Upcoming Civil War Events

Nov. 2nd, Lake County CWRT: Gene Wells on "Disunion in the Confederacy"

Nov. 2nd, Kankakee Valley CWRT: Betty Carlson on "Jenny Hodges, Julia Grant"

Nov. 4th, Northern Illinois CWRT: General George Thomas (Jerry Alden) on "History will do me Justice"

Nov. 5th, Kenosha Civil War Museum: Veterans’ Heritage Day

Nov. 6th, McHenry County CWRT: Jerry Allen on "General George Thomas"

Nov. 11th, Milwaukee CWRT: Gail Stephens on "Early’s Valley Campaign"

Nov. 15th, Lincoln-Davis CWRT: Dennis Keesee on "Boy Soldiers in the Union Army"

Nov. 17th, South Suburban CWRT: Donna Work on "Poetry and Music in the Civil War"

Nov. 18th, Salt Creek CWRT: Annual book auction, at the Glen Ellyn History Center


Reminder 2012 Tour

Chicagoland (Chicago) May 3-5, 2012

2013 Tour – Antietam

Gail Stephens

November 11, 2011

Gail Stephens on "Jubal’s in the Valley, Summer, 1864"

In the fourth summer of the Civil War, a small Confederate army came close to carrying off the improbable – the seizure of Washington, DC.

In June 1864, Lt. Gen. Jubal Early slipped away from the works around Richmond, where Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia faced Grant and the Army of the Potomac, and moved rapidly through the Shenandoah Valley in Maryland with an army of 16,000 veterans. Lee’s orders to Early were to take Washington, which had been stripped of veteran troops to reinforce Grant.

The Union high command in Washing- ton refused to believe the first reports of a Confederate presence north of the Potomac and took no action. The Union commander in Baltimore, Maj. Gen. Lew Wallace, was convinced of the threat, and mustered a small force near Frederick, Maryland, where on July 9 he and his men managed to hold Early’s army an entire day, though outnumbered two to one. Warned by Wallace, Grant swung into action and put a corps onto steamer trains to reach Washington. The race was on. Though the Confederates did not succeed, this little known cam-
Trust Raising Funds For Perryville Battle Ground

The Civil War Trust recently launched a campaign to raise $181,250 to protect 141 acres at the Oct. 8, 1862, Perryville Battlefield in Kentucky. The total to be raised by the Trust will be matched $4 to $1, up to a total of $372,500. The federal Civil War Battle- field Preservation Program and a lead gift from a trustee will make the match.

Mary Koik, Deputy Director, Communications, said, “As is often a hallmark of our acquisitions, we’re excited about how this fits in a ‘hole’ in the existing park and preserved area. To date, this is the first major acquisition on the west side of Mackville Road.”

The Civil War Trust has helped save 385 acres at Perryville, almost all of it incorporated into the Perryville Battle- field State Historic Site. Koik said the 141 new acres “brings us all the more close to having a critical mass at the site.”

Confederates at Perryville pushed the Federals back in a battle that lasted from late morning until dark, after which the Confederates retired, leaving Kentucky under Union control.

The 141-acre tract of the Henry Bottom farm includes the ground where Brig. Gen. Bushrod Johnson, Daniel Adams and Patrick Cleburne’s brigades crossed the Wilderness Fields, according to Mitchell. It is wooded and screens a treed island on the Wilderness Battlefield, according to Mitchell. It is wooded and screens a treed island on the Wilderness Battlefield.

The only requirement for membership in The Civil War Round Table is a genuine interest in the Civil War and its era. For information, address Membership Committee, 1033 Hinwood, Darion, Illinois 60761, or edit@chicagocwrt.org.

Two Preservationists to Buy 81 Acres in Spotsylvania County—Two prominent local battlefield preservationists acquired an option to buy 81.69 acres in Spotsylvania County for $985,793. The land they call Wild- derness Fields is on both the Chancellor- ville and Wilderness battlefields.

They, with five others, founded The Central Virginia Battlefields Trust (CVBT) in 1996 to preserve battlefield land in the region surrounding Freder- icksburg. The CVBT has preserved 893 acres to date.

The 150th battle commemoration will be held at Perryville Battlefield Oct. 5-7 next year. The Southern Division and Western Federal Blues will manage the battle reenactments, with registration fees going to The Friends of Perryville Battlefield State Historic Site. For in- formation call (859) 332-8631 or visit www.perryvillebattlefield.org.

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Of the three tracts, the 51-acre parcel has minimal Civil War historical signifi- cance, Mitchell said, but the own- er stipulated that it had to be included in the deal. It is wooded and screens a housing development from the heavily- traveled Route 3.

None of the parcels is within the Fred- ricksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park boundary. The land therefore could not be donated or sold to the National Park Service without Congress expanding the park bound- ary. Mitchell said ownership of the properties will be transferred to the county.

The antebellum Ellwood Manor on the Wilderness Battlefield can be seen from the westernmost parcel of Wil- derness Fields, according to Mitchell. Preserving that land will help protect Ellwood’s viewshed. The family cem- etery at Ellwood is where Jackson’s am- putated arm is buried.

My Thoughts Be Bloody – The Bitter Rivalry Between Edwin and John Wilkes Booth That Led to an American Tragedy, was presented to the 70th meeting of The Civil War Round Table of Chicago on October 14, 2011, by Nora Titone, author of the book by that name. While Edwin was the most prominent actor of his time, his brother did not share this fame. John Wilkes had charisma but no classical training or natural gift for drama. He was despised by other actors and for a time he forgot lines was known to improper stage violence which left other actors in- jured. In December 1862, Chicago critics issued negative reviews, call- ing his performance at the McVick- er’s Theatre “a severe dose of rant.”

He foreshadowed his later actions when while drinking in the Green Room, a saloon near State and Madison, he uttered, “What a glori- ous opportunity it would be for a man to achieve immortality,” by killing Lincoln.

John Wilkes struggled to stay aflame as an actor. Before the war he played theaters in the south and west; dur- ing the war he played mainly minor and provincial theaters. He had no home — when not touring he lived with Edwin at his New York man- sion for much of the war. What reserves he had were lost in an ill- fated oil drilling venture. What financial success John Wilkes’ had later came from payments he re- ceived from the Confederate secret service.

Edwin, on the other hand, was a colossus, an international star who defied the 19th century stereotype of actor as huckster and pariah. Instead he achieved great wealth and fame, impressing even Fanny Seward when Edwin dined with her father in March 1864. The aristocratic Fanny found President Lincoln kind and good but “a gentle- man,” while Edwin was to her “a genius, a scholar, and a gentleman” despite his having no formal edu- cation. Unlike his brother, Edwin supported the Union, using his Broadway theater for fundraising to assist widows and orphans. On the third day of his inaugura- tion, Edwin gave a command per- formance for Lincoln.

Following the war, Edwin’s success continued unabated. He estab- lished The Player’s Club, a private club in Manhattan whose member- ship included many wealthy and politically influential figures of the Gilded Age such as Grover Clev- erland, Mark Twain, J.P. Morgan, and William Sherman. Out of respect for Edwin, any discussion of his brother or Lincoln was not permit- ted until after his death in 1865.

Booth family history was respon- sible for the brothers’ divergent paths and profound dislike for each other. Their father, British stage star and social radical Junius Bru- tus, left his family in London and took up with his lover, Mary Ann Holmes, in America where he de- posed her and their ten children on a remote Maryland estate. Only four years separated the brothers, but as a twelve year old, Edwin became his increasingly intemperate father’s travelling associate. While John Wilkes was sent to boarding academies in Maryland where he socialized with slaveholding gen-
Battlefield Preservation
By BRIAN SEITER

The Civil War Trust recently launched a campaign to raise $181,250 to protect 141 acres at the Oct. 8, 1862, Perryville Battlefield in Kentucky. The total to be raised by the Trust will be matched $4 to $1 for land valued at $72,000. The federal Civil War Battle- field Preservation Program and a lead gift from a trustee will make the match.

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The 141-acre tract of the Henry Bottom farm includes the ground where Brig. Gens. Bushrod Johnson, Daniel Adams and Patrick Cleburne’s brigades crossed Doctor’s Creek and climbed the steep banks to surprise Union First Corps defenders from the 3rd Ohio and the 15th Kentucky.

The barn, in which wounded had taken shelter, was set on fire by Confederate artillery. In plume of smoke was a landmark during the battle. At least 560 of the barn’s 740 casualties were killed, wounded or captured on the target tract.

Artist William D.T. Travis used the burning barn incident as the image for the Battle of Perryville in his 32-panel panorama "The Army of the Cumber-

land" which can be seen at Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History.

Most of the battle was fought on the Bottom farm, which was then more than 620 acres, according to site Perryville Battlefield State Historic Site Manager Kurt Holman.

The 141 acres and funds raised will help toward the Civil War Trust’s "Campaign 150: Our Time, Our Legacy" five-year goal of raising $40 million and saving 20,000 acres (see August issue front page).

To see maps, Holman’s description of the action and to donate online, go to www.civilwar.org.

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Two Preservationists to Buy 81 Acres in Spotsylvania County—Two prominent local battlefield preservationists acquired an option to buy 81.69 acres in Spotsylvania for $69,293. The land they call Wil- derness Fields is on both the Chancel-

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(from October issue of Civil War News)

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posed her and their ten children on a remote Maryland estate. Only four years separated the brothers, but as a twelve year old, Edwin became his increasingly temperate father’s travelling associate. While John Wilkes was sent to boarding academies in Maryland where he socialized with slaveholding gen-

try, Edwin toured with his father, gaining skill as an actor. Thus John Wilkes was informed by southern culture while Edwin, who lived in New York and performed in large northern cities, was supported by the union and associated with elite northern intellectuals.

Trone concluded that it is impos-

sible to separate John Wilkes’ Con-

federate zealotry from his being an actor, the son of Junius Brutus, and brother of Edwin. The Booth clan was “a dynasty of Shakespearean stars who out-Shakespeare Shakespeare in the plot line of their fam-

ily life.” They were a narcissistic and
toweringly ambitious family, torn apart by rivalry, John Wilkes’ ulti-

mate actions are inextricable from his family’s tangled history. But ironically, Edwin, who performed Shakespeare for three generations, is now relatively unknown, whereas John Wilkes achieved a notoriety far beyond Richard III’s mythical and forgotten “ambitious youth who tired the Ephesian door.”

The CWRT is indebted to Nora Titone for having mined Booth family history and for the engross-

ing "Round Table” discussion she invited after her presentation.

To hear the entire talk, there is a recording of the meeting (and every meeting) available from Hal An-
dell, audio librarian, Contact Hal at (773) 774-6871 or hal229@ameri
tech.net. To view his slide presen-

tations see http://classic.kodakgal-

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2013 Tour – Antietam

Future Meetings

Regular meetings are held at the Holiday Inn Mart Plaza, 350 North Orleans Street, the second Friday of each month, unless otherwise indicated.

Nov. 11: Gail Stephens on "Jubal's in the Valley, Summer, 1864"
Dec. 9: James Robertson, "The Untold Civil War"
Jan. 13: Parker Hills, "Chickamauga"
Feb. 10: Barry Bulkeley, "I Propose to Fight it Out"
March 9: A. Wilson Greene, "Nevins-Freeman Address"
April 13: Marshall Krolick, "Riding for the Union: 8th Illinois Cavalry Troopers"
May 8: Bruce Holden Reid, TBA
June 8: Dennis Frye, "Antietam"


Gail Stephens on "Jubal's in the Valley, Summer, 1864"

In the fourth summer of the Civil War, a small Confederate army came close to carrying off the improbable – the seizure of Washington, DC.

In June 1864, Lt. Gen. Jubal Early slipped away from the works around Richmon and, where Lee and the Arm of Northern Virginia faced Grant and the Army of the Potomac, and moved rapidly through the Shenandoah Valley into Maryland with an army of 16,000 veterans. Lee's orders to Early were to take Washing ton, which had been stripped of veteran troops to reinforce Grant. The Union high command in Washing ton refused to believe the first report of a Confederate presence north of the Potomac and took no action. The Union commander in Baltimore, Maj. Gen. Lew Walla ce, was convinced of the threat, and mustered a small force near Frederick, Maryland, where on July 9 he and his men managed to hold Early's army an entire day, though outnumbered two to one. Warned by Wallace, Grant swung into action and put a corps onto steamships to reenter Washington. The race was on. Though the Confederates did not succeed, this little known cam-

Gail Stephens has a Bachelor's Degree in International Politics from George Washington University in Washington DC and did graduate work at Johns Hopkins and Harvard Universities. She worked for the Department of Defense for 26 years, retiring in 1994 as a member of the Department's Senior Executive Service. Upon retirement, she began to study the American Civil War. She lectures regularly on various Civil War topics, including Monocacy, Major General Lew Wallace and the 1864 Maryland Campaign, and Civil War battlefield tours. She has written articles on Lew Wallace and Early's 1864 invasion of the North for several Civil War publications. Her book on Wallace's Civil War career, Shadow of Shilo, recently won the Civil War Forum of New York City's William Henry Seward Award for Best Civil War Biography of 2011.