



THE drum roll

404th Regular Meeting Volume 41 Number 6 February 2, 2024



PLEASE NOTE!!!!!!

The December meeting will be in person at the Arlington Hts. Library on Friday, February 2, 2024, and on ZOOM, at 7:00 P.M. The library is at the corner of W. Euclid Ave. and N. Dunton Ave. in Arlington Hts. Underground parking is available, and you can take the elevator to the second floor and be right at the meeting site.

Our speaker for the February meeting is Dennis Doyle. A brief synopsis of his talk follows.

During the Battle of Gettysburg (July 1-3, 1863) there were three Illinois Regiments that served in the Army of the Potomac. Those regiments were the 8th and 12th Illinois Cavalry and the 82nd Infantry Regiment, and a total of 1,027 men served during the Battle of Gettysburg.

The three Illinois regiments suffered nine men killed during the battle, thirty four men were wounded, and ninety six men were either missing or captured during the battle.

The total strength of the Army of the Potomac was an estimated 90,000 men, and although Illinois contributed a small number to the Army of the Potomac, they served with distinction and devotion during the three day battle. Both the 8th and 12th Illinois Cavalry would serve well on the first day of the Battle of Gettysburg, as Lt. Marcellus Jones would fire the first shot of the battle on the morning of July 1. The two regiments would later retreat through Gettysburg and protected the Army of the Potomac's left flank on Cemetery Hill on the evening of July 1 and the morning of July 2. Also present was the 82nd Illinois Regiment, which was comprised of mostly German born soldiers and many who were recruited from Chicago. Under the overall command of Maj. Gen. O. O. Howard, the 82nd Illinois Regiment would serve in the 11th Corps.

About Dennis Doyle:

Dennis Doyle earned his BA from Colorado State University, and his MA in American History from American Public University. Since 1999 he has taught History and Sociology at Joliet Jr. College, in Joliet Illinois. Professor Doyle is President of the South Suburban Civil War Round Table, and Vice President of the Chicago CWRT. A former college football player, he is a long-time college and high school football referee and officiated the Dublin, Ireland Kickoff Classic last August, 2023.

GERMAN YANKEE IN THE SOUTH

The civilian populations North and South were far from homogenous or uniform in their attitudes towards the war, and sometimes in their ability to support or resist it. On January 5, Bruce Allardice (in another pinch-hit by our resident baseball historian) related the story of one such man: Charles F. Gunther.

Charles Gunther was a German living in the South when the war broke out, but also had significant Chicago connections; in fact Allardice related that, in the 1880's, Gunther was the second-most prominent personage in Chicago, behind only baseball star Cap Anson. And it was Gunther's diary, in the collection of the Chicago Historical Society, that allowed Allardice and co-author Wayne Wolf to flesh out Gunther's story in their book *Two Years Before the Paddlewheel*.

Born Karl Freidrich Gunther in Wurttemberg, Germany, in 1837, he emigrated with his family to Pennsylvania in 1842. At the young age of 10 he began work as a mail carrier, riding as many as 40 miles in a day – establishing a lifelong habit of hard work. His family relocated to Peru, Illinois, in 1850. There, along the Illinois River, Gunther became involved in the icemaking industry. (Before refrigeration, ice would be cut in blocks out of frozen rivers in the winter, preserved by packing in sawdust, and then sold in the warmer weather.)

In 1860, Gunther moved down to Memphis, Tennessee, joining the Bohlen Ice Company. It was a great location for the ice business, but poor timing; it would soon be foreign territory (by local

declaration, if not in fact). During the secession winter of 1860-61, Gunther was laid off of his job. Traveling to the Ozarks of northwest Arkansas, he was stunned at the local poverty and illiteracy. He took odd jobs such as driving hogs.

The outbreak of war found Gunther back in Memphis. Ice was briefly back in the picture, but then the blockade of the rivers began to have an effect. A member of a sizable German population in Memphis, Gunther worked in supplying steamboats with supplies. Although a Northern sympathizer, Gunther (like all military age local men) was drafted into the secessionist militia. He wanted to figure out a way to escape both this duty and the Confederacy itself; some of his co-workers were able to do so. In the meantime, Gunther's steamboat work involved boats that transported men and materiel for the Rebels. While employed on the vessel *Rose Douglas*, he was captured by Union forces in late 1862.

He was soon released in a prisoner exchange and made his way back to Peoria, and after that to Chicago, where he was employed by a confectioner (Sandford), and later another such business in New York. He traveled to Europe to learn the finer points of the trade. Soon after the war, in 1868, he opened his own candy store in Chicago, at 125 Clark Street. Gunther's Candies quickly achieved renown, and he became the most successful American candy manufacturer. Among other notable successes, his business was the first to mass produce caramels in the United States. (This writer is highly grateful for that.) He is also reputed to be the inventor of Cracker Jack, though this is in some dispute.

Gunther's establishment included, besides retail space, a restaurant and a museum. Unfortunately, his Clark Street location was destroyed, along with the rest of the heart of Chicago, in the Great Fire of October 1871. He was able to recover from this disaster, building a larger, more modern factory at 212 State Street. His candy company continued to be successful, and he used some of his considerable profits to purchase artifacts related to the Civil War. (He also displayed non-war artifacts, including some highly questionable – OK, false – items such as the mummy of the Pharaoh's daughter who found Moses, and the skin of the Garden of Eden serpent!) But most of his collection was legitimate, and eventually included Abraham Lincoln's

deathbed and the table upon which Robert E. Lee signed the Appomattox surrender. Gunther even purchased the former Libby Prison from Richmond, Virginia and moved it to Chicago. He eventually turned over his business to his two sons, who weren't really businessmen. Some of the collection was sold to the Chicago Historical Society.

Gunther was a prominent enough figure that a successful local semi-pro baseball team was named in his honor: the Chicago Gunthers. He also spent some time in Chicago politics; although a fan of Abraham Lincoln, Gunther was a Democrat. He served two terms as alderman and one as city treasurer. He even threw his hat into the ring in the 1908 Democratic gubernatorial race but lost out to Adlai Stevenson (the original Adlai). Gunther died in 1920 and is buried in Rosehill Cemetery. Upon his passing, the Chicago Historical Society purchased the balance of his collection of artifacts for \$150,000. These artifacts constitute the core of the Society's collection to this day. And, thankfully, his diary is part of the collection.

On behalf of the Round Table, I would like to thank Bruce Allardice for this illumination of the unusual and significant, if now obscure, life of Charles F. Gunther.

Pat McCormick

Sept. 1, 2023: Jerry Allen: Old Abe the War Eagle
 Oct. 6, 2023: Bruce Allardice: "Loose Lips"--
 Military Secrecy During the Civil War
 Nov. 3, 2023: Dave Powell Grant at Chattanooga
 Dec.1, 2023 Rob Girardi Stonewall Jackson
 Jan.5, 2024: Larry Hewitt Combat Photography
 Feb. 2, 2024: Dennis Doyle Illinois Units at
 Gettysburg
 Mar. 1, 2024: Steve Alban: The Election of 1860
 Apr. 5, 2024: Leslie Goddard TBA
 May 3, 2024: Jon Sebastian TBA
 June 7, 2024: Diana Dretske: The 96th Illinois



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Appointed Positions

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Upcoming Events

At this time, we are not charging dues for the 2023-2024 year.

Join Zoom Meeting on Friday, Feb. 2, 2024, at 7 PM.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81433758155?pwd=S1FqVjJ1WmZsTTd1VIJNRcTlCjJLdz09>

Important Announcements!!!!!!

Our Saturday discussion will be on the third Saturday of February, the 17th! The topic will be: Longstreet. With some new books recently published about this Confederate General, he is a worthy topic for our discussion. We will be discussing other sometimes lesser known Union and Confederate leaders in future discussions.

We have shortened our Saturday discussion in order to attract more participants. It will go from 10 AM to around 11:30 AM. Please try to get in on this. Pat does a great job, and everyone can jump in on the discussion. These Saturday sessions are in danger of being dropped if we cannot attract more participants, so please consider tuning in. If you have any ideas on how to increase participation, please forward them to the newsletter.

The link works for this meeting, also. Don't miss it.

The following is reprinted from the Salt Creek CWRT January newsletter.

JANUARY 2024 PRESERVATION REPORT

By Brian Conroy

Happy New Year! The Salt Creek Civil War Round Table would like to wish everyone a healthy and happy upcoming year and look forward to seeing everyone at our future meetings. This month's preservation report concerns land that has been saved at the bloody land of the Battle of Antietam, where more than 22,000 soldiers fell wounded, killed, or

missing on September 17, 1862, America's Bloodiest Day. The most recent victory saved 148 acres of battlefield land associated with the Maryland Campaign, including the Jacob Avey Farm, some of Antietam's most hallowed ground.

Earlier in 2023, the American Battlefield Trust asked their membership to help save a key 20-acre portion of Antietam's Jacob Avey Farm, where some of the fiercest fighting took place, and where Confederate soldiers were buried after the battle, according to the recently discovered Elliot Burial Map. That land also includes the historic Avey farmhouse, where the Avey family lived. Like many civilians in Sharpsburg, Jacob Avey Sr. suffered great financial loss due to the battle. Heavy fighting took place on his land, and an errant Union shell penetrated his house. His claims for reimbursement from the Federal government, like many others in Sharpsburg, were rejected, despite his feeding Union soldiers and caring for them in his house.

An additional victory that is being claimed is six additional acres that were originally part of the historic Reel Farm. In the midmorning of September 17, 1862, the Union armies were gaining ground at Antietam as a large, Northern force entered the West Woods, near this parcel now preserved forever. A powerful counterattack of some 7,000 Confederates fell upon the Union front flank, and rear, sending them reeling. The thousands of casualties suffered here comprised just one hour of that long, terrible day.

Preserving these six acres helps unite a significant portion of the Antietam battlefield already saved.

Shepherdstown

After the Battle of Antietam, Confederate forces moved back across the Potomac and into Virginia at Shepherdstown. Part of the Union army pursued and attacked the Confederate rearguard, capturing four guns. The next day, Union forces crossed the Potomac and established a bridgehead as well.

General Robert E. Lee dispatched General A.P. Hill's division to counterattack on land also being claimed as a victory – 122 acres of land associated with the Battle of Shepherdstown.

Confederates were able to hold off the Federals and discourage them from further pursuit, and Lincoln was so frustrated with General George B. McClellan's lack of initiative that in November he relieved him of duty and named General Ambrose Burnside the commander of the Army of the Potomac.

These 122 acres of battlefield land at Shepherdstown, which include the historic Osbourn House, appear mostly as they did during the battle, offering a valuable educational tool for generations to come.