Upcoming Civil War Events

May 1-2, Joliet Public Library, Black Road Branch: Civil War Encampment
May 5th, Lake County CWRT: Rick Andersen on “Committee on the Conduct of the War.”
May 5th, Kankakee Valley CWRT: Carol Readbury on “Civil War Medicine.”
May 7th, Northern Illinois CWRT: Jim Lewis on “They Fought at Stones River.”
May 11th, McHenry Co. CWRT: Jeff Berg and Fred Rockecki on “John Brown, Murderer or Hero?”

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

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At Naper Settlement’s “Civil War Hands of History” Day, May 7th, and at Rockford’s “Civil War Hands of History” Day, May 15th-16, and at the Morton Grove Farmers Market May 29th.

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Grapeshot

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Know of any upcoming talks, events, or publications? All members are welcome to contribute items to the newsletter. Contact the editor at bscl841@att.net or (630) 297-8046.

Future Meetings

691st REGULAR MEETING
William W. Freehling on “The Strange, Difficult Triumph of the Southern Secession”
Friday, May 14
HOLIDAY INN MART PLAZA
350 NORTH ORLEANS STREET
Cocktails at 5:30 p.m.
Dinner at 6:30 p.m.
$40 - Members/Non-members

Entree: Chicken Casserole, Baked Orange Bread, Vegetable Medley or Fruit Slate

please note
Make your reservations by Monday, May 10 by calling (708) 867-6500, or emailing click4lincoln@earthlink.net, with the names of your party and choice of entrees.
If a cancellation becomes necessary after dinner reservations have been made, please call the number below by 9 a.m. Thursday.
We are offering the option of choosing one to two dinner entrée and coming only for the addition of $7.50, for a charge of $3 per person.
Parking at the Holiday Inn is $5.00 with a validated parking sticker.

William W. Freehling

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Professor William Freehling grew up in Chicago, received his AB degree Magna Cum Laude and Phi Beta Kappa from Harvard College, and his MA and PhD from the University of California, Berkeley (where he wrote his PhD thesis under Kenneth Stampp). He has taught at Berkeley and Harvard, held full professorships at Michigan and Hopkins, and ended chairs at SUNY Buffalo and at Kentucky. He is currently the editor of 8 books, he currently writes full time at the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities as a permanent Senior Fellow.
Battlefield Preservation

BY BRIAN SEITER

Judge’s Ruling Awaits After First Hearing On Wilderness Wal-mart.

ORANGE, VA – The so-called “Wilderness Wal-mart” case had its first day in court on Feb. 3. The judge has not yet made a decision in the opening legal clash between preservationists and Orange County. A Wal-mart Supercenter is proposed to be built at the gateway to the Wilderness battlefield, where Generals Robert E. Lee and Ulysses S. Grant first met in battle. Last August 23rd the Orange County Board of Supervisors approved the special use permit Wal-mart required for the 138,000-square-foot store it wants to build at the intersection of Virginia State Routes 3 and 20. It would be the fifth Wal-mart within 20 miles of that location.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation and Friends of Wilderness Battlefield (FoWB), along with six individuals and two preservation organizations did not have standing, so they did not have standing, to file suit in the federal court. In her plea in bar filing, Pandak mustered arguments “are essentially to insulate, if accepted, the BOS (supervisors) from any judicial review because they argue for a standard which would ‘ever could meet’ …” (The plaintiffs) can’t just say there’s traffic, there’s noise, there’s air pollution. They have to show that you direct connection and, if they cannot, then they simply are making a public policy argument of “well now making an argument that’s general to the public as a whole,” Pandak said. Judge Bouton praised the plaintiffs’ arguments as “precise and to the point.” He noted, “The issue of standing can be a thorny one.” … Regarding the standing of the Friends of Wilderness Battlefield, Pandak said that no case law would give them standing. Rosenbaum emphasized that no case law would give them standing can be a thorny one.” … Regarding the standing of the Friends of Wilderness Battlefield, Pandak said that no case law would give them standing. Rosenbaum emphasized that no case law would give them standing can be a thorny one.” … Regarding the standing of the Friends of Wilderness Battlefield, Pandak said that no case law would give them standing. Rosenbaum emphasized that no case law would give them standing can be a thorny one.” …

The only requirement for membership in The Round Table is a genuine interest in the Civil War and its era. For information, address Membership Committee, 1039 Hinwood, Darien, Illinois 60561, or contact bsal1861@att.net.

The Civil War Round Table
Founded December 5, 1940
1039 Hinwood
Darien, Illinois 60561
Phone: 630-463-1865
www.thecwrt.org

April Meeting

BY MARK MATRANGA

David O. Stewart spoke to 27 members and guests at the 671th meeting of the The Civil War Round Table of Chicago on the “Impeachment of Andrew Johnson” event in its Feb. 20th, calling it a "high point." He called it the high point in our history when the Constitution held the country together in a meaningful way. The Civil War was certainly a time when it failed, but a few years afterward the nation plunged into crisis and the Constitution was the only thing which stood between us and real chaos.

How did the country come to this impasse? There have been unsuccessful presidents but only one has been impeached. Andrew Johnson came to office under unusual circumstances a mere 5 weeks into Lincoln’s second term. He was appointed by a Federalist party because he was a “War Democrat” who served as military governor of Tennessee. Appointed to a task as a young man, he worked his way up in the world of politics from a laborer to senator and governor. A man of little humor, he was described as vindictive and perverse, “the best hater I ever knew,” according to President Polk. He was a slave owner and unlike Lincoln and the radicals, did not view slavery from a moral perspective.

After the war, there were feelings of anger and resentment. Southern social relations, once fixed, were now different; within months of Lincoln’s assassination, violence broke out between whites and the newly freed slaves. Armed, uniformed blacks occupying the south enraged the white southern populace. Northern radicals wanted to punish the south for its transgressions and resisted former confederate officials return to power. The social revolution had begun as real chaos.

The two main issues facing the government in the postwar period were what type of governments the southern states would adopt and how to deal with the newly freed slaves. Johnson’s reconstitution policy continued Lincoln’s approach, but when southern states elected former confederate congressmen to Congress, Thaddeus Stevens used procedural trickery to ensure that none were seated. This enraged Johnson, since all were Democrats.

With regard to the freed slaves, Johnson was not prone to dictate to the states. This course of conduct brought immediate conflict with Congress, which passed all civil rights legislation over his veto. Congress stripped Johnson of virtually all power over the military. It eliminated seats on the Supreme Court so that Johnson could not fill vacancies. But the Tenure of Office Act caused the final collision.

At the time, all 42,000 federal jobs were subject to patronage. As Johnson began to fire Republican placeholders, Congress enacted the Tenure in Office Act, passed over his veto. The Act required Senate confirmation of any termination and made its violation a “high crime and misdemeanor.” Johnson had grounds for firing Stanton, who actively undermined Johnson’s reconstruction policies, but the Senate refused to confirm. When Johnson appointed Lorenzo Thomas Secretary of War, the House voted articles of impeachment on straightforward party lines.

Johnson was eventually acquitted by a single vote. Several factors led to this result. First, the president pro tempore of the Senate and one who voted to remove Johnson was Ben Wade, an unpalatable choice. Second, the vote was taken in May, Republican senators were concerned that making Johnson a martyr would cause problems for Grant, their candidate in the November election. Third, Johnson had become conciliatory toward Congress by the time of trial. Also, the choice of Ben Butler as prosecutor was a poor choice— he had a history of procedural trickery. A quick trial was in the radicals’ interest. Last, Stewart contends substantial bribery was involved—this included the deciding vote of Senator Rose.

The articles of impeachment were dubious— the Tenure in Office Act was later found unconstitutional — and the impeachment clause ambiguous and inconsistently applied. But despite the vitriol over Johnson’s actions, all accepted the verdict. At a time when “it really mattered” our Constitution worked.

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“The National Trust for Historic Preservation and Friends of Wilderness Battlefield (FoWB), along with six individuals living near the proposed store site, filed suit on September 23rd to overturn the BOS decision. Orange County Circuit Court Judge Daniel R. Bouton presided over a three-hour hearing on February 3. The judge later said, ‘We’re not going to try the merits of this case today.’ Bouton said, ‘The primary issues that we’re going to take up at this hearing are the Standing of the parties of Johnson’s Island. Thank you for coming. Our Constitution held the country to one thing: that is direct and pecuniary, that would give rise to allowing them to be plaintiffs in this case,’ according to Pandak. Judge Bouton praised the lawyers’ arguments as, ‘precise and to the point.’ He noted, ‘The issue of standing can be a thorny one.’ Regarding the standing of the Friends of Wilderness Battlefield, Pandak said that no case would give them standing. Rosenbaum emphasized the contractual obligations of FoWB for management of Ellwood Manor (on Wilderness Battlefield) and the $1,500,000 friends group contributed for Ellwood’s renovation. This was substantial enough to give the group standing. Additionally, he said the proposed Wal-mart would bring 2,000 more cars per day to Route 20, where the entrance to Ellwood is, making it harder for people to visit the historic home. Pandak conceded the FoWB demonstrated they have an interest in Ellwood, but said they had to do more to prove standing. That’s why my saying I have an interest in Monticello because I make contributions to that. That’s not sufficient to get me standing.’

When Bouton adjourned the hearing, he told the attorneys that he would either issue its rulings by letter or by summoning both sides and ruling from the bench. Referring to the 10 to 14 days it would take to create a hearing transcript, he said he would delay his decision for 30 days after the hearing to ‘get into the decision-making process at that point.’ FoWB president Zann Nelson said afterward the judge had done “his homework,” and said Jim Campi, communications director for the Civil War Preservation Trust, which filed a friend-of-the-court brief in the case. Two people with a keen interest in the proceedings sat on the bench closest to the Orange County attorney — siblings Gregory W. and Claudia J. Baycliff, partners of the land on which Wal-mart wants to build the new store. When asked for his opinion of the day’s hearing, Gregory Baycliff replied with a brusque, ‘No comment.’

from the April Civil War News

The Battlefield Preservation Committee at the April Civil War Round Table meeting in Chicago on the Impeachment of Andrew Johnson. Stewart was selected as the moderator for this moment in our history when the Constitution held the country together in a meaningful way. The Civil War was certainly a time when it failed, but a few years afterward the nation plunged into crisis and the Constitution was “the only thing which stood between us and real chaos.”

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By Bruce Allandice

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Call by Monday May 10

The Civil War Round Table

Volume LXX, Number 9

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