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Chicagoland's Outdoor History Museum

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Page 1 of 2

The untold stories of the Civil War

Naperville, Ill. — There are many stories of people who gave unselfishly to help others during the Civil War. This year's Civil War Days at Naper Settlement to be held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. May 21-22, features some of those unsung heroes, such as abolitionist Maria Weston Chapman, teacher Susie Baker King Taylor and Mary Ann Bickerdyke, a nurse from Galesburg, Illinois. You'll also hear some lesser known facts about famous personages such as Gen. Ulysses S. Grant and Gen. Robert E. Lee.

Rebecca Tulloch of Prairie Star Productions will portray Chapman, an abolitionist, journalist and contemporary of William Lloyd Garrison. "I took an interest in learning about women who advocated abolition during the Civil War," Tulloch said. "It's an interesting story and something different."

Mary Ann Bickerdyke will be portrayed by Naper Settlement Museum Educator Jo Ruggiero. While traveling with Gen. Grant's and Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman's armies, Bickerdyke helped set up many of the Union's 300 field hospitals. Ruggiero's horse, Princess, will represent "Old Whitey," Bickerdyke's beloved horse that was rescued from a battlefield.

Gen. Grant and his wife, Julia Dent Grant, will be portrayed by Scott and Peggy Whitney. "We tell stories about our life together," Scott Whitney said. "There are certain things he wouldn't talk about, that she would." Although Grant never mentioned it in his two-volume memoir, visitors might be surprised to learn that he was an expert horseman and was considered the best equestrian in the Army.

Don Locke has been portraying General Lee for more than 18 years and is a member of the National Registry of Living Historians. Locke said that he has done extensive research on Lee and has a deep commitment to share with others an accurate historical account of this outstanding man. "I could never in two lifetimes be the man that Robert E. Lee was, but by studying him and learning about his character, his belief in God, his devotion to family, his honor, and what he perceived as his duty, I feel that I can, in some small way, keep his important contribution to our history alive."

Susie Baker King Taylor was the first African American to openly teach black children and the only African American woman to publish a memoir of her wartime experiences. Educator and actress Ta-Tanisha Jordan, who will portray Taylor, said, "It's great that Naper Settlement wants to bring to light that minorities played a vital role in our nation's history. These are untold stories and unsung songs," she said.

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Civil War Days is held at Naper Settlement, 523 S. Webster St., Naperville. Tickets are \$12 adults; \$8 youth 4-17. Members and season pass holders are free. Discounted advance tickets are available at Naper Settlement and Naperville retailers including Anderson's Bookshop, Country Curtains, Oswald's Pharmacy and Just Ducky. Call (630) 420-6010 or visit www.napersettlement.museum

History comes to life at Naper Settlement, an outdoor history museum, located in downtown Naperville at 523 S. Webster St. Accredited by the American Association of Museums, Naper Settlement has 30 historic structures ranging from a rustic log cabin to an elegant Victorian mansion, listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Open year round, for more information about hours and admission prices, visit www.napersettlement.museum or call (630) 420-6010.

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