

Civil War Seminars Sponsored in 2008n by the
Lansing/Sunfield Curtenius Guard Camp #17
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War



Curtenius Guard Camp #17

Department of Michigan

Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

Samuel W. Grinnell GAR Post #283

115 Main Street, Sunfield, Michigan

<http://suvcw.org/mi/017/017home.htm>

Civil War History Seminar Series

The Lansing/Sunfield, Curtenius Guard, Camp #17, Department of Michigan, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War announces the first in a series of Civil War History Seminars. The inaugural program will take place on **Tuesday, April 29th at 7 P.M. at the Sunfield Community Room** (186 Main Street, Sunfield Michigan). The Community Room is located just east of the Fire Department.

The presentation topic will be **The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln**. The presenter also will briefly discuss **Lieutenant Luther Baker's Involvement in the Capture of John Wilkes Booth**. Baker along with Colonel Enerton Conger and Lieutenant Edward Doherty lead the search party that captured Booth at Garrett's Farm 12 days after the President's assassination. Following the Civil War, Baker settled in Lansing Michigan and is buried in Lansing's Mt Hope Cemetery.

Lansing Historian, Rick Brown will be presenting the talk. Rick is a noted Lincoln Assassination Scholar and has spent over 40-years conducting research on the subject. It all adds up to an interesting and informative evening on this aspect of Civil War History. **There is no charge for the program and light refreshments will be provided.**

Subsequent seminars are planned every other month thereafter (April, June, October and February) at 7 P.M. with the exception of August and December, at the Sunfield Community Room. Future Civil War topics to be covered will include *1st Michigan Sharpshooters, Michigan's Engineers and Mechanics, History of the Curtenius Guards, Home Front during the Civil War, History of the Grand Army of the Republic, Collecting Grand Army of the Republic Memorabilia, and Contributions of African American Military Units during the Civil War.*

**Civil War Seminars Sponsored in 2008n by the
Lansing/Sunfield Curtenius Guard Camp #17
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War**



Civil War Seminars Sponsored in 2008n by the Lansing/Sunfield Curtenius Guard Camp #17 Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

Civil War Battle Flags the Topic of Presentation

The Lansing/Sunfield Camp of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War will be offering the 2nd in a series of free Civil War History Seminars, on Tuesday, June 24th at 7 PM. The presentation will be held at the Sunfield Community Room located at 186 Main St in Sunfield. The Community Room is located just east of the Fire Department in Sunfield.

The presenter will be Matt VanAcker who is Director of Tour & Information Services at the State Capital in Lansing. Mr. VanAcker will speak on the State of Michigan's "Rally Round the Flags" project.

Why were flags important to Civil War soldiers?

The color bearer carried the flag in the center of the regiment. Soldiers looked to the flag to maintain their position and to keep from being separated from their regiment. The flag bearer(s) and 8 to 10 corporals made up the color guard. The pace of the color guard set the pace for the entire regiment. During battle, the color bearer held the flag aloft to rally the regiment and renew its spirit. Upon capture of an enemy site, the victors raised their flag.



How did flags make a link between the war and the home front?

Some flags were made by women in the communities. Other communities raised money to buy a commercially made flag for their volunteers. Sometimes women in the community embellished the purchased flags with embroidery. If possible, the flag would be presented to the regiment with great ceremony, including speeches of presentation and of reception.

The Save the Flags Project

As part of the restoration of the Michigan State Capitol, a program was launched on July 2, 1991, to help save nearly 160 fragile, battle-torn Civil War flags that had been displayed for decades in the Capitol rotunda. How did these flags—carried into battle by Michigan volunteers over 130 years ago—find their way to the Michigan State Capitol? In 1866, after the close of the Civil War, Michigan regiments returned to the state their most precious mementos of the war—their regimental flags. Covered with the names of the battles in which they had fought, tattered from bullet holes and sometimes even stained with the blood of their bearers (for flag bearers would suffer the greatest casualties of the war), these flags stood for everything they had fought for—the honor of their regiments, the abolishment of hated slavery and the preservation of the Union.

The regiments presented these treasured banners to Governor Crapo, who promised that they would be preserved forever as a reminder of their sacrifices—the nearly 90,000 volunteers Michigan sent to the war. This building—our present Capitol—was built, in part, to provide a suitable place to preserve and display the flags.

When the restoration of the State Capitol began in 1989, it was thought that our biggest problem would be to protect the flags—then almost 125 years old—from accidental damage. But we soon discovered a much bigger problem. The flags were being destroyed anyway—actually turned to dust—not by construction during the restoration, but by age and by the way they had been displayed for so long. Standing upright and unfurled in eight crowded cases surrounding the rotunda, these huge, heavy, brittle silk banners were literally falling to pieces, and bits of the flags littered the bottom of each case. Light was bleaching them of color. Crowding was so severe that little could be seen of any one flag.

Mr VanAcker is actively involved with the project and will share his knowledge and insight regarding our State's Civil War Battle Flags and the process involved regarding their preservation. Light refreshments will be served.

For directions log on to the Curtenius Guard, Sons of Union Veterans website at <http://suvcw.org/mi/017/017home.htm> and click on the Civil War History Seminar link.

**Civil War Seminars Sponsored in 2008n by the
Lansing/Sunfield Curtenius Guard Camp #17
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War**



Civil War Seminars Sponsored in 2008n by the
Lansing/Sunfield Curtenius Guard Camp #17
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War



Curtenius Guard Camp #17
Department of Michigan
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

Samuel W. Grinnell GAR Post #283
115 Main Street, Sunfield, Michigan
<http://suvcw.org/mi/017/017home.htm>

Free Civil War History Presentation to Feature Michigan Engineers & Mechanics

The Lansing /Sunfield camp of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War will be offering the next in their series of free Civil War History Seminars on **Tuesday, October 21, 2008 at 7 PM at the Sunfield Community Room, located at 166 Main Street in Sunfield.** The Community Room is located just east of the fire department.



The topic of the presentation will cover the role of the Michigan Engineers and Mechanics in the Civil War. The presenter will be Mark Hoffman. Hoffman is currently deputy director, Michigan Department of History, Arts and Libraries and earned a B. A. from Michigan State University. His book, "**My Brave Mechanics, The Michigan Engineers and Their Civil War.**" was recognized with a State History Award by the Historical Society of Michigan in 2007. The book also was selected as one of the 20 Michigan Notable Books of 2008 by the Library of Michigan. "**My Brave Mechanics**" is the culmination of more than 20 years of research on the subject and draws heavily on soldier letters, diaries, and other wartime primary sources.

The Michigan Engineers served in the western theater during the Civil War and played a critical role in the Union victory. "**My Brave Mechanics**" covers their service in depth, including key roles in transportation, communications, and fortifications. Hoffman also chronicles the struggle between Regular Army and Volunteer engineers, as well as how the Michigan Engineers held their own when engaged as infantry.

As quoted in the book, "*As volunteer engineers for the Union Army, the 1st Engineers and Mechanics Regiment was made up of skilled artisans, craftsmen, railroad men, and engineers whose behind the scenes work was crucial to the Union victory. Charged with maintaining the Union supply line the engineers constructed a staggering number of bridges, blockhouses, fortifications, railroads, and telegraph lines to keep the Union Army functioning in the aftermath of battle.*" "**My Brave Mechanics**" traces the history of this little known unit, revealing its

substantial engineering accomplishments as well as its combat experience. Although the regiment was charged primarily with engineering work, it also saw substantial combat action and was frequently targets of confederate guerrillas and bushwhackers. Hoffman will lead listeners on a captivating journey of this remarkable but often overlooked unit that served with the Union Army during the Civil War.



Directions and maps to the meeting location can be obtained by visiting the Curtenius Guard, Camp #17 Sons of Union Veterans website at <http://suvcw.org/mi/017/017home.htm> and clicking on the Announcement link. They direction maps also are attached to this flyer.