. Their first assignment was to guard POW's from Manassas. Wirz was conspicuous and noticed by Brig. Gen John Henry who was in charge of all prisoners in Richmond. Wirz was promoted to Sergeant in August of 1861. Brig Gen. John Henry Winder requested that Wirz be transferred to Winder's Staff. He was transferred; his first assignment was to Tuscaloosa Alabama. with Capt. Elias Griswold with prisoners. Prisoners were to be kept in abandoned paper mill. Griswold transferred back and left Wirz in charge in spite of being a non-commissioned officer. Camp closed and Wirz takes prisoners to Montgomery, Alabama and return to Richmond. Wirz was injured at the Battle of Seven Pines on the 31<sup>st</sup> of May 1862. He injured his left shoulder and right arm bone was shattered. Wirz was promoted to Captain on the 12<sup>th</sup> of June 1862. Wirz was placed in

charge of all Richmond POW's in August 1862.

Wirz was granted a three month medical furlough in December 1862 to get medical attention for his wounds. In March 1863 he reported to Jackson Mississippi to requested additional four month medical leave to go to Europe to have his wounds treated.

During his time at Camp Sumter and Andersonville Wirz was officially in charge of the inner stockade. He was responsible for medical care, food, shelter or clothing. Capt Sidney Winder (son) was in charge of troops. Capt. Richard Winder (nephew) was in charge of procurement. When Wirz arrived at Camp Sumter, stockade was not complete, no barracks or building materials for barrackers, ovens or steel doors for ovens. By the end of April 1864, POW population was 10,427. They were over capacity by 427. In May 1864 ovens with doors were operational. The reason for the location of Camp Sumter was because it was out of way, local food supply was adequate and not used to supply Confederate army. They had sufficient potable water, climate was moderate and they had an access to a rail line for shipping of supplies and POW's.

Wirz initiated changes, he paroled Drummer Boys and moved them out of the stockade and sent them back to either the Union or released. In June 1864, Trial of Raiders happened. Raid was brought on by Plymouth NC Pilgrims. They arrived with new uniforms and back pay as they were going on enlistment furloughs. 125 people were arrested. Twenty-five were put into ball and chains. Six were hung and buried apart from other POW's. Wirz transferred prisoners that testified against the "Raiders" to the hospital located outside the stockade.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> of July 1864 a six member committee lead by Edward Boate went to Washington D.C. with a petition to Washington to get more funding. Gen. Winder granted permission and funding in July, 1864 to expand camp by ten acres. In August 1864 POW population was at 32, 894. Death Rate was at 2,993 or almost 9%. Death rate would have been higher if Wirz had not re-located the Cook House.

On September 1, 1864 Sherman took Atlanta. Richmond authorized a new camp location due to Sherman in August 1864. Camp Lawton in Millen GA. This reduced POW's by roughly 5000 day down to 8,218 at the end of September 1864. On February 6, 1865 Brig Gen. John H. Winder died. Winder was a booster for Wirz.

Trial by Military Tribunal began on the 21<sup>st</sup> August 1865. Edwin Stanton wanted to hang Jeff Davis, Robert E Lee and the Confederacy Cabinet, etc. They had problems, Grant said he would go public with opposition. Second the public became incensed when they heard that Davis was held in chains at Fortress Monroe in Hampton Virginia. Third a small time crook Stanton paid to lie about Davis alleged plan to incapacitate union POW's went public with his lies.

During the trial the prosecution had well over 100 witnesses. Several witnesses were not even there. Prosecutor Chipman-Judge Advocate had to approve the witnesses. Many were rejected because they would only injury the good name of President Lincoln, U.S. Govt. and US. Military. Edwin Boate, POW Committee Chairman was not allowed to testify. Neither was Colonel Ould Confederate Commissioner of Exchange. The trial was completed on the 24<sup>th</sup> of October 1865. There was a 2 hour deliberation to find Wirz guilty of personally being involved in thirteen murders and other heinous crimes. The murders Wirz allegedly personally participated in did not have victims names or dates. Additionally, he was not

even physically in Andersonville in August 1864. Clemency plea was submitted on the 6<sup>th</sup> of November 1865 they received no response. Offer while on "Death Row" Authorized by high ranking Government officials, a "Clemency" if Wirz would agree to implicate Jeff Davis in this conspiracy to physically injure Union POW's. Wirz was executed on the 10<sup>th</sup> of November 1865.

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

As the northwest state in the Confederacy, the host of its capital, and a neighbor to the Union capital, Virginia was hotly contested throughout the American Civil war and saw almost one-third of the war's most significant battles, by far the most of any other state, according to the National Park Service. Today, Virginia's effort to commemorate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this dramatic era in the history of the Commonwealth and the nation is being coordinated by the Virginia Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War Commission.

Mississippi history will be preserved with the acquisition of 67 acres of a Civil War battlefield where roughly 1,000 men were killed, wounded or declared missing after fighting in 1863. The Battle of Raymond was a part of the Union Army's campaign to capture Vicksburg, which it eventually did, following a 47 day siege of the city. About 16,000 men fought in the one day battle in Raymond on May 12, 1863, with the Confederates being outmanned by a ratio of three to one. (Source for above articles is: © Civil war Interactive "The Daily Newspaper of the Civil War")

(Springfield, IL) –During a ceremony this morning at the Springfield Hilton Hotel, the National Civil War Preservation Trust (CWPT) recognized three Illinois preservation advocates with the organization's Chairman's Awards for Achievement in Historic Preservation the awards, presented by

CWPT Chairman John L. Nau, III, honored Illinois State Historian Thomas F. Schwartz and philanthropists Don and Janis Barnes. The ceremony was a part of the CWPT's trustee meeting and Grant Review fundraising event held this weekend in Springfield.

According to Nau, the awards are an opportunity for CWPT to "personally thank committed individuals who have made it their lives' work to promote the physical and conceptual protection of our nation's heritage.

Schwartz, who has served as state historian since 1993, is a highly regarded Abraham Lincoln scholar and is a leading force in exhibit development at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum. For his tremendous success in stirring the public imagination and encouraging the study of the Civil War's tumultuous and lasting impact on American History, he was recognized with the Chairman's Award for Achievement in Education.

## **UPCOMING CIVIL WAR EVENTS**

### **Veterans Heritage Day**

Civil War Museum Kenosha WI  
Saturday, November 7, 2009  
10:00-4:00 p.m.

Memorabilia will be on display from all branches of service during the Civil War, World War 1, World War II, Korean War and Vietnam War. . At 11:00 a.m. there will be a military and veteran brick dedication in the museum lobby.

### **Chicago Civil War Roundtable**

Holiday Inn Mart Plaza Chicago, IL  
Friday, November 13, 2009  
5:30 p.m. Dinner  
7:30 p.m. Speaker Presentation  
\$40.00 Dinner (\$5.00) for presentation only  
1-630-460-1865 to make reservation  
[www.thecwrt.org](http://www.thecwrt.org)

## **Annual Symposium**

McHenry County Civil War Round Table  
Pinecrest Golf Club  
11220 Algonquin Road Huntley IL.  
Saturday, November 14, 2009  
8:30-3:30 p.m.

## **ALL FOR THE UNION**

Memorabilia/Show and Tell will be December 4<sup>th</sup> at Fairview. Volunteers are needed for 10 minute or less presentations. See Jan if you have something to share.

## **EDITOR'S NOTES**

The next board meeting will be at the Fairview Village private dining room on 11/03/09 at 7:30 PM. Call Jan at 630-830-7614 with any questions.

## **FUTURE MEETINGS**

Dec 4 - Memorabilia/Show and Tell

## **NOTE STARTING IN JANUARY WE WILL BE MEETING ON THE 3<sup>RD</sup> FRIDAY**

### **2010 (3rd FRIDAY OF THE MONTH)**

Jan 15- Rob Girardi/A. Lincoln's Doctors Dog  
Feb 19 - Jim Cunningham/Nation vs. State:  
Mar 19-Ray Glick/Civil War Horses and Mules  
April 16-Brian Seiter/Gen. William Starke Rosecrans

## **THE SALT CREEK CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE**

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

President: Jan Rasmussen

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