

Monroe County Civil War Roundtable

The Sentinel

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“Legacy Profiles” End the Year...

Once again the Roundtable season has drawn to a close. This year it did so with a dual presentation from two of our regular members who recounted the stories of their Civil War ancestors.

Bob Willey kicked the evening off by highlighting the history of not one, but two, of his great, great grandfathers. **Samuel Faye Willey** was from Terre Haute, Indiana, and enlisted in Co. C, 31st Indiana Volunteer Infantry on September 20th, 1861, at the age of 20. Fighting in the Western Theater, he participated in the battles of Fort Donelson, Shiloh, the pursuit of Braxton Bragg toward Louisville (preceding the Battle of Perryville), Stones River and Chickamauga. At Shiloh, Sam was in the thick of the struggle at the “Hornets’ Nest” with Prentiss, facing overwhelming odds. After that fight was finished, he found five bullet holes in his jacket but was amazingly not injured. After Chickamauga, the entire regiment re-enlisted and, after a furlough back home, joined Sherman on the Atlanta campaign, fighting at Buzzard’s Roost Gap, Rocky Face Ridge, Resaca, New Hope Church, Cassville, Kennesaw Mountain, Peachtree Creek and finally in the Battle of Atlanta itself. At Kennesaw Mountain, Sam was at the apex of the “Bloody Angle” and at Chickamauga he again dodged the Grim Reaper with three bullet holes in his hat but no wounds. After Atlanta, the 31st joined the pursuit of John Bell Hood into Tennessee which led them to the bloody battles of Franklin and Nashville. Sam Willey was mustered out in Texas in 1865.

Walter Quentin Gresham, Bob Willey’s other ancestor in the war, was from southern Indiana and had been a Republican party organizer immediately before the war. When war erupted, Gresham offered his services to Governor Oliver Morton but some heated disagreements between these two men caused Gresham to be refused a commission. Eventually, after returning home to Corydon and enlisting as a private in the 38th Indiana, he was elected captain and then was appointed by Governor Morton to a three year command of the 53rd Indiana, probably to bury him politically for the foreseeable future in the Indiana Chief Executive’s eyes. This regiment was more a paper unit than a real one, and Gresham was required to put up \$2500 of his own money to back it, which he managed to do with the help of friends back home. Ordered to Savannah, Tennessee in March, 1862, the Gresham asked Grant to be included in the Shiloh campaign but was refused by Grant, but was then involved in the pursuit to Corinth, and later the Siege of Vicksburg where Gresham earned a Brigadier’s star for his leadership. Three more months of campaigning with Sherman to Atlanta earned Gresham another star and, as a Major General, he was placed in command of the Fourth Division of the Seventeenth Army Corps. Unfortunately, in the Battle of Atlanta on August 22nd, he was shot through the right thigh. He refused to allow his leg to be amputated, but the wound caused that leg to be two inches shorter than the other for the rest of his life. Gresham went on after the war to be a Federal District Judge, The US Postmaster General, US Secretary of the Treasury and Secretary of State. He ran for president in both 1884 and 1888 and is buried today in Arlington National Cemetery.

Our other Member/Presenter was Randy Stevenson, who recounted the story of not two, but *four* of his ancestors who played a role in the war. The first was **William Frank Starnes**, his great great grandfather, who we mistakenly promoted in the May *Sentinel* as being a Confederate. We apologize for the error! “Big Bill” Starnes, as he was known, was from German ancestors who immigrated to America in the early 1700s and settled in several places, including Illinois, where Big Bill hailed from. He enlisted as a private in Co. A of the 84th Illinois Infantry on June 25, 1862 at the age of 25. By the end of July, he had been elected a 2nd Lt. of the regiment so he must have been popular with his comrades. After some morale boosting by a \$25 signing bonus along with a similar amount of advance pay, and a send-off party by the citizens of Macomb, Illinois and the surrounding area, the unit now almost a thousand strong, left on September 23rd to join General Don Carlos Buell’s Army of the Ohio/Cumberland, arriving in Louisville on the 26th. Braxton Bragg’s Confederate forces were threatening the area at this time. They were involved in early October in the Battle of Perryville, but curiously, while fighting in the battle raged all around

them, they were never really engaged until a bit of skirmishing at nearby Danville. Big Bill was injured not in a battle but in an accident. He remained with the unit, however, suffering all the while, until late December when he entered a hospital in Nashville and resigned his commission. In December of 1863, he had recuperated enough to join a new unit and marry a woman almost ten years his junior. Space limitations prohibit going into Big Bill's colorful private life and his years after the war. He was plagued for years after the war by his injuries and applied for a disability pension in 1884 at the age of 47. He ultimately got a \$3.75 per month disability pension, dying in 1914 at the ripe old age of 77.

Another of Randy's ancestors, **Timothy Boyer**, also of German ancestry, enlisted in the 29th Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regimental Band, at the age of 41, interestingly doing so along with his son, **Allen**. The 29th saw some heavy fighting at Fts. Henry and Donelson, staying engaged at Donelson longer than any other unit, taking the brunt of Pillow's abortive breakout attempt. By the time Buckner surrendered to Grant after meeting at the Dover Hotel, the 29th had suffered 30 killed and 100 other casualties. Later at Shiloh, they took another 100 casualties killed and wounded, then were engaged in the siege at Corinth. Oddly, both Timothy and his son were mustered out in June of 1862 because Congress had decided it cost too much money to maintain a regimental band! Boyer died at 70 in 1890.

Finally, Randy's last ancestor, if only by marriage, to participate in the war was **David D. Schaub** of the 65th Ohio Volunteer Infantry. Born in 1838 in Ohio, he enlisted in Co. E of the 65th Ohio on November 9th, 1861. The 65th saw limited action on the second day of Shiloh, losing only two men wounded. Their most severe trial by fire was at Stones River in late 1862, early 1863 near Murfreesboro, TN. Rosecrans 44,000 man Army of the Cumberland faced Braggs 38,000 man Army of Tennessee. The regiment was engaged nearly the entire three days of the battle, losing almost 50 killed, over 100 wounded and 19 missing. Schaub was discharged on August 15th, 1863, living until he was 75, dying on Nov. 22, 1913.

Remember, if you have a relative from the CW era that you would like to "show off", consider being part of our Legacy Profiles series. You don't have to be a professor or an entertainer, just someone with a real story like those above to tell. We will help you with all aspects of any presentation. They need only be 20-30 minutes in length at most. Contact any executive board member (listed at the end of the newsletter) to make it happen!

... and What a Year It Was!

Our 2009-2010 season came to an end with the June meeting, and it was a great year for our Roundtable. Here is a brief list of some of the things that were significant about the season. We think 2010-2011 will be even bigger and better!

1. **Overlease Library now bigger and better than ever.** Our own "rolling library", the Overlease Collection, has gained contributions steadily and is available for all members. If you cannot get to a meeting, and especially now that we do not meet again until September, just contact a board member to gain access to the "stacks".
2. **Record number of out of town presenters and longest distance travelled.** There were a significant number of out-of-town presenters who presented great programs this year, including Greg Biggs from the Clarksville, TN, roundtable, David Fraley from Anderson, IN, Michael Willever from Indianapolis. Mr. Biggs sets the distance record for coming to our little roundtable, since Clarksville, TN, is on the southern border of the state, and he drove home that night! We truly appreciated his visit.
3. **Institution of the "Legacy Profiles" series.** The Legacy Profile series began this year, with our own members sharing the stories of their own ancestors who fought in the war. From Allen Sather's Iowa roots to David Wiley's ancestor at Fort Pulaski, to the lead article for this newsletter, these brief but fascinating vignettes bring the focus of the conflict to a very personal level. Again, if you have an ancestor who was involved in the war, contact a board member. We can help you get your family story in front of the group.
4. **Perryville trip-** The first annual Roundtable Field Trip was an April excursion to Perryville, KY, and the battlefield there that was one of the most significant in the Western theater, and surely the most prominent in Kentucky's history of the war. State Battlefield Park manager Kurt Holman gave a riveting explanation of the battle and a wonderful tour of the grounds, especially since his staff was trying to spirit him away to a surprise birthday party! For further detailed information on Perryville, go to the Civil War Preservation Trust's (CWPT) excellent website, www.civilwar.org/perryville10. If you have suggestions for next year's trip, let us know. (Gettysburg, anyone?)

Major Exhibit Closing in Indy

If you haven't seen it yet, try to get to the Indiana State Museum before July 25th. The exhibit [With Charity for All: The Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection](#) closes on that date. Who was Abraham Lincoln? Since his birth on a farm in the Kentucky wilderness some 200 years ago, Lincoln lore has transformed him into an almost mythological figure. This exhibit highlights artifacts that paint a picture of an ordinary man who rose to become, perhaps, the greatest leader in American history. This is a "must-see" for any Lincoln and/or Civil War buff.

Looking for a Rare Book?

Caveat Emptor Used and Rare Books, 112 N. Walnut, on the downtown square, has contacted us with a unique opportunity. They have received, and are selling for a price of \$200.00, the *Revised U. S. Army Regulations of 1863*. The book was originally owned by a captain in the 1st Div., 2nd Corps, and it is dated December 20, 1863. It is bound in the original blue boards with gold stamping on the spine. The interior is lightly foxed, but on the whole, the book is in remarkably good condition. As you can imagine, these manuals were well used, and it's difficult to find one in this condition. They also have a first edition of Michael Shaara's *The Killer Angels*. In general, they feel that, at any given time, they have perhaps 50-75 affordable books related to the American Civil War on their shelves. If you are interested, or know someone who might be, stop by the store and check it out.

Want to Take a Fun Quiz?

The Civil War Preservation Trust has recently come out with their annual Top Ten Most Endangered Battlefields list and there is a fun quiz you can take to test your knowledge of these places at <http://www.civilwar.org/history-under-siege/2010-endangered/2010-history-under-siege-quiz.html>. The questions are challenging and the CWPT always maintains a great informational website. If you haven't tried out one of their "Battles In Motion", don't wait any longer.

The National Archives Highlights the War

A friend of the MCCWR from the Monroe County History Center, Lou Malcomb, has alerted us to a great issue of *Prologue* magazine, a publication of the National Archives, highlighting many CW topics. Take a few minutes to look at it at <http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/>

150th Celebration...What Do *You* Want?

Next year is, of course, the 150th anniversary of the beginning of the Civil War. Commemorations are being planned all the way from the federal government to the National Park Service to state and local events. Do you have an idea of what you would like the MCCWR to concentrate on? If so, contact a board member and pass it along. We are looking for ways we can help to memorialize this significant date.

IHS Sponsored Trip

There are many trips available out there for the Civil War enthusiast, but one with local ties is being offered by the **Indiana Historical Society (IHS)** in October. The trip will be four days, three nights and will include air fare, accommodations, many meals and will stop at Frederick, MD. Harpers Ferry, Gettysburg, the Lincoln Cottage in Washington and more. Visit significant CW sites with your fellow Hoosiers. For details go to www.indianahistory.org/trip

IHS Exhibit to Be at History Center

Speaking of the IHS, at the end of this month they will be providing a travelling exhibit to the History Center called *Faces of the Civil War*. It will be in place for the 4th annual encampment at the History Center (see below) on July 31st. *Faces of the Civil War* brings to life the stories of many Hoosiers whose lives were touched, and in some cases taken, by the Civil War. Not all are well-known or revered – many were just everyday citizens fulfilling their duties to their friends, family, state and country. Rather than focusing on statistics and large scale battles, *Faces of the Civil War* illustrates how regular people coped with the tragic experiences of the day – all from an Indiana perspective. Hands-on, interactive elements enhance the visitor experience.

Civil War Time Line

A friend of the roundtable has passed along this interesting website he stumbled onto by accident. It is a time line of the war and covers many aspects of the conflict. Go to the following link to check it out:

<http://newoh.ohwy.com/progs/history/timeline.cfm?cat=3>

The Encampment is Coming!

The fourth annual Civil War Encampment on the lawn of the Monroe County History Center, 202 E Washington St. in Bloomington, is set to happen on Saturday, July 31st. Come on down and bring a friend that day to interact with the 35th Irish, the same group who was here last year. We also could use a few volunteers to man a table at the event for an hour or two at a time between 10 am and 4 pm. If you would like to help out (it's *really* a lot of fun to chat CW with folks there!), contact Secretary Steve Rolfe (see below) and let him know.

Special Civil War DVD Offer

Remember the Encyclopedia Britannica? Well, they are still out there! They are offering an American Civil War 2-DVD set covering the entire war, and at a special price of only \$14, with **free shipping** (USA addresses only). And you may [order now](#) [and pay later](#). Click to follow the link or send a clearly written order to:

Britannica Offer
P.O. Box 349900
Columbus, OH 43234-9934

[The following paragraph is a promotional excerpt from their website]: "The Civil War is arguably the most important event in American history since the birth of our nation. Now, **The American Civil War 2 DVD set** allows you to stand with "Stonewall" Jackson at the Battle of Bull Run and charge with Pickett's men at Gettysburg. This is the complete Civil War experience; dramatic reenactments, photos, maps, drawings, and paintings give you a most comprehensive and accurate presentation. The reenactments were painstakingly filmed over a period of 5 years and bring 11 of the war's most important battles to life, including Shiloh, Chickamauga, and Vicksburg. Learn about the issues, strategies, problems, and technologies that shaped each battle and the course of history. Ride with the great generals and walk alongside ordinary soldiers as you witness the horror, courage, and patriotism of America's first "modern" war."

They are offering a 60-day 100% money back guarantee with this offer. After a preview, this production follows the time line of the war mainly through battles. While basic, it seems to be accurate and would be an excellent beginner's or student's look at the conflict.

Our Apologies...

Due to some unforeseen circumstances and time constraints, your *Sentinel* has a much simpler (and not as good!) look this month, but we feel it is still packed with the usual interesting and helpful information. We plan to be back to our old selves with the fall issue in September. See you then!

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