

The Sentinel



Snow, Snow & More Snow

This edition of *The Sentinel* is greatly abbreviated because we had the double whammy of having our February meeting cancelled not just once but twice due to heavy snow. The regular meeting was supposed to be on Tuesday, January 9, but the season's first really big snowfall closed schools that day and, true to our policy of not having a meeting if schools are closed, the Roundtable cancelled that evening. But, after much discussion, it was decided to try again for the next Tuesday, February 16. Then Mother Nature threw a real curveball and sent another winter storm to blanket the area and cancel the schools and the Roundtable meeting once again.

Not being too self-flagellating, and in deference to our stalwart presenter, Rick Watson, the decision was made after the second try to forego the February meeting and wait until March and (hopefully) some better weather. Rick's much anticipated program on the Committee on the Conduct of the War will now have to wait until next season to be shared, but it should definitely be worth the wait.

Sign-up for Perryville!

The first annual MCCWR field trip, in this case to the battlefield at Perryville, Kentucky, is set to take place the weekend of April 17. Details were to be presented at the cancelled February meeting, but the trip is still a "go," with more than half-a-dozen signed up so far. The trip will get under way early on the morning of Saturday, the 17th, arriving in Perryville by mid-day where an expert guide will lead us through both the ground and the history of this important early battle of the war.

Dinner will be enjoyed at a nearby restaurant, perhaps the Owl Tavern at the historic Beaumont Inn in neighboring Harrodsburg. While plans are still being formulated, Sunday morning will bring a leisurely return to Bloomington with perhaps a stop along the way at one of the many other historic venues along the way home. Contact any officer or executive board member for more details and to get your name on the list. There will be an informational display at the March meeting.



Perryville Battlefield scene sans snow

Next Meeting

Join us on Tuesday, March 9, at 7 p.m. at the Monroe County History Center (weather permitting, of course!) to hear member Allan Sather present a program in our Legacy Profile series on the story of Pvt. Jacob Mann of Company A of the 16th Iowa Volunteers who died at Andersonville Prison – Pvt. Mann was Allan's great, great grandfather.

Demolition Plans for Indiana Veterans' Home Buildings



Officials target two historic buildings on the campus of the Indiana Veterans' Home in West Lafayette for demolition, including the 1895 Administration Building, shown above.

The following, which may be of interest to Roundtable members, is taken from the website of the Historic Landmarks Foundation Western Regional Office website.

In the years following the Civil War, the government's approach to care of veterans looked more like home than an institution. In fact, the Indiana Veterans' Home (IVH) must have seemed idyllic. Accessed by a steep serpentine lane, the 1895 hilltop complex in West Lafayette once featured private cottages in leafy settings that housed retirement-age veterans, and often, entire families.

Today, the cottages are gone, but four of the oldest, most historically significant buildings remain, two of which—the 1895 Administration Building and the 1912 Men's Dormitory—have been targeted for imminent demolition by the IVH and the Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs

Historic Landmarks Foundation and the Wabash Valley Trust for Historic Preservation have been advocating for preservation of the endangered structures for years, proposing a number of reuse ideas—though so far none has found favor with IVH officials or the State, which plan to use federal stimulus funds for the demolitions.

Both buildings have suffered neglect for decades under the aegis of several state agencies, including the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, so any reuse will require substantial restoration, including making the structures ADA accessible. Along with the 1895 Commandant's Home and 1896 Lawrie Library, the Administration Building is listed in the National Register as part of the Indiana State Soldiers Home Historic District.

In January the Indiana Historic Preservation Review Board approved IVH's request to demolish the Men's Dormitory, but there is still time to save the Administration Building.

Historic Landmarks Foundation awarded a grant to the Wabash Valley Trust to prepare a feasibility study on rehabilitating and reusing the Administration Building. The study is expected to be complete by the end of March.

To support preservation of the Administration Building, contact Tommy Kleckner, director of Historic Landmarks' Western Regional Office, 812-232-4534 or tkleckner@historiclandmarks.org.

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