Abraham Lincoln Events

As part of the bicentennial of Abraham Lincoln’s birth, the Chicago History Museum has an exhibit, “Abraham Lincoln: Transformed,” thru April 12, 2010.


The National Portrait Gallery in Washington, DC, has an exhibit, “President Lincoln’s Inaugural Ball,” thru Jan. 18th.

Upcoming Civil War Events

Jan. 6th, Kankakee Valley CWRT: Forum on the Illinois Central Railroad in the Civil War
Jan. 7th, Milwaukee CWRT: Robert L. Girardi on “Railroad Defense During the Atlanta Campaign”
Jan. 8th, Northwestern Illinois CWRT: Jerry Kowalski on “George Thomas My Friends, Enemies, and Lovers”
Jan. 10th, McHenry Co. CWRT: Civil War discussion group at Borders Bookstore in Crystal Lake: Topic: “Stones River,” 10 a.m. to noon.
Jan. 15th, Salt Creek CWRT: Robert L. Girardi, TBD
Jan. 21st, South Suburban CWRT: Kim Shethorn on “Beyond Nursing: The Role of Women in the Civil War”
Jan. 30th, Kenosha Civil War Museum, 1 p.m.: “Civil War Cyclorama Panorama” by Michael Kutzer.
Feb. 5th, Northern Illinois CWRT: Dave Noe on “The Great Camel Experiment”
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Battlefield Preservation

By Brian Seiter

Washington, D.C.- The Civil War Preservation Trust (CWPT) hopes to raise $2.125 million in order to buy 85 acres at Chancellorsville by the end of the year. The Wagner Tract, just east of Wilderness Church, includes nearly 2,000 feet of frontage on the north shoulder of the historic Orange Plank Road.

"Extinguishing the potential for dense commercial use along that long stretch seems to me to constitute the most dazzling jewel in the CWPT's long and impressive history of preserving hallowed ground," said Krick.

Krick described the tract as "beautiful, open space fronting along Route 3 and also some wooded areas back from the road."

When CWPT first negotiated purchase of the property from Frank Wagner of Fredericksburg, it was for 80 acres at $1.525 million. An additional five acres was added to the sale, bringing the price to $2.125 million.

The Battle of Chancellorsville is considered to be one of the most critical engagements of the Civil War. Gen. Robert E. Lee divided his outnumbered army, sending Stonewall Jackson on the flanking march around the Army of the Potomac. Jackson was able to launch a full-scale attack on the unsuspecting Union Eleventh Corps.

In recognition of the property's historic value and the funds needed, CWPT will acknowledge every donation of $100 or more on a permanent plaque at the battlefield site. Larger donations will be differentiated.

Maps, recent and historic photos and a video of Krick describing the tract's significance can be seen at the Chancellorsville09 link on CWPT's Web site www.civilwar.org. Pictures can also be seen at www.flickr.com/photos/cwpt/sets/2157603692978835.

CWPT has previously preserved other key portions of the Chancellorsville Battlefield, including 215 acres that were the scene of the fighting along the Orange Turnpike on May 1, 1863. Now interpreted and open to the public as the First Day at Chancellorsville Battlefield Park, the site includes recently found ephemera of these letters as well as on other items in the exhibition. CWPT also participated in the protection of two other tracts on the battlefield, including 16 additional acres associated with Stonewall Jackson's flank attack.

Donations for the Wagner Tract purchase can be made at www.civilwar.org or mailed to PO Box 17686, Baltimore, MD 21297-1686 (from December's "Civil War News").
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Washington, D.C. - The Civil War Preservation Trust (CWPT) hopes to raise $2.125 million in order to buy 85 acres at Chancellorsville by the end of the year.

The so-called Wagner Tract is “one of the most historically significant unprotected landscapes of the entire Civil War,” said CWPT President James Lighthizer.

It was there that Gen. Thomas J. „Stonewall“ Jackson led the May 2, 1863, 12-mile flanking march around the Federal right that turned the battle in favor of the South. Heavy fighting took place on this property. Hours later Confederate pikemen mistakenly shot Jackson.

Lighthizer said there is a limited window of availability to receive state funding. Projects in Virginia are eligible to participate in a 2 to 1 matching grant program through the end of the year. The state appropriated $8 million for battlefield preservation, but projects must close by the end of 2009.

CWPT’s Deputy Director of Communications Mary Goundrey Koik said, “The state legislature saw that investing in land preservation now could create a lasting and meaningful legacy as we commemorate the Civil War sesquicentennial, a message that we hope others also embrace.”

“This (state fund) is in addition to federal matching grants available to preserve historic battlefield land outside of national parks, leaving CWPT to raise less than half the purchase price from private donations,” said Lighthizer in a press release.

Historian Robert K. Krick called saving the Wagner Tract a “preservation coup” and spectacular success.

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CWPT also participated in the protection of two other tracts on the battlefield, including 16 additional acres associated with Stonewall Jackson’s flank attack.

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Lincoln Exhibit at Newberry Library

Honest Abe of the West, an exhibition organized by the Newberry Library, will open on October 10, 2009, to commemorate the 200th birthday of America’s sixteenth president. Lincoln-related artifacts from the Newberry’s collections will accompany the Library of Congress’s traveling exhibition, With Malice Toward None, also on display at the Newberry beginning October 10 (and ending Dec. 31).

Honest Abe of the West chronicles Lincoln’s early years in Illinois, focusing on his career as an attorney in Springfield and as a dedicated leader of the Whig Party. Rare copies of printed materials in the exhibition chronicle his important debates with Stephen A. Douglas during the race for the U.S. Senate seat from Illinois in 1858. The exhibition also includes recently found ephemera related to Lincoln’s assassination and the nation’s mourning, from memorial sheet music published in 1865 to one of the earliest printings of Walt Whitman’s famous poem, “O Captain! My Captain!” written for the fallen leader.

The exhibition will also display items from the Alfred Otredoorff Collection, on generous loan to the Newberry. These include a docket book Lincoln used in the late 1830s and 1840 to track his legal cases and fees; a list of his office expenses from 1846, and various legal documents in Lincoln’s hand, among others.

Admission to all exhibits at the Newberry Library is free and open to the public. Galleries are open Monday, Friday, Saturday from 8:15 am - 5:00 pm, and Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, from 8:15 am - 7:30 pm. (from the Newberry Library’s website, www.Newberry.org)

Monitor’s Gun Carriages Now Right Side Up

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. – The USS Monitor’s two gun carriages were recently turned right-side up for the first time since the ship sank on Dec. 31, 1862.

On Nov. 9 and 10, a heavy crane carefully lifted one carriage a day from the conservation tanks in which they sit in the Batten Conservation Laboratory Complex at The Mariners’ Museum, home of the USS Monitor Center. Each was carefully attached to a special A-frame crane and then rotated to a right-side up orientation. Within minutes, each carriage was hoisted and returned to its tank.

The carriages for the iconic Union ironclad’s two Xi-inch Dahlgren Shell Guns were pulled from the ocean’s depths in 2002 when the Monitor’s turret was recovered. Everything in the turret was left with the same upside-down orientation it had in 230 feet of water at the wreck site off Cape Hatteras, N.C. (from December’s Civil War News)
**Shimmelfennig Boutique**

Fifteen years of audio recordings of CWRT lectures by distinguished historians are available and can be purchased in either audio cassette or CD format. For lecture lists, contact Hal Adell at hal2290@mac.com or phone him at (773) 774-6781.

Each meeting features a book raffle, with proceeds going to battlefield preservation. There is also a silent auction for books donated by Ralph Newman and others, again with proceeds benefiting battlefield preservation.

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**Future Meetings**

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Jan. 8, 2010: Rob Girardi, "Railroad Defense in the Atlanta Campaign"

Feb. 12: Paul Finkelman, "Lincoln and Emancipation"

March 12: Eric Jacobson, "The Battle of Franklin"

April 9: David O. Stewart, "The Impeachment of Andrew Johnson"

May 14: William W. Freeing, "The Strange, Difficult Triumph of Southern Secession"

June 11: John V. Quarstein, "Battle of the Ironclads"

Born Skapsken at the Abraham Lincoln Book Shop reminds us that the next "Virtual Book Signing" will be noon, Jan. 30th, with Norman Boas talking about his new book; Abraham Lincoln: Illustrated Biographical Dictionary and Burrus Carnahan on Lincoln On Trial Southern Civilians and the Laws of War. For more information on this and upcoming events, visit www.virtualbooksigning.net or www.alincolnbookshop.com.

**Robert I. Girardi**

On Railroad Defense in the Atlanta Campaign

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HOLIDAY INN MART PLAZA
350 NORTH ORLEANS STREET
Cocktails at 5:30 p.m.
Dinner at 6:30 p.m.
$40 - Members/Non-members

Ceviche: Chicken Napoleon, Fish, Vegetarian Plate or Fruit Plate

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**Call by Monday Jan. 4**

Robert I. Girardi


He is on the editorial review board of the Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society and has consulted for the Chicago Historical Society on its Civil War exhibits.