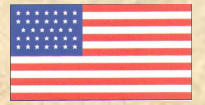


# The Union Defender

The Newsletter of Phelps Camp No. 66,  
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War



## March 2019

### WHAT HAPPENED AT THE DECEMBER MEETING?

Members enjoyed good food and fine fellowship at the camp's holiday dinner, held at Big Whiskey's in Republic.

### NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Phelps Camp will be on Tuesday, March 5, 2019 at 7 p.m. at the Wilson's Creek Visitor Center.

### DUES ARE NOW DUE

It's that time again! 2019 Phelps Camp dues are now due.

Please send a check or money order, payable to "Phelps Camp No. 66, SUVCW," to our camp treasurer, Kirk Singleton, at 13679 Lawrence 1245, Billings, MO, 65610-6202.

Dues will be \$30, the same as last year, although any additional contribution to the camp coffers will be greatly appreciated.

We have much to do as a camp in 2019. Let's get all of our current members to "re-up," and recruit some new members!



**AUTHOR TO GIVE  
PRESENTATIONS ON  
ELIZABETH KECKLY AND  
FIRST LADY  
MARY TODD LINCOLN**

Wilson's Creek National Battlefield, in cooperation with the Springfield-Greene County Library and the Civil War Roundtable of the Ozarks, will be hosting Dr. Jennifer Fleischner on Saturday, March 16, 2019 in the auditorium at the Springfield Library Center, 4653 S. Campbell Avenue.



Professor Fleischner's program is entitled "It May Be Charged That I Have Written Too Freely": Elizabeth Keckly and Mary Lincoln Remember and Write."

Dr. Fleischner will give two programs on March 16. The first, at 2 p.m., is geared toward young adults, and will not only tell the story of Keckly and Lincoln, but will explain how students can interpret historic documents. The second program, at 7 p.m., will be for adults and will focus on the relationship between Keckly and Lincoln.

Elizabeth Keckly lived a remarkable life. Born into slavery in Virginia in 1818, Keckly was forced into a relationship with a white man that produced a son named George. She purchased freedom for herself and her son in 1855 and established her own dressmaking business. When President and Mrs. Abraham Lincoln arrived in Washington, D.C. in 1861, Elizabeth Keckly became Mary Todd Lincoln's confidante and best friend. In 1868, Keckly wrote of their relationship in her book, *Behind the Scenes or Thirty Years a Slave and Four Years in the White House*. Keckly's son George died while fighting with the Union Army at the Battle of Wilson's Creek.

Professor Jennifer Fleischner is a professor in the Department of English, Adelphi University. Her books include *Mrs. Lincoln and Mrs. Keckly: The Remarkable Story of the Friendship Between a First Lady and a Former Slave; Nobody's Boy*, and, most recently, *A History of Adelphi University* (Pearson, 2015). Some of these titles will be available for purchase at the event.

## HISTORICAL NOTES

War Reminiscences— Bits of Unwritten History Pleasantly Recalled.

Rolla, Mo., Sept. 17—. . . I will indulge in some recollections of Rolla as I saw it just thirty years ago when the woods, fields and the valley of Beaver Creek were one vast camp, the soldiers sheltered in tents and huts to the number at one time, of 10,000 men, and the nights were lit up with the glare of a thousand camp-fires.

The heart of the city was then covered with dense chaparral of brush and black jack, threaded by bridal paths, which have since been transformed into beautiful avenues, lined on either side with imposing buildings. Rolla at that time had but one church structure, belonging to the Catholics. . . .

I also heard from the mouth of Mr. E.W. Bishop, the first pioneer and father of the city, the origin of the name of Rolla and how it became the county seat. The place had no name except that given by the railroad men of "White House," so named from the residence built by Mr. Bishop for the engineers. There was then no Post Office, the nearest one being at Little Prairie, six miles distant. A post office was secured. Then commenced a bitter contest for the county seat with Dillon, an aspiring place, also on the railroad. Three commissioners finally gave it to the town at the end of the railroad track. Then came a contest for the name of the county seat, the selection being according to the Dillonites. They proposed "Hardscrabble," which was abhorrent. At length Mr. George Coppidge, a Dillonite and a North Carolinian, proposed Raleigh as a compromise. Mr. Bishop accepted it, but suggested, as the name was difficult to spell, it be called Rolla, which carried, and it was thus entered on the court records.

The writer of this first struck Rolla on the 12th of August, 1861, two days after the Battle of Wilson's Creek, but the news of that fight had not yet reached there. It was then the end of the track known as the Southwest Branch of the Missouri Pacific, but the road was graded twelve miles beyond to the Gasconade. There was then no telegraph line nearer than Franklin (now Pacific), on the main line.

A large two-story block house, erected for the railroad men, stood near the track and was occupied as headquarters by Col. John B. Wyman, commandant of the post. On the elevated ground east of the track two full regiments were encamped, the Thirteenth Illinois, Colonel Wyman, and Seventh Missouri ("Bloody Seventh"), Colonel John D. Stevenson in command. The barren fields, then sprinkled with white tents, are now densely built over. . . .

(Continued in next newsletter)

