



**Civil War Celebration  
In Lemont, IL May 13 at 7 p.m.**

The Lemont Area Historical Society in cooperation with the Lemont Park Foundation will be hosting a Civil War program at 7 p.m. May 13 (Friday evening) in the Old Stone Church museum on 306 Lemont Street. This year is the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of the Civil War or War between the States and Lemont played an important role in recruiting almost 300 volunteers from the small township. General Ulysses Grant is believed to have visited the church from his home in Galena to help recruit volunteers. A reenactment will be featured with a picnic or tea party outside to add to the historical event after the program. Music will also be featured. **Admission charge for program and picnic (see below)**  
Contact the society's web site for more details and other coming events.

**RE-ENACTMENT & PICNIC  
ADULTS - \$10.00  
CHILDREN - \$ 5.00**



**LEMONT QUARRYMEN  
VINTAGE BASEBALL TEAM**  
Sponsored by Lemont Area Historical Society  
**HOME OPENER: MAY 15, 1 PM.  
COVINGTON PARK (2 games)  
COVINGTON DR. & 127<sup>TH</sup> STREET  
LEMONT**

# Cornerstone

Lemont Area Historical Society  
306 Lemont Street Lemont IL 60439  
[lemontahs@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lemontahs@sbcglobal.net)  
[www.lemonthistorical.org](http://www.lemonthistorical.org)

## MAY EDITION

May 13: Civil War Reenactment & Picnic -7pm.  
May 15: Quarrymen Baseball at Covington Park -1pm.  
May 24: General Membership Meeting 7pm.  
June 4 – Quarry Walk – Meet at KA STEEL Parking Lot - 8am & 9am. (Two Tours)  
June 17 & 18: Tag Days  
July 26: “ALL ABOUT JAZZ” at This Must be the Place, Dinner 6:30pm. Program at 7pm.

## CIVIL WAR MUSEUM EXHIBIT

The museum also has a new Civil War exhibit downstairs to celebrate this important part of our history. Copies of Sonia Kallick's book, "Lemont And Its People" are for sale which contains many interesting stories of local volunteers and our Medal of Honor recipient, John Warden.



NEW CIVL WAR MUSEUM EXHIBIT

## *President's Message. . .*



We are starting to ramp up our activities for the warmer weather so we hope to see more of you at our events. Some new tours may be added and we have already had a couple good ones. Tours give us a chance to get out and see some things we may not have seen before and learn something new.

Our income has been down significantly the first three months of the year, so we are hoping and depending on our loyal supporters like The Park District and Village board to keep us afloat in these hard times. We're thankful to see the Township stepping in to support us as an Athens Club member.

We will be doing something special, probably in November to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the building, Lemont Methodist Church that had it's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary last October at the new church. The office and bridal room is redecorated and looks very nice so we expect more wedding bookings to help our income flow.

**Need volunteers for Tag Days – June 17 & 18**

*Sincerely Yours, Richard H. Lee*

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### **LIMESTONE RAFFLE COMING!!!!**

**1<sup>ST</sup> Prize: Weekend in "Music City"**

**(Historic Nashville)**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Prize:\$250.00**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Prize: Lemont Parking Permit or Cash Equivalent**

**4<sup>th</sup> Prize: Weekend for 2 in Historic Lemont**

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### **ATTENTION:**

**Keep an eye out for "This Old House –What 's Its Story?" Date to be announced.**

### **Lemont Area Historical Society**

*In the Old Stone Church at*

306 Lemont Street

Lemont, IL 60439

630-257-2972

[www.lemonthistorical.org](http://www.lemonthistorical.org)

#### **Museum Hours**

10 am to 2 pm Tuesday, Friday

10 am to 1 pm Saturday

1 to 4 pm Sunday

#### **Library Committee**

meets 10 am to 12 noon on Wednesday.

Visits by appointment only.

**The main floor of the museum is available for weddings, meetings, and events.**

#### **Board of Directors**

Richard Lee, President

Joanne Pick, 1st Vice President

Carol Garibay, 2nd Vice President

William Uznanski, Treasurer

Gary Roy, Secretary

#### **Board Members**

Barbara Bannon, Susan Donahue, Richard Meyer

Doris Peterman, Susan Roy

#### **Committees:**

##### **Strategic Planning**

Richard Meyer, Gary Roy, Susan Roy

##### **Resource Center**

Carol Garibay

Collections, Library, Genealogy,

Oral Histories, Photographs

##### **Community Outreach**

Rose Yates

Programs, Exhibits, Publicity, Tours,

Historic Sites, Web Site

##### **Membership**

Susan Donahue

##### **Sunday Volunteers**

Doris Peterman

##### **Wedding Comm.**

Joanne Pick, Carol Garibay

**Building & Maintenance:** Bill Uznanski, Richard Lee

##### **Web Master:**

Paul Froehle

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*Cornerstone* is the official newsletter of the Lemont Area Historical Society, a not for profit organization as set forth by the provisions of the State of Illinois. *Cornerstone* is published six times a year with a circulation of 200 issues. Issues are mailed or emailed to all members of the Lemont Area Historical Society. Complimentary copies are available. Publication offices for *Cornerstone* are located at 306 Lemont Street, Lemont, IL 60439. The editor may be contacted by writing to the Lemont Area Historical Society, 306 Lemont Street, Lemont, IL 60439, or leaving a message at the museum at 630-257-2972. Contributions to the newsletter are welcome, although acceptance of copy does not imply that the article will be published. We reserve the right to edit and rewrite to comply with our style. For information about membership in the Lemont Area Historical Society and memorials in the name of a family member or friend, see the membership application elsewhere in the newsletter

## Genealogy Corner



By Barb Bannon

### Illinois Civil War Prisons

The American Civil War lasted from 1861 to 1865 and total casualties were staggering, somewhere between 600,000 and 700,000 people died during the war. When you factor in the wounded, the total casualty number rises to around 1,030,000.

More than half of all deaths during the American Civil War were the result of disease not from battle. The primary culprits included typhoid fever, dysentery, tuberculosis and pneumonia with many of these the consequence of being held prisoner. In the very beginning of the Civil War, prisoners were exchanged right on the battlefield, a private for a private, a sergeant for a sergeant and a captain for a captain. In 1862 this system broke down, most of those Confederate prisoners who were paroled were back in the trenches within weeks.

Discussions about this problem lasted until October 1862, when Secretary of War directed that all commanders of places of confinement be notified that there would be no more exchanges. This decision would greatly affect the large numbers of prisoners in northern and southern prison camps. The so-called "holding pens" now became permanent prisons.

Nutrition for soldiers in both the North and South was inadequate most of the time. Understandably these crowded conditions caused medical care to be inadequate with many prisons lacking hospital facilities. Ignorance of proper



Using Chicago streets today, the entrance to Camp Douglas was on Cottage Grove Ave., between Thirty-First St. and Thirty-Third St

hygiene led to disease also many of the camps were in areas with poor drainage where stagnant waters soon accumulated. "holding pens" now became permanent prisons. Nutrition for soldiers in both the North and South was inadequate most of the time. Understandably these crowded conditions caused medical care to be inadequate with many prisons lacking hospital facilities. Ignorance of proper hygiene led to disease also many of the camps were in areas with poor drainage where stagnant waters accumulated.

Many people on both sides thought that poor prison conditions were due to cruelty but historians now believe the failure of POW camps was due to human error. Adequately housing so many people was next to impossible even in peacetime and with the burden of war it was not feasible at all. There were numerous prisoner of war (POW) camps on both sides of the conflict. More than 150 places in all and generally they fit into five types: fortifications, former penitentiaries, altered buildings, enclosures

around barracks or tents, and the open stockades.

ILLINOIS CIVIL WAR PRISONS cont:

**Alton Penitentiary**, one of four prominent sites in Illinois, was on the Mississippi just north of St. Louis. The Alton site opened in 1833 as the first Illinois State Penitentiary and was closed in 1860, when the last state prisoners (a few Confederate Soldiers) were moved to the new facility in Joliet. In late December 1861 the need arose to relieve the overcrowding at two St. Louis Civil War prisons. An order was given for an inspection of the closed penitentiary, improvements were made and the first prisoners arrived in February of 1862. Although it was the smallest Illinois prison and known for its many escapes, during the next three years over 11,764 Confederate prisoners would be brought to Alton Prison.

Conditions were harsh and the mortality rate was very high as at most camps. A State of Illinois cemetery, used for most that died, has a monument listing 1,534 names of Confederate soldiers that are known to have died. The prison closed in July 1865 when the last prisoners were released or sent to St. Louis. The buildings were torn down over the next decades and stone from the prison buildings is found in walls and other structures all over the Alton area.

**Camp Butler** in Springfield, a barracks type prison, received 2,000 prisoners taken at Fort Donelson, Tennessee and two months later that number grew to 3,500. The prisoners were housed in 21 wood-frame buildings meant to house 100 men each. In January, 1863 another 1,665 arrived and more than 500 a few months later. Due to excessive escapes a 12 foot high plank fence was built around the camp.

In May, 1863 the last of the prisoners were transferred out and the camp closed for the remainder of the war. It continued as an

instruction camp throughout the war. By 1874 most of the land was returned to cropland and has remained so since.

**Rock Island Prison**, constructed in 1863 was known as the most notorious prison camps in the North. The prison was not yet completed in December when the first prisoners were incarcerated. Over 5,000 total would swell the population in that month alone. There were over 12,000 total imprisoned there during the Civil War and almost 2,000 soldiers are buried there.

After the war, the facility was completely destroyed and all that remains to tell the story of these men who fought for the Confederacy is row after row of pointed grave markers at Rock Island Confederate Cemetery for about 1,950 soldiers. It has been told the reason the markers were made with points was to keep "Yankees" from sitting on them.

**Camp Douglas**, near Lake Michigan, the largest of the four, was another barracks type prison. During the war it held over 18,000 men, the single largest group in December, 1864 was over 12,000. The camp eventually became known for its poor conditions. The devastating Chicago winter of 1864 caused a loss of 1,091 lives in only four months, the heaviest for any period the camp's history. Camp Douglas had a death rate between seventeen and twenty-three percent, the highest of all Union Civil War prisons.

A monument erected at Oak Woods Cemetery, at 67<sup>th</sup> St. and Cottage Grove Ave, by Southern Veterans, is all that remains of Camp Douglas. The inscription reads: Erected to the memory of six thousand southern soldiers here buried who died in Camp Douglas Prison 1862-65.

Military records are becoming easier to locate with many websites now dedicated to family history research but tracing an ancestor killed

in the Civil War proves difficult. Direct contact with Libraries and Historical Societies  
**ILLINOIS CIVIL WAR PRISONS cont:**  
in the area where battles took place or where camps were located will help to better target your research.

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**Sidenote: We also remember that one of our own Lemonters, Thomas Driscoll, was a P.O.W. during the Civil War. Were there others? Time and research will tell.**

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Editor Note: At the end of this month we will have Memorial Day – a time and a day set aside for us to remember all those who paid the ultimate price fighting for our freedom and liberties.

The Civil War divided families just as it did our beloved nation. It can be difficult for us who live in the North to understand how deep the wounds are for those who live in the South even today.

A Civil War documentary “CIVIL WAR” by Ken Burns was shown on WTTW within the past few weeks. Ironically the war began in the same month: April, 1861. - and ended April. 1865. In this special we were shown not only photos but heard narratives. As I watched these words kept echoing from the South from the past to the present, “You who live in the North can not understand – we LOST and the wound for us will NEVER heal.”

One man said, (paraphrased) something that really brought it home for me - the lingering bitterness:

“When I was reading about U.S. history and WWII General Patton said, “The United States had NEVER lost a war and we weren’t about to now.” How could he have said that and so easily forgotten that his own family member had fought along side General Lee in a war and we did lose.” sd

## CIVIL WAR MEMORIAL - LEMONT

There is a Civil War Memorial in Legion Park, downtown Lemont, supported by funds from the Park Foundation and it features Images of Civil War days etched in stone on the front with the names of volunteers on the backside of the unique limestone slab.

LEMONT CIVIL WAR MONUMENT  
LEGION PARK



FRONT



BACK



## **SOCIETY NEWS**

*By Susan Donahue*

### **SUNDAY VOLUNTEER PROGRAM**

We thank the faithful volunteers who help man the museum on Sundays. The faithful are :Gail August, Pat Browne, Norma Johnson, Richard Lee, Howard Mitchell, Doris Peterman, Maureen Rogus, and Kim Savage.

### **TOURS:**



**TOUR GROUP AT ST. PATRICK'S**

Reflecting on the two recent tours: The former parishioners of the current pastor of St. Patrick's attended noon mass officiated by Fr. Boras, learned about the history of St. Patrick's, museum, our town, and the Hindu Temple. They had dinner at the Stonehouse Pub to complete their visit to Lemont. I have heard nothing but good things from the contact person I dealt with about how much they enjoyed their time here. Sue Roy, proprietor of Smokey Row, graciously had prepared gift bags with coupons from our local businesses – a pleasant surprise to those touring. We also had a smaller tour group of the Equestrian Club of Downers Grove, who also commented on the way our exhibits are displayed. Joyful music to our ears.

### **DEEPEST SYMPATHY**

We extend to Candy (Povalish) and Howard Mitchell and their family our sincere sympathy at the loss of Isabelle Povalish, Candy's mom. A very kind lady.

### **Membership Renewals:**

We are grateful for the renewal of memberships and new members: Joe & Barb Bannon Fam, Mr. & Mrs. Leo Cattoini, Mr. & Mrs. Tim Connellan, Charlene Counter, Susan Donahue, Carol Garibay, Frank Iwan, Fran Klappa, Joanna Kmiec, Pamela Laasch, Jim & Lori Madsen, Doris Peterman, Jerry Polaczek, Karen Rodde, Chuck & Susan Sahs, Mr. & Mrs. Don Tomes, Bill Uznanski, Amy Woods, Dan & Bonnie Zolecki, and Greg & Linda Zolecki.

### **NEW LIFE MEMBER: TOM HESS**

### **WRAP-UP MARCH PROGRAM**



Tom Hess, March program guest speaker, was engaging and informative. We also appreciated all the input from the audience both with photos and insights into "Funnels & Flakes. .

### **"HAPPY 90<sup>th</sup> BIRTHDAY – NORMA"**



Norma thanks everyone for all their good wishes, cards, gifts and says it truly was a surprise party. She thought she was going to the regular March program and noticed in passing that we were serving refreshments, which we often do. The "90 Year Young" birthday cake was a special treat. Two of her daughters and grandson were able to attend and are with her in the photo. We were happy to give back in a small measure all she has done for the LAHS over the years.



## *STEPPING BACK IN TIME*

*By Susan Donahue*

**CIVIL WAR RESEARCH:** I know you enjoy Barb Bannon's column on genealogy and probably have done some research about a subject that you found interesting too. I do also.

When the idea of a Civil War Memorial first came up thanks to Clyde Zimmer and Richard Lee I was one of those asked if I could help find some of the names of those who served from Lemont, which I did. The one reoccurring item I kept running into was a post here in Lemont called the J.B. Rood Post. I thought if only I could find the key to open this I would have all the names I needed of those who served from Lemont.

Unfortunately, the Grand Army of the Republic in Illinois was discontinued in 1956. This is a stumbling block but the Nancy Drew in me feels there must be a way around it – it is just a matter of persistence.

Many of you probably remember this from school but just in case the Grand Army of the Republic of Illinois or GAR was formed in Decatur, Illinois shortly after the Civil War by Benjamin F. Stephenson. It was the largest organization of Union veterans of the Civil War. The organization promoted comradeship among veterans, worked to increase pensions and assist war widows and orphans, and maintained homes for old soldiers.

In 1868, the commander in chief of GAR and Civil War General John Alexander Logan inaugurated the observance of Memorial Day to honor fallen soldiers. Membership in the staunchly Republican organization peaked at more than 409,000 in 1890. The last member died in 1955.

Now on to the connection with Lemont.

Among the posts of the GAR was **472 J.B. Rood Lemont, Cook County**

Ok, I said to myself who is J. B. Rood and what is his connection to the Civil War that a Lemont post would be named in his honor? If it had been John Warden, Lemont Civil War Medal honoree, I would have not been surprised. Here is what I learned:

Excerpt from Will County Advertiser, 1884 Obit

Joseph B. Rood was born September 29, 1844, in LaSalle County, IL. His father, Lewis Esq. was one of the earliest settlers in LaSalle County and a prominent citizen there until his death in 1875. Joseph Rood entered Beloit College, WI, for three years and then entered Monmouth College, IL. During his senior year at this institution a company was raised among the students in response to President Lincoln's call for 90-daymen, and he enlisted in May, 1864. This company became Company of the 13<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Illinois Volunteer Infantry and participated in the defense of St. Louis. Dr. Rood studied medicine with Dr. Pierce of Lisbon, Kendall County, and also at the Univ. of Michigan and Rush Medical College, Chicago, from which he graduated in 1868. He immediately began his practice in Lemont and has been here ever since Dr. Rood was an able and skillful physician and surgeon and his successful practice extended into five or six townships. He married Miss Amelia Wells, daughter of Joel A. Wells, Lemont's first Mayor, on July 25, 1872 by which marriage they had four children, of whom Flavilla and George G. are now living. Dr. Rood's genial disposition made him a favorite with all who had the pleasure of his intimate acquaintance. He believed the golden rule was the true guide of mankind. The funeral took place from the M.E. Church (Lemont United Methodist.)

**HOW DID HE DIE?**

On Friday morning, at two o'clock he was called by a Polander to attend the wants of his sick wife. The doctor responded immediately and the told the man to go to Wells & Warner's Drug Store, arouse the clerk, get his instrument case and wait for him; that he would saddle his horse and immediately follow. The man did as he was told and left the doctor busily preparing for his ride. On Lawrence Street from Stephen Street to Martin & Son's store a deep ditch had been dug to lay a water pipe, and except where it began and ended had been left open. The doctor mounted his horse and dashed down the hill, and turning the corner from the railroad crossing, without any thought of the gaping ditch, galloped full speed into it. From all appearances the horse must have stumbled on the embankment formed by the earth thrown out and fell headlong into the narrow grave-like ditch with its four feet in the air and the doctor underneath. The narrowness and depth of the ditch rendered it impossible for the horse to get out, and while struggling for freedom the poor man beneath was being crushed to death with each exertion. The man who went to the drug store performed his errand and then waited; as the doctor did not arrive, he went back to the Rood residence and must have passed within a few feet of the dying physician. He went back to the drug store, a second time to the house, and thinking he must have misunderstood, galloped his horse homeward. About 6 o'clock some men on their way to work discovered the horse lying in the ditch on its back; they gave the alarm and released it from its position alive with scarcely an injury, but the spirit of Joseph B. Rood had passed to the life beyond. The remains were taken to his late residence, where a broken hearted widow and fatherless children bowed in grief.

**Members are encouraged to volunteer and attend programs – bring friends – give a gift membership – it is the only way the LAHS will survive**

**Lemont Area Historical Society**  
**Membership**  
**Student:\$10.00-----**  
**Senior Citizen:\$10.00 -----**  
**Individual: \$15.00 -----**  
**Family: \$25.00 -----**  
**Corporate:\$50.00 -----**  
**Life Member:\$200-----**  
**Old Quarry Club:\$250.00 -----**  
**Friends of Keepataw:500.00 -----**  
**Athens Marble Club:\$1,000.00 ----**  
**Additional Donation \_\_\_\_\_**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email**  
**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail to:**  
**LAHS**  
**306 Lemont Street**  
**Lemont, IL 60439**

**ATJENS MARBLE CLUB MEMBERS**  
**VILLAGE OF LEMONT**  
**LEMONT TOWNSHIP**  
**LEMONT PARK DISTRICT**

We thank you for your support!