

## Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War Camp #17 History Seminar Attended by 90 People

On Tuesday, June 30, 2009, another banner crowd of 90 people attended the Lansing/Sunfield Curtenius Guard Camp #17, Civil War History Seminar. The seminar was held at the Brethren Church located on Grand Ledge Highway in Sunfield. This was a new and larger location due to the crowd of 103 people that attended the previous seminar in April.

Our speaker, Valerie Marvin from the Tour and Information Services Division of the State Capitol in Lansing, did a marvelous job on her presentation on **“Elijah E. Myers: America's Greatest Capitol Architect.”**

Elijah E. Myers was one of America's greatest architects\*. Born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1832, Elijah Myers studied law, then carpentry, before apprenticing with a friend who was an architect. Myers started his own architectural firm in Springfield, Illinois. His first important commission was an Illinois county courthouse. In 1872, Myers' life changed dramatically when he won the commission to design the new Michigan State Capitol.



Valerie Marvin and Camp Commander Dave Arnold

Myers went on to design capitol buildings in Texas, Colorado, Utah, and Idaho. He also designed many other buildings in Michigan. Some have been demolished (Lansing High School – 1875, Eastern Michigan Asylum for the Insane – 1878, and Grand Rapids City Hall - 1888), while others survive (Central United Methodist Church in Lansing - 1888, Stockbridge Town Hall - 1892 and Howell Carnegie District Library - 1902). By the time of his death in 1909 (and subsequent burial in Detroit), Elijah Myers had become one of the most successful and important architects of public buildings in America.



Egotistical, temperamental, flamboyant, and exceedingly talented, Myers left his mark across the country both through the buildings he designed and the events in which he participated, including President Lincoln's funeral, and both the Philadelphia and Columbian Expositions. Yet despite his contributions to architecture, today Myers remains largely forgotten.

The speaker, Valerie Marvin, led the audience on a captivating journey of E. E. Myers and his architectural accomplishments not only in Michigan, but also throughout the country. At the end of the program, Ms Marvin was presented with a certificate of appreciation from the Camp.

The Curtenius Guard, Camp #17 Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War will be taking the summer off before starting the popular seminars back up in the fall.

\* A Grand Old Building that Still Looks New, Aug 2008 – Michigan History Magazine