



MCHS News

January 2016

Opening Doors to Madison County History

Vol. 4 No. 1

715 N Main Street
Edwardsville, IL
62025

Hours:
Wed-Fri 9 am - 4 pm
Sunday 1 pm - 4 pm
Group Tours Available

Free Admission

Museum Phone:
618-656-7562

Library Phone:
618-656-7569

Web Address:
madcohistory.org

E-mail:
info@madcohistory.org

About Us:
The MCHS museum complex, consisting of a modern archival library, a museum in the 1836 Weir House and the Helms Collection Center, is owned by the nonprofit Madison County Historical Society and operated jointly with Madison County.

The Madison County Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization.

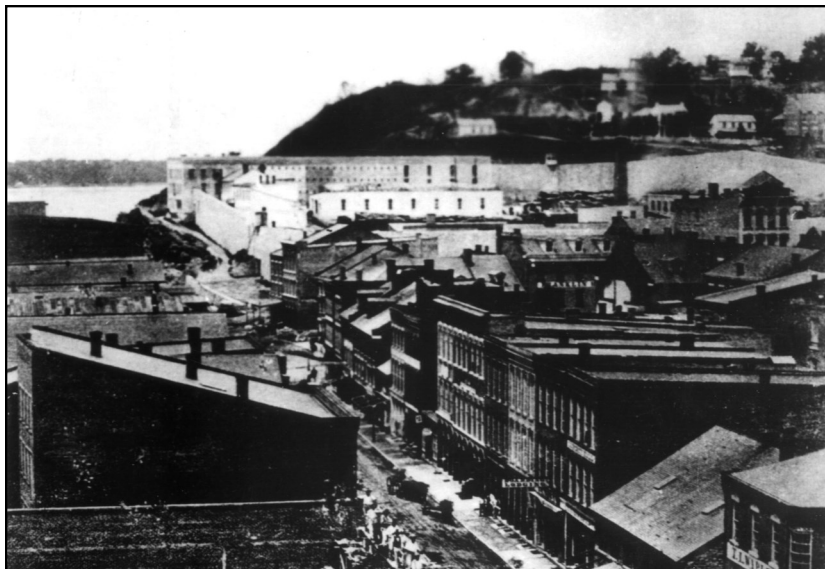
By Don Huber

The Alton prison opened in 1833 as the first Illinois State Penitentiary and was closed in 1860 when the last prisoners were moved to a new facility at Joliet. By late 1861 an urgent need arose to relieve the overcrowding at two St. Louis prisons. On Dec 31, 1861, Maj. Gen. Henry Halleck, Commander of the Department of the Missouri, ordered Lt. Col. James B. McPherson to Alton for an inspection of the closed penitentiary. Col. McPherson reported that the prison could be made into a military prison and house up to 1,750 prisoners with improvements estimated to cost \$2,415.

The first prisoners arrived at the Alton Federal Military Prison on Feb 9, 1862 and members of the 13th U.S. Infantry were assigned as guards under the command of Col. Sidney Burbank.

During the next three years over 11,764 Confederate prisoners would pass through the gates of the Alton Prison. Of the four classes of

THE PRISON AT ALTON 1833-1865



*The white walls of the Alton prison can be seen in the background of this photograph taken from the rooftop of Alton's City Hall in 1858.
Photo courtesy of Alton Telegraph.*

prisoners housed at Alton, Confederate soldiers made up most of the population. Citizens, including several women, were imprisoned here for treasonable actions, making anti-Union statements, aiding an escaped Confederate, etc. Others, classified as

Continued on page 4

WINTER CALENDAR

Program:

SUNDAY, JANUARY 24 - 2 P.M.
THE ALTON CIVIL WAR PRISON

Presenter: Donald J. Huber
Madison County Archival Library

Huber is a life-long resident of Alton who studied history and political science at SIUE. He has been researching Alton history for many years with a special interest in the Alton Military Prison. He has a fascinating collection of anecdotes and stories about the prison to share in addition to the information provided for this issue of the MCHS News.

Temporary Mini-Exhibits:

Madison County Historical Museum

**INFLUENCE OF THE CITY BEAUTIFUL
MOVEMENT ON MADISON COUNTY**

~

WHAT ARE YOU AFRAID OF?

Dolls from the past are sometimes considered "creepy" by today's standards.

~

**DISCOVERING THE HISTORY BEHIND
THE MADISON COUNTY COURTHOUSE**

~

CIVIL DEFENSE

Featuring a fallout shelter emergency kit.

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VOLUNTEERS

There are abundant and varied opportunities for volunteers at either the museum or the archival library. Please call if interested.

MEMBERSHIPS

Several membership levels are available to those interested in supporting the work of preserving Madison County history through an MCHS membership. Memberships run on the calendar year, Jan 1-Dec 31. Applications are available on our web site, at the MCHS Museum or at the Archival Library.

PUBLICATIONS

MCHS NEWS

6 issues annually
Cindy Reinhardt, Editor

WEB SITE

madcohistory.org

ARCHIVAL LIBRARY SPOTLIGHT

By Mary Westerhold, Archival Research Manager

Treasures in the Attic

Moving is hard work as anyone who has ever moved from one residence to another is well aware. But sometimes the sorting, packing, and unpacking can reveal long forgotten treasures.

In December 2001 the Archival Library moved from three very crowded rooms on the second and third floors of the museum building to the new Archival Library building. The new building not only permitted access to all of the collection on one floor, it also provided room to work and process large collections that were stored but not adequately cataloged.

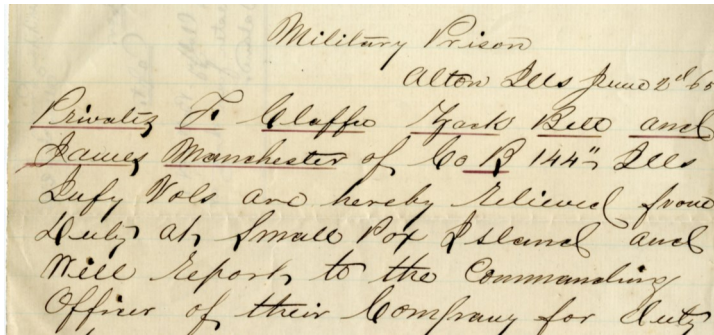
One such collection was a small box labeled "Melling, Patrick Joseph Civil War Papers." In this box were several folded documents that looked too old and fragile to unfold. The first step was to use a humidification chamber to allow the papers to

be unfolded and flattened without damage. After several weeks of this process, the cataloging began.

The collection contained the original papers of the Company B of the Illinois 144th Infantry from the Civil War. There were pay records, individual orders, and original enlistment papers (two originals for each individual) with over 100 documents in all.

The unit was organized in Alton in 1864 as a one-year volunteer unit with the main duty of guarding the Confederate Prison at Alton.

Apparently Mr. Melling failed to send the documents to the Illinois Adjutant General's office when requested and instead kept them. In 1965, 100 years after the Civil War, family members donated the box of papers to the Madison County Historical Society. Without the move to a larger facility, this treasure may never have been opened!



MUSEUM SPOTLIGHT

By Jenn Walta, Curator

The new exhibit on the City Beautiful Movement is complimented by a selection of artifacts and architectural elements from various structures in Madison County.

One such artifact on display is a bell that belonged to the Old Wabash Hotel in Edwardsville. The building, located at the corner of Union and Main Streets, was the second hotel built by John T. Lusk. Built circa 1840, the hotel was a popular stop on the stagecoach trail between Springfield and Saint Louis. It was also a prominent location for political and social activities. The bell, pictured above, was



used to announce the arrival of a stagecoach. Another source stated that workers rang the instrument to publicize meal times to guests and personnel at the courthouse. C.H. Crocker purchased the property in 1891, and the bell was stored in his home for nearly 40 years until it was donated to MCHS.

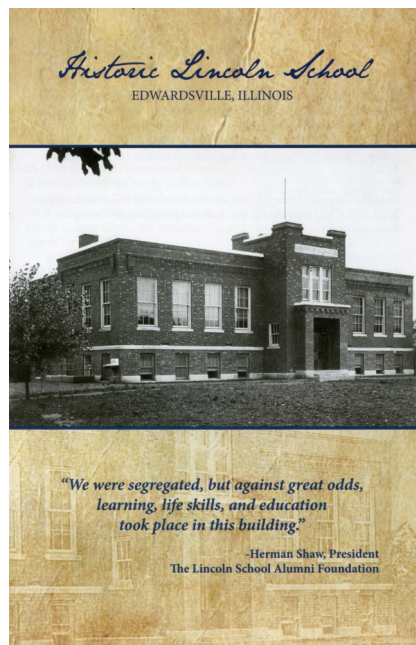


RECENT MCHS NEWS

Lincoln School Brochure

MCHS assisted with the publication of a new 8-page brochure on the history of Edwardsville's former "colored school." The original Lincoln School on Main Street was recently renovated and has reopened as the Mannie Jackson Center for the Humanities in conjunction with Lewis and Clark Community College.

The brochures were produced by the Lincoln School Alumni Foundation through a history committee chaired by SIUE history instructor, Dr. Victoria Harrison. Copies of the new publication are available at no charge at the Madison County Archival Library.



New Exhibits in Museum

Over the past two months there have been four temporary mini-exhibits installed at the Madison County Historical Museum.

In the front room on the north side of the building is a display celebrating the Centennial of the Madison County Court House and another that shows the contents of a fallout shelter emergency kit from the 1960s. Also sharing the room is a display highlighting research by Assistant Curator Casey Weeks on the City Beautiful Movement in Madison County. Both Alton and Granite City built new city halls during this period. Weeks incorporated her research information and photographs to create a large poster explaining the local impact of this change in architectural design. Complimenting the poster is a case of architectural elements. While none of these items are tied to the City Beautiful Movement, these artifacts connect us to local structures with fascinating stories.

The fourth mini-exhibit is in the large display case in the center hall. This doll exhibit illustrates how some dolls from the past might look mean or seem "creepy" by today's standards.

2016 NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS

Nov-Dec ♦ Thank you for supporting MCHS!

\$250 Edward Coles

Henry & Shirley Malench

\$100 James Madison

Bill & Miriam Burns
W. Scott & Marcia Delicate
Gary & Benna Denué
Kathy & Joe Gugger
Robert Gusewelle
William & Anna Haine
Joseph B. Helms
Charlotte Johnson
Dan Marshall
Don & Marlene Metzger
Arnold Meyer
Theresa Morrison
Lisa Shashek
JoAnn Nabe

\$50 Family

Tom & Donna Bardon
Patrick & Lynn Bury
Jim & Debbie Caulk

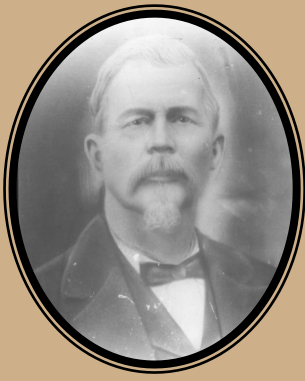
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\$35 Individual

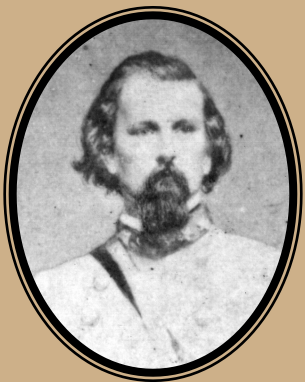
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Stella Smith
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Sarah Turner
Mary T. Westerhold
Sharon Whittaker

THE ALTON PRISON (CONT FROM PAGE 1)



A native of Alabama, Henry Whitman Moses (above) moved his family to Hempstead County, AR, in 1856. On May 13, 1862 he joined the Confederate Army and over two years participated in many battles and skirmishes until his capture on Oct 12, 1864. After capture he was sent to the Alton Military Prison, but stayed only a short time before being transferred to the prison at Rock Island, IL, and later to Richmond, VA. He was paroled on May 2, 1865.



Brig. Gen. Lloyd Tilghman was left to surrender Fort Henry to Gen. Ulysses Grant on Feb 6, 1862. The troops captured at Fort Henry were some of the first sent to Alton. As high-ranking officers, Gen. Tilghman and four of his staff members were allowed to stay at a local hotel and move about the city on parole. The general and his staff were later sent to Fort Warren, Boston, and eventually exchanged.

Gen. Tilghman returned to a direct command and was killed by a cannon ball on May 16, 1863 at Champion Hills, MS.



This view of the partially demolished cell block taken in 1870 shows the four by seven foot cells that held up to nine men. The small remnant of the prison still in existence today includes the three windows at lower left in this image.

Photo courtesy of the Alton Telegraph.

bushwhackers or guerillas, were imprisoned for acts against the government such as bridge burning and railroad vandalism.

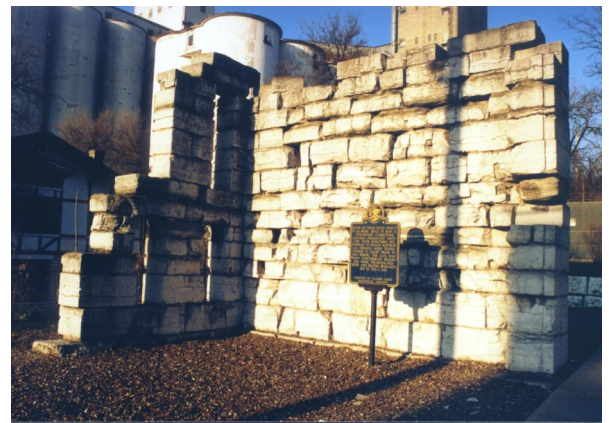
Conditions in the prison were harsh and the mortality rate was above average for a Union prison. Hot, humid summers and cold Midwestern winters took a heavy toll on prisoners already weakened by poor nourishment and inadequate clothing. The prison was overcrowded much of the time and sanitary facilities were inadequate. Pneumonia and dysentery were common killers, but contagious diseases such as smallpox and rubella were the most feared.

When smallpox infection became alarmingly high in the winter of 1862 and spring of 1863, a quarantine hospital was located on an island across the Mississippi River from the prison. Up to 300 prisoners and soldiers died and are buried on the island, now under water. A cemetery in North Alton that belonged to the State of Illinois was used for most that died. A monument there lists 1,534 names of Confederate soldiers that are known to have died. An additional number of civilians and Union soldiers were victims of disease and illness.

During the war several different units were assigned to serve as guards at Alton. The 13th U.S. Infantry was followed by the 77th Ohio Infantry, the 37th Iowa Infantry,

the 10th Kansas Infantry and the 144th Illinois Infantry. Formed at Alton specifically to serve as prison guards, the Illinois 144th was almost completely made up of Alton area residents.

The prison closed on Jul 7, 1865 when the last prisoners were released or sent to St. Louis. The buildings were torn down over the next decades and the land was eventually used by the city as a park named after the Joel Chandler Harris character, "Uncle Remus," from *Song of the South*. Stone from the prison buildings is found in walls and other structures all over the Alton area.



Above are three windows and part of a wall, all that remains of the Alton Prison today.

Photo courtesy of Don Huber.

A CONFEDERATE VETERAN REMEMBERS

Alton Evening Telegraph, Monday, July 8, 1935.

CONFEDERATE VETERAN RETURNS TO THE SITE OF PRISON WHERE HE WAS HELD DURING THE CIVIL WAR

S.A. Harrison, Aged 93 Recalls Days of 1864 Here

Seventy years after his discharge from the Alton military prison where he spent eight months as a prisoner of the Union forces just before the close of the Civil War, S.A. Harrison, 93-year-old Confederate veteran from Dent County, Missouri, Sunday revisited for the first time the scene of his wartime captivity.

"I didn't find much of the old prison left", the elderly veteran told a Telegraph reporter today. "Everything is changed – but I rather expected it would be."

Harrison's visit to the old prison site came in the course of a visit at the home of his granddaughter, Mrs. C.A. Coppedge in East Alton, where he has two great-grandchildren. With his daughter, Mrs. R.S. Null, and his grandson, S.C. Null and family of Rolla, Mo., he came by automobile, and made a pleasant call this afternoon at the office of the Telegraph just before the party started back to Rolla.

In Vigorous Health

Despite his age, Mr. Harrison enjoys vigorous health and a keen recollection of his days in the prison here. He reads without glasses and his hearing is excellent. When a reporter expressed amazement at his evident vigor at age 93, the old veteran replied with just a degree of honest pride: "Why I did a bit of ploughing last summer, sowed some wheat, and cut some corn." And just a little later on in the conversation he let it be known that he can still draw a steady bead on a squirrel and enjoyed a bit of hunting last fall.

"There were said to be 6000 prisoners here when I was sent to Alton in October of 1864," Harrison related in a short recital of his prison experience. "I had been cut off near Rolla and had surrendered. Of course the prison was terribly crowded. Bunks had been built up in tiers seven, maybe nine tiers high in the prison buildings. Three or more men slept in each tier, and I can remember that the first night I climbed up to the seventh tier to sleep."

Smallpox Prevalent

"Smallpox was still prevalent, and that first night I slept between two men, one of whom broke out with smallpox the next day but somehow I did not catch it. At

one time I worked in the prison hospital as a nurse. Sisters of Charity were helping to care for the sick, but the death rate under the crowded conditions was high. One night I remember helping to carry out 20 who had succumbed.

Because of the epidemic conditions, the moving of many coffins gave a chance at times for escapes. There was one occasion I know of when I helped carry out some prisoners who had concealed themselves in coffins, but they failed of success. They beat off the lids and jumped for the cart on which the coffins were being transported to the graveyard, but the guards caught them and brought them back."



Samuel Aaron Harrison, a former Confederate prisoner-of-war, visiting the remains of Alton's Civil War Prison in 1935. At his death in 1940 he was said to be the last survivor of the prison. One of the limestone blocks from the walls serves as a marker on his grave in Anutt, Missouri. Photo courtesy of the Alton Telegraph.

Harrison also recalled that the assassination of President Lincoln occurred during his prison stay. "I don't remember just how the news got into the prison," he said, "but I do remember that cannon boomed from the bluff top to the west most of the day."

As to the treatment of the prisoners, Harrison declared that it was probably as good as could be expected. "The guards were kind, and treated us well," he said, "but the main trouble was the food; we just didn't get enough. The crowding too, was a hardship. I got a bit of exercise now and then by being sent out to work digging away material from under the bluffs. But there wasn't much

freedom in this for the prisoners let outside the walls wore a ball and chain lest they make a break for freedom."

Walked 45 Miles Home

"Of Alton itself in prison days, I remember little. I got no chance to see the town, other than the levee. When I was released on Jun 5, 1865, I was given transportation to Rolla, then the terminus of the Frisco road. From that point I had to walk 45 miles to get back home and you can guess I was pretty weak when I tell you the walk took four days."

"I got home to find all the family possessions swept away and that I was penniless."

Born Apr 10, 1841, in Texas County, Missouri, Harrison, on Aug 6, 1862, when 21, enlisted in the Eighth Missouri Volunteers. On his return home he married the girl to whom he had been engaged when he enlisted. He resumed farming with fair success and gradually recovered from the losses the war had cost him.

On leaving the Telegraph office, he expressed pleasure at his long deferred visit to the prison site, and hopes he may come again at an early date.

A Letter Home

Alton Military Prison

22 January 1862/3

Dear wife it is with pleasure that I seat myself to drop you a few lines to let you know that I am well at this time and hope when this comes to hand it may find you all enjoying the same good blessing the rest of the boys is well with the exception of your brother samuel and he is mending very fast James Parker is also sick with the smallpox but he is doing very well and James Davis has the same he is doing as well as can be expected Mary I

not received a letter

have not received a letter from you for some time I have neglected righting several days hoping to receive one from you and still look anxiously for it gives me great satisfaction to peruse a letter that is ritten by your own hands the last letter we received was the one you and your father rote to James he spoke of sending money to the boys it has not come to hand yet they are in neede of it and would be very thankful if you would send it and I am

kneede of money

in knede of money my self and would be glad if you could send me some money as soon as possible Mary I hope we will be permitted to mete soon and god spede the time we may mete on earth once more and at last in heaven right often the boys all join me sending there love to you all give my love to all and our parents in particular and reserve a full portion to your self nothing more at present but remane your affectionate husband till death John G. Wallace to Mary G. Wallace

John G. Wallace

ALTON'S CONFEDERATE CEMETERY

One of the most isolated pieces of Alton history is located on Rozier Street in North Alton. Alton's Confederate Cemetery is the final resting-place for up to 2000 soldiers and civilians that died while prisoners in the Alton Military Prison.

The ground was originally purchased in 1833 by the State of Illinois for use as a cemetery for deaths that occurred at the Illinois State Penitentiary. Thirty prisoners died and were buried there from 1833 to 1858. When the penitentiary was put to use as a Military Prison in 1862 the cemetery again became the repository for prisoners remains. Prisoners were buried in trenches and wooden stakes identified individual bodies with numbers and initials. Records were kept by undertakers hired under contract by the U.S. Government. The original plot was filled by February of 1864 and an additional two acres were purchased.

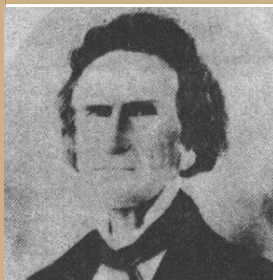
After the Civil War the Cemetery fell into disrepair and was neglected. The last effort to maintain the wooden headboards was in 1868. Soon afterward the cemetery became a cow pasture and the stakes were collected for firewood.

In 1905 Congress passed legislation that provided for markers for Confederate graves. In 1907 the local chapter of the Daughters of the Confederacy petitioned the U. S. Government to appropriate an amount equal to the cost of marking all the graves and erect a single monument to honor the dead interred there. The monument was completed on 1909 and contains the names of 1,354 soldiers who died while in the prison. The inscription on the monument says: "Erected by the United States to Mark the Burial Place of 1,354 Confederate Soldiers who died here and at the Small Pox Hospital on the Adjacent Island while Prisoners of War and whose graves cannot be identified."

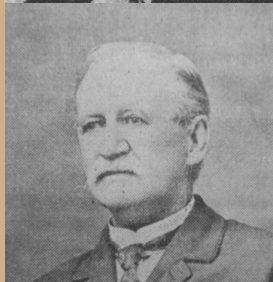
The gates of the Cemetery were erected in 1910 by the Sam Davis Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy. One pillar of the gates contains the poem:

**"Soldier, rest, thy warfare o'er:
Sleep the sleep that knows no waking:
Dream of battlefields no more,
Days of danger, nights of waking."**

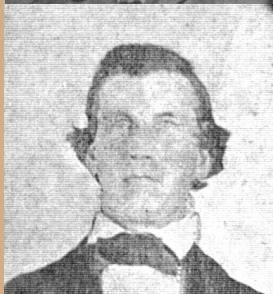
CONFEDERATE PRISONERS



Erasmus Potts (top photo) was born in Lincoln County, SC, on Aug 8, 1801 and eventually moved to Mississippi. He was too old to fight when the Civil War broke out so he devoted his time and money to supplying Confederate troops. He was arrested on Dec 27, 1862 for selling supplies to the Confederates and was sent to Alton Prison. He died Jan 15, 1863 of chronic diarrhea. His body was shipped home in a metal box filled with wood shavings. He was buried in Potts Cemetery near Winborn, MS.



Capt. Griffith Frost (center) was a newspaper editor before the war. Frost kept a diary while a prisoner at Gratiot Street Prison in St. Louis and at the Alton Prison. His book, *Camp and Prison Journal*, details the day-to-day activities at these two prisons. The photograph shown here was taken circa 1905.



William Hill (lower photo) and his son Archibald joined the Confederate service in the fall of 1864 near Fayetteville, AR. Both men fought at Fayetteville under the command of Col. Brooks.

Oral histories of the Hill family indicate that William Hill was wounded near Prairie Grove, AR and transported to Fayetteville where he was captured by Federal troops on Nov 4, 1864. Federal records support this account. Hill was visited by his wife at Fayetteville before being sent to the Alton Military Prison on Dec 7, 1864.

Hill was admitted to the hospital on Jan 21, 1865 and died a week later on Jan 30 from erusiphas, an inflammatory infection of the skin and mucous membranes.

Photos courtesy of Don Huber.

ALTON NATIONAL CEMETERY

During the Christmas season a great deal of attention was paid to a small plot of ground on Pearl Street when the Wreaths Across America program saw the decoration of all 530 graves in the Alton National Cemetery. Under the leadership of Margaret Hopkins, veterans and Boy Scouts placed wreaths on every grave in the National Cemetery. The remembrance of those silent inhabitants of that small plot is well deserved because we owe each and every one for their contribution to the safety and security of our country. In many cases their service was crucial to the preservation of our country as one union.

The Alton National Cemetery is one of 125 national cemeteries in the country administered by the Veterans Administration. Created by the National Cemetery Act of 1867, it provided for the burial of Union soldiers who died in our deadliest war, the Civil War. Civil War battles resulted in casualties greater than any previous war and in much greater numbers than any government was prepared to deal with. There were more soldiers killed in one day of fighting at Shiloh than in all other wars fought by the United States, including the Revolutionary War. Carnage on such a grand scale left battlefields covered with bodies. At places like Cold Harbor, Virginia, 7,000 soldiers died in the first 20 minutes of the battle. When the battle was over it was said that one could walk across the battlefield and never walk on the ground it was so strewn with bodies.

At Alton the Civil War took its victims not from battle but from disease. Of the 620,000 soldiers who died during the Civil War fully two-thirds died of disease. Diseases such as smallpox, dysentery, pneumonia, rubella and infection were deadly due to the absence of simple antibiotics and sanitary conditions. This was true at the Alton Military Prison among the Confederate prisoners and by association among the prison guards as well. The guards died of diseases caught from the prisoners and in some cases from other guards.

Confederate prisoners who died during the war were buried in what is now known as the Confederate Cemetery in North Alton. Union soldiers who died were buried in a section of the Alton Cemetery known as "Citizens Ground." During the war approximately 200 soldiers died while serving as guards at the Alton Military Prison.

Alton was also the southern terminus of the Chicago and Alton Railroad and thousands of soldiers arrived at Alton by train to be loaded on steam boats for southern battlefields. Among these were the random soldiers who perished while in route. These soldiers were rarely returned to their families and more likely were interred in the Alton Cemetery along with their comrades.

Although legislation was passed in 1867 for the creation of national cemeteries,



Alton National Cemetery.

Photo courtesy of Don Huber.

Alton's National Cemetery didn't come into existence until 1938. At that time the Alton Cemetery donated a plot of land to the federal government to be used as a National Cemetery and final resting place for veterans of at least 4 wars at that time. In exchange the government was to provide an adequate entrance to the cemetery on Pearl Street to include a rostrum and receiving room for veterans burials. The Works Progress Administration was in charge of the construction of the entrance as it appears today. Also constructed at that time was a set of steps on Union Street at the rear of the cemetery.

Work also began on reinterring all the bodies in the National Cemetery in accordance with federal guidelines. Soldiers were removed from graves throughout the cemetery at the behest of families and all soldiers buried in Citizens Ground were reburied in the new National Cemetery. Three officers who died in the Mexican War in 1847 were included in the new cemetery as were soldiers who served in the Civil War but died after 1865. Included among the last group were two soldiers who served in the U.S. Colored Infantry, black regiments raised in Illinois who served near the end of the war.

Where Are They?

High on the top of a hill, overlooking the Milton Cemetery and the Wood River, are the headstones of George and Amos Ernest, Company C, 144th Illinois Volunteer Infantry. The stones were issued by the government to veterans of the Union Army. The brothers were members of "The Alton Regiment," which was formed in 1864 to specifically serve as guards at the Alton Prison. Both men were mustered into service on Sep 7, 1864, at Camp Butler in Springfield. Amos was discharged on Feb 24, 1865 for disability. An article from the *Alton Telegraph* from Mar 24, 1865 tells a sad story. Amos and George died on Mar 16, 1865 within 20 minutes of one another. Evidently, Amos had been sick, and George had cared for him until the day before they died. It was thought that George died from the stress of nursing his brother.

That might finish the story except that in Alton's National Cemetery there is an almost identical set of headstones, for George and Amos Ernest, of the 144th Illinois Volunteer Infantry.

So, are George and Amos buried in Milton Cemetery or in the Alton National Cemetery? The burial records of Milton Cemetery go back to about 1900. All records earlier than that have been lost or destroyed. The soldiers buried in the National Cemetery who died during the Civil War were buried first in the Alton Cemetery in a plot called "Citizens Ground." Records for the Alton Cemetery show no record of burial for George or Amos.

Since the *Telegraph* article states that the brothers were from Upper Alton and that they were buried in one grave, one can only surmise that they are buried in the Milton Cemetery. Wherever they may rest they are together.

Continued on page 8



Madison County Historical Society

Opening Doors to Madison County History

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Although Pvt. George Thomas Tracey, pictured above, was only 15 at the outbreak of the war, he was big for his age and went from one enlistment station to another, lying about his age, until he was accepted into Company A, 10th Kansas Volunteer Infantry. He fought in several significant battles before the unit was assigned to Alton in Jan 1864. Duty at Alton in Jan 1864 was as dangerous as a battlefield assignment because of a severe winter and a bad outbreak of smallpox. Nineteen of his regiment died during service in Alton.

Tracey survived and returned home to marry and raise a family of 12 children.

ALTON NATIONAL CEMETERY (CONT FROM PAGE 7)

Segregation was never a practice in the Alton Cemetery and did not become a factor in the National Cemetery.

Veteran burials continued at the Alton National Cemetery until the early 1960s when the cemetery was declared full. Cremated remains are still accepted for burial at Alton, but full burials are no longer accepted. The cemetery is the final resting place for over 220 Civil War veterans, three Mexican War veterans and a number of veterans from the Spanish-American War, World War I, World War II and the Korean War.

Today, the total number of burials stands at 530.

The Alton National Cemetery underwent a complete makeover last summer when all the grave stones were reset and the plot was re-sodded. The administrators at Jefferson Barracks are in charge of this cemetery and do a great job of maintaining the dignity warranted in such a place.

As a true measure of the reverence accorded this final resting place of so many veterans, not one wreath went missing over the holidays.

MARY'S RESEARCH TIP

By the time you read this newsletter, the news of Ancestry's discontinuance of Family Tree Maker (FTM) software has become a reality. No more sales, although support will continue through 2016. This announcement in December 2015 sent a major rumble through the genealogical community.

What does this mean for users of FTM and Ancestry's online Treesync? If you are looking for new PC software for your family tree (as I am), which one will integrate best with current FTM data and media and also provide the flexibility and charts and other printed information that I need? Is it time to quit using PC based software and switch to a cloud based alternative? These are tough questions and

there is not one answer that fits everyone's needs.

My suggestion is to decide what features are MOST important to you and find the software or cloud based alternative that offers those options. Keep in mind that the major players in the genealogy software world will be offering special discounts for Family Tree Maker users in hopes that Ancestry's loss will be their gain. (RootsMagic and MyHeritage posted special offers within days of Ancestry's announcement.) Your FTM software will continue to work indefinitely on your PC, so you have time to decide what works best for you. Check out the special offers and enjoy your search for an alternative. It's just another genealogical quest!