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History You Can Touch at Zurko National Civil War Show in Wheaton, Illinois

Article & photos by Brian Maloney

It's billed as Chicagoland's Massive National Civil War Collectors Show & Sale, and that's no exaggeration! Bob Zurko, of Zurko Promotions, revived the bi-annual event a few years ago, bringing back a Civil War show to the DuPage County Fairgrounds after an absence of several years. Now in its third season, the show boasted big crowds all day, with shoppers wandering among the more than 300 tables of artifacts from the Civil War, Spanish American War, and Revolutionary War.



From Shiloh Relics, a Bailey & Co., Boston Civil War-era dress sword, the very one featured on the jacket of John Thillmann's book *Civil War Army Swords* - \$15,000. 731-438-3541

Wow! I found this dated 1861 oil painting depicting a Confederate ironclad warship in Phillip Lamb's booth, asking price \$7,500. 828-669-0792



Tennessee's Fort Donelson Relics brought some great Civil War ordinance, including this field-found Hotchkiss 3.8" shell with brass time-fuse adapter - \$625. 931-801-5129



Georgia collector Everitt Bowles of Civilwarbadges.com brought much more, like these G.A.R. Encampment advertising paperweights, priced at \$235 and \$250. 770-926-1132



Dress Uniform, plus document archive of Vermont Brigadier General George F. Davis, from Shiloh Relics - \$11,500. 731-438-3541

Civil War Henry Rifle Brings \$17,000 at Kramer Firearm Auction in Prairie du Chien, WI

Article & photos by Brian Maloney

Where could you find a collection of over 100 antique & vintage firearms, hundreds of examples of military memorabilia dating back to the Civil War, and a choice group of Native American artifacts - all displayed on the stage of a historic movie theatre? Why, at a recent Kramer Real Estate & Auction Service event in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, of course! There's not a bad seat in the house inside the Kramer Auction Gallery converted movie house-turned-auction house, smack in the middle of the city's historic downtown district. The prize of the day: a rare Henry 1860 rifle, selling for an amazing \$17,000!



Top: Austrian Cape Gun (shotgun/rifle combination), marked Franz Sodja Ferlach - \$850, bottom: 1932 Winchester Model-21 12 gauge trap gun, with full provenance - \$6,250.



From top: Winchester 1886 rifle, shortened octagonal barrel - \$1,100, Winchester 1886 rifle, first-year of production model - \$4,700, Winchester 1876 rifle, 28" round barrel - \$2,750.

This rare New Haven Arms Co. Henry Rifle. With several repairs and modifications, the rifle still sold for an impressive \$17,000!



Auctioneer Kurt Kramer with the 1st-year Winchester Model-1886 45-70 caliber rifle that later sold for \$4,700.

Continued on pages 23, 24 & 25

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Zurko National Civil War Show Settles in for Third Successful Season

Article & photos by Brian Maloney

Anytime I attend a specialty show, it strikes me how many different worlds of collecting there are - and how those worlds often don't overlap much with each other. Such is the case with those folks interested in the American Civil War. Exactly why interest in the subject is so high might have something to do with the very scope of the conflict. Over three million Americans fought in the Civil War, with 600,000 perishing either on the battlefield or from disease.

Or perhaps it's because the American Civil War was the first war that was so meticulously documented, both in print and in photographs. Whatever the reason, Civil War buffs have been around since right after the end of the conflict. The Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.), the fraternal organization of Union Army veterans, alone boasted over 400,000 members. And you can add in the countless thousands more members of similar Confederate veteran organizations, plus clubs for sons, daughters, and descendants of those soldiers.

Modern Civil War enthusiasts are as varied as they ever were. Civil war reenactment clubs are very popular all over the U.S. and beyond. There are scores of reenactment organizations, publications, and supply firms. You can find organized reenactments throughout the year; in fact, there are sometimes several to choose from on any given weekend! A good place to find more info: www.civilwarreenactors.com.

Those with a more scholarly interest in the Civil War often join one of the dozens of Civil War Round Tables, located both in the U.S. and in countries as far away as Australia, France, and Denmark. Illinois, and the Chicago area in particular, has always been a center of Civil War interest. In fact, the very first Civil War Round Tables started here nearly 50 years ago. There are now nearly a dozen round table groups scattered throughout Illinois alone.

And then there are the Civil War artifact collectors. There were around 200 of them displaying their wares at the show, completely filling the main hall of the DuPage County Fairgrounds in Wheaton, just west of Chicago. As you might imagine, there

was no shortage of firearms, swords, and the like, but the breadth of the Civil War collector's interests was surprising.

John Walsh of Fort Donelson Relics came from Tennessee with a fascinating array of Civil War artillery ordinance. These massive shells ranged from solid iron "bolts" used to destroy fortified structures to hollow shells designed to explode above opposing troops using a time-fuse automatically lit when the shell was fired.

Some of the most coveted Civil War memorabilia are those examples that can be attributed to a particular soldier, especially one that later became famous. Among the best in that category at the show: a pair of dress swords shown by Michael Simens. The swords were worn by Union Army Colonel Joseph H. Keifer, who later was promoted to Brigadier General. After the war, Keifer was elected to the Ohio State Senate, then as a U.S. Representative, becoming Speaker of the House. With full documentation, the pair was well worth its \$17,500 asking price.

Whether you are interested in Civil War era firearms, photography, Native American artifacts, and much more you can find it here. I found dealers specializing in everything from Civil War era jewelry to G.A.R. & U.C.V. memorabilia. In fact, you'll find military artifacts here ranging back to the American Revolutionary War period.

Even if you're not a Civil War buff, you'll have a great time at the show. The dealers are a friendly lot, and knowledgeable to an amazing degree. All are happy to share that knowledge, whether it's a tutorial on the rapid progression of rifle technology during the 19th century, or explaining the difference between a percussion-fuse and a time-fuse artillery shell. As they speak, you'll be able to touch and hold the very history they're talking about - something you can't do at most museums!

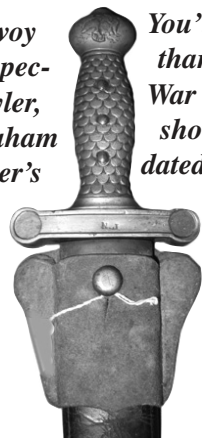
The spring 2009 edition of the Zurko National Civil War Collectors Show & Sale has already been scheduled for Saturday, April 18th. Plus, Zurko Promotions has a brand-new Centreville, Michigan Civil War Show. Held in conjunction with the Centreville Antiques Market, the new show will debut very soon - on Sunday, October 5th. You can find more details at www.zurkopromotions.com, and as always, keep an eye out for all of Zurko Promotions events in the Auction Action Antique News!



From Prairie house, a pristine Civil War era carpet bag - \$225. 815-824-2829



L- Tom McEvoy brought this spectacular Schuyler, Hartley, & Graham medical officer's sword, asking price \$2,495.



You'll find more than just Civil War items at the show, like this dated 1834 Ames artillery sword shown by Tom McEvoy - \$1,395.



Collector Tom McEvoy specializes in carte de visites, the little 2 1/2" x 4" photographs that were wildly popular in the latter half of the 19th century. He brought a wide selection, especially those with Civil War era images.



From Schoolmaster Antiques, a beautifully complete 18th century surgeon's amputation kit - \$9,500. 608-356-1017



Shiloh Relics displayed this Civil War Tranter revolver owned by Joseph D. Wilson of the 46th Tennessee Infantry. In an inscribed case & with full provenance, the pistol was priced at \$15,000. 731-438-3541

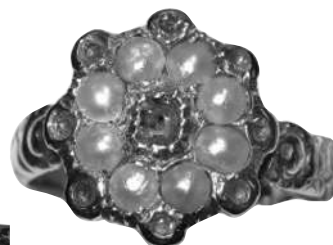
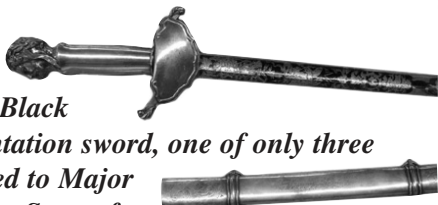


Hard-to-find marked C.S. spur, from Charles Stafford's Relics.com - \$2,400. 662-415-9121

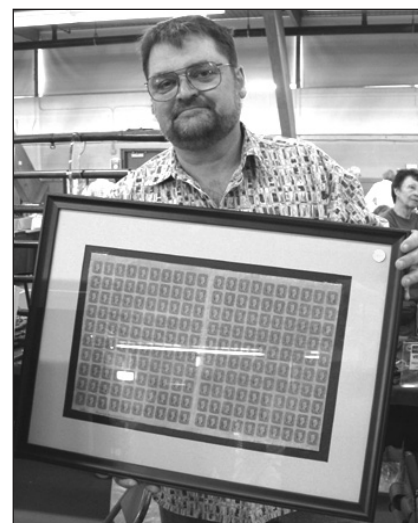


Rare Virginia-style CSA belt buckle, from Relics.com - \$2,700. 662-415-9121

From John Sexton, a very rare Ball, Tomkins, & Black "Emperor's Head" presentation sword, one of only three known examples. Presented to Major Thomas Livingston by the State of Illinois, the gold-washed solid silver sword was priced at \$23,000.



Georgian era Boston emerald, pearl, and gold ring, from Facets of History - \$695. 423-836-0690



Civil War Ephemera dealer Harvey Warrner with a rare full sheet of period 10-cent stamps, marked in the margin: Bank Note Engravers, Richmond, VA, No. 1 - \$2,950. 317-979-1808



Rafael Eledge of Shiloh Relics was on hand, here offering his opinion of an attendee's rifle. He's one of the best in the business, appearing regularly as a Civil War expert on PBS's Antiques Roadshow. 731-438-3541



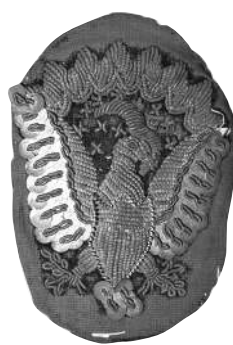
Kim & Michael Simens brought some fantastic Civil War arms, plus fellow show-traveler Maxie the dachshund.



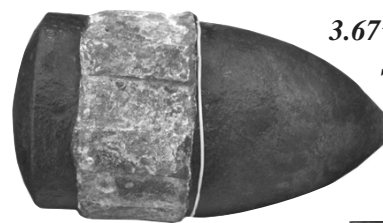
Facets of History brought a fascinating selection of 18th & 19th century jewelry, including this circa 1850 hairwork brooch. 1 5/8" in length, the brooch was priced at \$1,250. 423-836-0690



Mid-19th century ivory child's memorial cross brooch, from Facets of History - \$495. 423-836-0690



From Facets of History, a circa 1855 "Jeff Davis" embroidered officer's hat device, named after the then Secretary of War Jefferson Davis - \$595. 423-836-0690



3.67" Schenkl shell with Schenkl percussion-fuse, from Fort Donelson Relics - \$495. 931-801-5129



This 1948 Illinois G.A.R. Encampment ribbon (from Warren Barber - \$185) marked the state's last one; no surprise, as most of the Civil War veterans would have been 100 years old at the time!



From MichaelSimens.com, a pair of Civil War swords owned by Colonel Joseph Warren Keifer, later a Brigadier General, U.S. Representative, and Speaker of the House. With full documentation, the pair was priced at \$17,500. 216-541-4111



From Fort Donelson Relics, a near-perfect 4.2" Federal Parrot Bolt with brass sabot, asking price \$650. www.fortdonelsonrelics.com



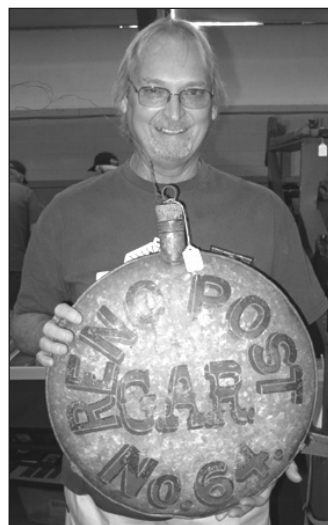
Warren Barber brought hundreds of examples of post-Civil War organization ribbons, including these Daughters of Union Veterans and Women's Relief Corps examples, most priced at under \$50. 269-685-5704



Indiana G.A.R. Encampment ribbons, priced from \$39 to \$175 at Warren Barber's booth. 269-685-5704



From Pete's Buffalo Saloon & Trading Post, a rare Sharps Model-2 1874 rifle, dated 1877 - \$14,500. 847-682-7062



Keith McGrew of McG's enterprises with a terrific jumbo G.A.R. Post canteen display sign, asking price - \$995.



Bob Zurko revived this Civil War Show, held at the DuPage County Fairgrounds, after an absence of several years. The bi-annual show, now in its third season, is already a big success, with over 300 tables of merchandise completely filling the sold-out hall.



Winchester Model 1873 rifle with the rare nickel-plated receiver and 22" round barrel, from Pete's Buffalo Saloon & Trading post - \$7,350. 847-682-7062



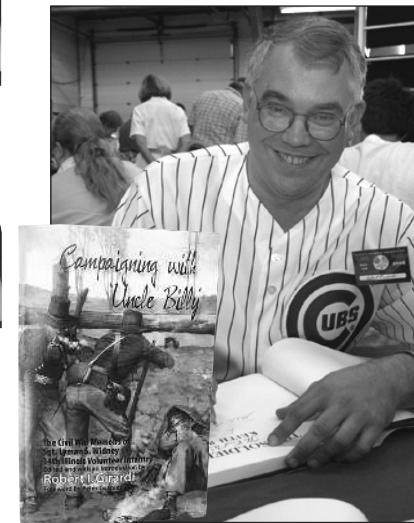
Another rare early rifle from Pete's Buffalo Saloon & Trading Post, a U.S. Springfield Model-1870 .50-70 caliber example, one of only 312 made before the switch to .45 caliber - \$12,250. 847-682-7062



From Pete's Buffalo Saloon & Trading Post, an impressive 19th century buffalo hunter's skinning kit with period tools - \$5,750. 847-682-7062



Uncut sheet of eight Confederate States of America 10 dollar bills - \$995 from Harvey Warrner. 317-979-1808



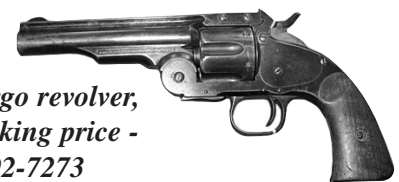
Author and historian Robert Girardi was busy signing copies of his latest of six Civil War themed books - Campaigning with Uncle Billy, The Civil War Memoirs of Sgt. Lyman S. Widley, 34th Illinois Volunteer Infantry. You can get your copy at www.trafford.com. 773-693-7387



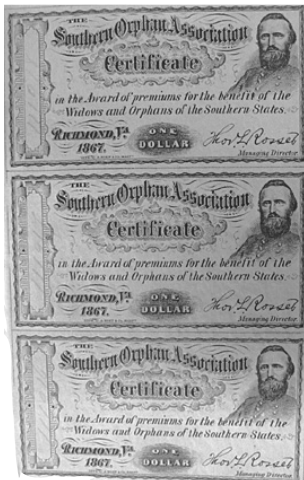
Dated 1889 Milwaukee G.A.R. Post pressed glass goblet, from McG's Enterprises - \$90.

Rare Smith & Wesson

Schofield/Wells Fargo revolver, from C.S. Arms, asking price - \$5,250. 540-592-7273



From Cliff Sophia's C.S. Arms, a Spencer 1860 Cavalry Carbine - \$2,550. Cliff explained that it was this gun that this gun helped tip the war in favor of the Union troops that used it. The first widely used repeating rifle of the Civil War, it could shoot seven rounds as fast as you could work the lever and pull the trigger. 540-592-7273

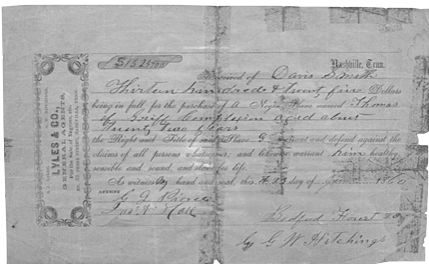


Uncut sheet of three post Civil War Southern Orphan Association one-dollar lottery tickets, from Phillip B. Lamb - \$495. 828-669-0792



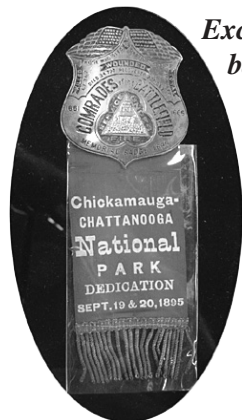
From Museum Quality Americana, a T. Stevens embroidered ribbon commemorating the famous Iron Brigade, in a period frame - \$1,895. www.mqamericana.com

From Museum Quality Americana, a near-perfect pair of Union Artillery Colonel's shoulder straps - \$2,950. www.mqamericana.com

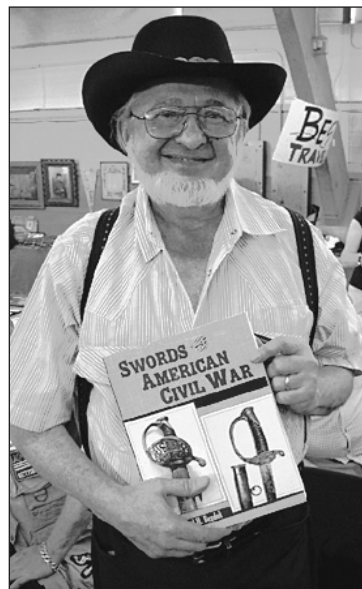


Very rare slave bill-of-sale signed by N. B. Forrest, who would later become one of the Confederacy's most noted Generals, from Phillip Lamb - \$2,500. 828-669-0792

Set of 71st Pennsylvania Corps (worn at Gettysburg) badge, uniform buttons, etc. - from Museum Quality Americana - \$5,000. www.mwamericana.com



Exceptional Comrades of the Battlefield badge commemorating the dedication of the Chickamauga-Chattanooga National Park in 1895 - from Civilwarbadges.com - \$395. 770-926-1132



Author Richard H. Bezdek was on hand, signing copies of his latest work *Swords of the American Civil War*. The book is the first complete photographic survey of both Union & Confederate swords, offering more than 700 photographs of regulation and presentation swords. You can order it, or any of Richard's five other related books, at www.paladin-press.com. 847-297-3817



The show has become one of the best Civil War shows in the nation - over 300 tables filled with thousands of artifacts ranging from firearms and swords to documents, photos, and uniforms.



At the aptly named Museum Quality Americana, this fantastic collection of Lincoln assassination memorabilia - including a piece of the curtain from the president's private box - could be yours for \$7,500. www.mqamericana.com