



Curtenius Guard Camp #17

Department of Michigan

Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

Samuel W. Grinnell GAR Post #283

115 Main Street, Sunfield, Michigan

<http://suvchw.org/mi/017/017home.htm>

Free Civil War History Seminar “Michigan Soldiers at Andersonville Prison”

The Lansing/Sunfield Curtenius Guard Camp #17, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW) sponsored its first 2010 seminar in its series of *Free Civil War History Seminars* on Tuesday, February 23, 2010 at the Brethren Church in Sunfield, Michigan. The presentation covered was “**Michigan Soldiers at Andersonville Prison.**” The crowd, at 145, was the largest that the Camp has had at one of its seminars.



During the Civil War, Union soldiers captured in battle were sent to a prison camp in Georgia run by the Confederate Army. The actual name of the prison was *Camp Sumter*, but history books call it *Andersonville Prison*. Lansing historian Chris Czopek presented new information about Michigan soldiers who stayed there as “Guests of the Confederacy.” During his presentation, he

told about the Michigan governor who had been a prisoner at Andersonville. New information was revealed about the most colorful group of Michigan prisoners – the captured troopers from General Custer’s Cavalry. He also told about how the Medal of Honor was awarded to a Michigan soldier for his daring escape from Andersonville. Other new discoveries discussed included how Native American soldiers from Company K (*Michigan’s Native American Sharpshooters in the Civil War*) ended up at Andersonville. He ended the evening with the amazing story of Morgan Dowling; a smooth-talking Sergeant in the 17th Michigan Infantry who fell in love with a Southern belle living at the local plantation and who promised to come back and marry her if she would help him escape.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER –Chris Czopek “Lansing’s History Detective” Chris grew up in Michigan during the Civil War Centennial. Stories in *LIFE* magazine and special Television programs captured his imagination and started a lifelong interest in Civil War history. As a boy, he would watch a movie on TV – then go to the library and find out how much of the story was true. This was the beginning of his career as a “history detective”.



After college, he worked for a newspaper, joined the US Army, and served six years in Military Intelligence, volunteered for an archaeological dig in Israel, worked as a tour guide at the State Capitol Building in Lansing, a photographer for the State Senate, and in the offices of the Michigan State Police. He lives in Lansing with his wife, Bonnie.

In recent years, Chris has become well known to Michigan historians for his expert research of Civil War soldiers. Called “Lansing’s History Detective” by the Lansing State Journal, he has published three books on local history, and has been a consultant for The History Channel. Currently he collecting information on Michigan soldiers held at Andersonville prison for a future book project.