



THE **drum roll**

Volume 32 **309th Regular Meeting**
Number 8 **April 4, 2014**

Camp housed over 30,000 Confederate prisoners

Friday, April 4, 2014, 7:30 p.m.

Arlington Heights Memorial Library
500 North Dunton Avenue, Arlington Heights, Illinois

Camp Douglas



David Keller

Opened in 1861, Camp Douglas was a reception and training facility in Chicago for more than 40,000 Union soldiers. Camp Douglas became a prison camp, housing over 30,000 Confederate prisoners from 1862 until it was demolished in 1865. Its first prisoners of war arrived after the capture of Fort Donelson in Tennessee. Containing over 200 buildings on 60 acres, Camp Douglas was the most significant Civil War facility in northern Illinois. The boundaries of Camp Douglas were present-day 31st Street on the north, 33rd Place on the south,

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive on the west, and Cottage Grove Avenue (or Giles Avenue) on the east on land donated by Stephen A. Douglas.

David Keller, founder of the Camp Douglas Restoration Foundation, will tell the history of the camp including the conditions and loss of life at the camp, stories from diaries and journals of Confederate prisoners of the camp, current status of the camp's site, and the work done by the Camp Douglas Restoration Foundation, which was founded in 2010 to provide a lasting remembrance of Camp Douglas. His presentation also will include a display of information, photographs, and artifacts.

David Keller is a long-time resident of Chicago and an amateur historian. His professional life included various executive positions at Chicago-area commercial banks. Currently he is a respected expert witness to banking matters throughout the country. Retired in 2002, he devotes much of his time to volunteer activities including the Lincoln Park Zoo, Chicago History Museum, and American Youth Soccer Organization. His interest in Camp Douglas comes from his interest in the Civil War, Civil War prison camps, and Nineteenth-Century Chicago history.

The mission of the Camp Douglas Restoration Foundation is to establish a significant memorial to Camp Douglas and to provide interpretive and educational opportunities on Camp Douglas, Civil War prison camps, and the contributions of African-Americans to the Civil War.

If you would like to join us for dinner with David Keller at 5:30 p.m. before the April 4 meeting at Sam's of Arlington restaurant, 1863 West Central Road, Arlington Heights, please contact me at dlimburg@prodigy.net or (847) 577-7744 by Wednesday, April 2. — *Denise Limburg*

Save June 6 for the annual banquet

1864: Decisive Moment of the Civil War

By Tom DeFranco

On March 7, 2014, member and former president Bruce Allardice spoke to the round table about what he considered to be the decisive battle of the American Civil War — the re-election of President Abraham Lincoln.

The election guaranteed not only that the United States would be again *united*, but that it would be united without the stain of slavery. By 1864, Federal forces had experienced undeniable success on the battle-

field, most notably in the West. Most of the South west of the Appalachians now lay under the control of Union troops. In the Nineteenth Century, it was quite common that the side with the smaller army would lose the war, but for three years the South had been able to

survive partly because of its ability to reinforce threatened fronts with soldiers from quieter areas.

In March, General Ulysses Grant was transferred east to command all of the Federal armies. General William T. Sherman commanded several armies with the goal of capturing Atlanta. General George Meade commanded the Army of the Potomac with General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia as his objective. Also in the East General Franz Sigel had the task of controlling the Shenandoah Valley, and General Benjamin Butler and his Army of the James were charged with threatening Richmond from the line of the James River.

One of the most important features of this new military effort was coordination between the various armies. Grant took great pains to assure that the armies moved simultaneously so that the Confederates could not use their advantage of interior strategic lines to reinforce a front that was in dire straits. Despite these efforts, events in the field were not looking up. Although Grant was actually making headway, progress was slow and he seem-

ingly became bogged down in a series of bloody stalemates in the East.

The commanders on the lesser fronts in the East had done so poorly that they had to be relieved. Sherman's advance toward Atlanta seemed to be mired in the mountain passes in Georgia. President Lincoln himself seriously doubted his own re-election, having had his cabinet sign a document unknown to them that was an acknowledgment of his administration's failure to restore the Union and free the slaves.



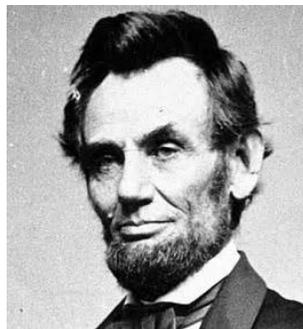
George B. McClellan

American political factions at the time could be boiled down to four groups. The Radical Republicans backed a continuation of the war as not only a war to restore the Union, but primarily to free the slaves (to their way of thinking, Lincoln was not moving

fast enough); the Moderate Republicans were not so married to the belief that slaves had to be freed, but they favored restoring the Union by force and thus were in favor of continuing the war.

The Democrats also had two major factions. The Peace Democrats wanted peace at any cost (they hated Lincoln). A major portion of this group was the Copperheads, who broke from backing the Federal war effort when the abolition of slavery was introduced as a war aim. They were headed by Clement Vallandigham, who earlier in the war was banished to the South but made his way back to the northern states by going to Canada and entering Detroit from Windsor, Ontario. The last faction was the War Democrats; they wanted Lincoln ousted because of his views on abolition. Like the moderate Republicans, they favored continuing the war to restore the Union, but they were against abolition.

The passions of the various factions made for very lively party conventions that spring and summer. After vicious arguments in their convention in Chicago, the War Democrats won out over the



President Abraham Lincoln

more radical Copperheads and selected former general George McClellan as their nominee.

The Republican convention was also contested. The Radical Republicans favored as their choices General Grant (who had no desire to run, yet), General Benjamin Butler, General John C. Fremont, or Salmon P. Chase. Some concessions were made — such as dropping abolitionist Hannibal Hamlin from the ticket and adding a border-state moderate, Andrew Johnson.

For his part, George McClellan was not favored by the Peace Democrats, even after his nomination, and he realized this. He never actively campaigned (true to political standards of the day).

Finally, by August, things started looking up again for the Union war effort. Admiral David

Farragut won an important victory at Mobile Bay. In early September, Atlanta was “fairly won” by Sherman. And in mid-October, the signal victory at Cedar Creek occurred, which marked the end of General Jubal Early’s foray into the Shenandoah Valley.

Some Federal troops were able to go home to vote and were reminded along the way by political operatives for whom to cast their votes. The soldiers’ votes were decisive for Lincoln. He managed to secure 78 percent of their votes.

Many thanks to Bruce Allardice for his presentation on the decisive moment of the Civil War — that which decided not only that the Union would be restored, but also that slavery would be eradicated from the land.

April Events

April 2–May 16, Lincoln: The Constitution and the Civil War, Gail Borden Library, 270 North Grove Avenue, Elgin. Exhibition presents a more complete understanding of Abraham Lincoln as president and the Civil War as the nation’s gravest constitutional crisis (organized by the National Constitution Center and the American Library Association Public Programs Office and made possible by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities). Information on all library programs is available at www.gailborden.info or (847) 429-4597.

April 6, Keynote Address and Reception, Gail Borden Library, Elgin. Dr. Al Gini will speak on Lincoln, leadership, and ethics, followed by a reception kicking off the special exhibit. There will be reenactors, a Lincoln impersonator, and music of the Civil War. Registration requested.

April 8, Gail Borden Library, Elgin. Dave Noe will discuss Sherman’s March, 11:45 a.m.

April 8, McHenry County Civil War Round Table. Jon Austin will speak on Civil War Field Embalming.

April 10, Lake County Civil War Round Table. Charlie Banks will speak on the Great Rail Movement.

April 11, Civil War Museum, Kenosha, WI. Dave Powell will speak on Confederate Cavalry in the

Chickamauga Campaign. Program sponsored by the Milwaukee Civil War Round Table and the Iron Brigade Association. Information on all Civil War Museum programs is available at (262) 653-4140 or www.thecivilwarmuseum.org.

April 11, Chicago Civil War Round Table. Scott Bowden will speak on Last Chance for Victory.

April 21, Salt Creek Civil War Round Table. A panel presentation will cover Civil War 101.

April 22 and 29, Civil War Museum, Kenosha, WI. Bjorn Skaptson of the Abraham Lincoln Bookshop will discuss the major battles and events of the Atlanta Campaign, 6:30 p.m., \$25/\$20 Friends of the Museum.

April 23, General Impressions of the Civil War, Gail Borden Library, Elgin. Robert Girardi will examine what Civil War generals wrote, said, and thought about each other, 7 p.m. Registration requested.

April 26, Civil War Museum, Kenosha, WI. Reenactors from the 36th Illinois present a time line of their appearances during the war, 11 a.m.–3 p.m. Dr. Theodore Karamanski discusses the Illinois Home Front during the Civil War, 1 p.m.

April 28, Meet Mr. Lincoln, Gail Borden Library, Elgin. Travel with the 16th President as he strives to hold the union together, 7 p.m. Registration requested.



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Book Raffle	Charles Banks
Newsletter Editor	Sally Smith

April Saturday Discussion

All members and guests are invited to participate in the session to be held at the Hoffman Estates Community Bank, 1375 Palatine Road, Hoffman Estates, on Saturday, April 19, from 10:00 a.m. until noon. Attendees are asked to park in the adjacent lot rather than in spaces provided for bank customers. The group will wind up its discussion of the Atlanta Campaign, led by second vice president Patrick McCormick.

These discussions are generally held on the third Saturday of the month from September through June. They are held to generate and foster a free exchange of ideas on events that transpired during the Civil War.

2013–2014 Speakers

April 4, David Keller will speak on Camp Douglas.

May 2, Betty Kay will speak on Three Illinois Women During the Civil War.

June 6, Tim Smith will speak on Corinth.

March Raffle

The March raffle winners were Ronald Feltz, who won *Shiloh: The Battle That Changed the Civil War* by Larry J. Daniel, Charles Brenneman, who won *The Gallant Dead: Union and Confederate Generals Killed in the Civil War* by Derek Smith, and Thomas Postema, who won *No Quarter: The Battle of the Crater, 1864* by Richard Slotkin, all donated by David Powell; and David Noe, who won *Two Years Before the Paddlewheel: Charles F. Gunther, Mississippi River Confederate* by Bruce S. Allardice and Wayne L. Wolfe, donated by Bruce Allardice.

Congratulations to the winners and sincere thanks to the donors. To donate Civil War-related books or items, please contact Charlie Banks.

Roster Change

New Recruit

Cheryl S. Pike
1208 East Northwest Highway, Apt. 1E
Arlington Heights, Illinois 60004-6793

Book Discussion Group

The Civil War book discussion group led by Tom DeFranco at the Eisenhower Library, 4613 North Oketo, Harwood Heights, meets on the first Saturday of the month from 10:00 until 11:30 a.m. On April 5 they will continue the discussion of Gordon Rhea's series on the Wilderness Campaign.

Women's Civil War Book Club

The next book for the Civil War book club for women is *The Year of Jubilo: A Novel of the Civil War* by Howard Bahr. The group will meet at 4 p.m., April 26, at Denise Limburg's home, 451 Woodview Road, Lake Barrington. If you are interested in joining the group, contact Denise Limburg at dlimburg@prodigy.net or (847) 382-1022, or Mary Banks at zeller1@comcast.net or (847) 497-3149.

**To learn more about this Round Table call Ellen Allen at (847) 516-6429
or visit our website at www.northernilcwrt.org**