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A History Museum

CONTACTS:

Donna DeFalco, Marketing Coordinator, (630) 305-5250,

defalcod@naperville.il.us

Jody E. Ellyne, Marketing Director, (630) 420.6017,

ellynej@naperville.il.us

523 S. Webster Street
Naperville, Illinois 60540
P: 630.420.6010 • F: 630.305.5255
www.napersettlement.museum

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History comes to life at Naper Settlement's Civil War Days

Naperville, IL — When visitors step onto the grounds of Naper Settlement during Civil War Days, they are taking a step back in time. They'll have a chance to chat with and receive an autograph from many famous historic characters, such as President Abraham Lincoln, General Robert E. Lee and General Ulysses S. Grant. The annual reenactment is held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, May 15 and 16, at the historic 12-acre museum village, located at 523 S. Webster St. in Naperville. More than 300 reenactors participate in infantry and artillery drills, first-person interpretations, period music, recruitment stations and drills, living history demonstrations and activities for ladies. There is also a sutler's row. A battle takes place each day at 2:30 p.m.

Tickets are \$12 adults, \$11 seniors and \$8 youth 4-17. Discounted admission tickets are available until May 14 at Naper Settlement and several Naperville retailers including Anderson's Bookshop, Canterbury Shoppe, Country Curtains, Oswald's Pharmacy and Just Ducky. Members are free. For more information, call Naper Settlement at (630) 420-6010, the Event Hotline at (630) 305-5555 or visit www.napersettlement.museum.

Chicago Light Artillery, Battery A, is the host unit of Civil War Days. Reenactor Bill Kummerow said the unit is based on an actual battery that fought with the Union Army of the Tennessee, 15th Army Corps, under General Grant. Chicago Light Artillery will bring an original bronze cannon, known as a six-pounder, that was cast in 1846, and a reproduction three-inch ordnance rifle. Both weapons were commonly used during the Civil War.

"I enjoy talking to people about the Civil War, particularly the children and the adults who have serious questions," Kummerow said. "I've always loved history. One of my ancestors was General James William Denver and I'm a member of the Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War."

Reenactor Norm Camp will present a cooking demonstration to show what life was like for an army on the march. He said that each camp had a centralized cooking area with one cook per company. "Their mainstay would be coffee, which would go 24/7," he said. During the demonstration, Camp will be assisted by his wife, Gina. The two are celebrating their eighth wedding anniversary this year – they were married at Civil War Days 2002 in front of more than 2,000 onlookers.

Although providing medical supplies was essential, it was oftentimes difficult and risky. Actress and historian Leslie Goddard will portray Clara Barton, who defied convention and became the first woman to work on the front lines in a battlefield hospital. "There is probably no other single individual who raised as many supplies and personally delivered them to the battlefield," Goddard said. "And she did it on her own – she was never associated with any institution or had an official appointment by the government."

During the two-day event, there are many more characters to meet and activities that bring the past to life. Thank you to our sponsor, the Naperville Convention and Visitors Bureau.

History comes to life at Naper Settlement, an outdoor museum village, 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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