

The American Civil War

Adventures in Learning explores this unique, bloody period. What were its triggers? Where were its battles? Who were its leaders? Who served? What of the families of the soldiers who died? How did the nation change? We invite you to ten presentations. Our guest lecturers are authors scholars and historians and include four professors from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

These 50-minute presentations will be held each Friday beginning January 6 at 11 a.m. at South Broadland Presbyterian Church, 7850 Holmes in Kansas City, Missouri. For more information, call Shepherd's Center Central, 816-444-1121.



January 6

“American Civil War—Why?”

On Dec. 20, 1860, South Carolina’s state convention voted to dissolve its union with the United States of America. Historian

Jim Howk reveals the events from 1787 to 1861 that led to the Civil War. Could it have been prevented? Why did all attempts at compromise fail?



February 10

“Battle of Wilson Creek: August, 1861”

Union General Nathaniel Lyon, with only 6,000 men, attacked 12,000 Confederate troops near Springfield, Missouri. This surprise attack kept Missouri in the Union. Fort Leavenworth Military History Assistant Professor, Dr. Terry Beckenbaugh’s next book focuses on abolitionists.

January 13

“General Lee Before the War”

On the Civil War’s eve, many thought Robert E. Lee the most respected man in the U.S. Army. His 1861 decision to resign his commission to serve Virginia has obscured his pre-war life as an exemplary soldier and leader. Author Ethan Refuse is a Fort Leavenworth military history professor.



February 17

“The Bloody Events of 1863”

A sequence of events increased our area’s violent involvement in 1863. Darryl Levings recalls Quantrill at Lawrence, Kansas, the fatal jail collapse in Kansas City, and Deportation Order 11. Levings, Kansas City Star editor for 30 years, wrote the Star’s recent Civil War 150 series.



January 20

“The Crisis of Fort Sumter”

Jim Howk returns to explain the first engagement of the Civil War: Fort Sumter.

The long, bloody war began with the crisis over whether the fort belonged to South Carolina or was federal property. The firing began after neither side could, or would, back down.



February 24

“Battle of Westport: October 1864”

Subtitled “Missouri’s Great Confederate Raid,” author, historian and speaker Paul Kirkman, tells how 30,000 combatants battled across Jackson County. With Kansas City’s population only 2,000, this massive disaster left 3,000 casualties spread near Loose Park for old men, women and children to bury.



January 27

“General Grant Before the War”

With his lackluster pre-war career, few expected Grant to become commander of all U.S. armies, much less to succeed as military leader.

Gregory Hospoder, Associate Professor, was named 2011 Teacher of the Year by the Military History Department at Fort Leavenworth.



March 2

“Railroads in the War”

As both sides competed in learning how to use trains, the North’s superiority in “railroad generalship” was key to winning.

Dr. Christopher Gabel’s other works include World War II tank maneuver doctrines. He teaches at US Army command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth.



February 3

“Overview: The War in Missouri and Kansas”

Historian and author Don Gilmore depicts the barbaric encounters between Union raiders and Confederate guerrillas as one pursued the other from farm to farm with mounting civilian casualties. Besides his military career at Fort Leavenworth, he’s also taught at UMKC, Longview and Avila University.



March 9

“Daily Life of the Civil War Soldier”

Jim Beckner, a founder of Missouri Civil War Reenactors Association, has participated in some 600 living history events, debates and reenactments as well as more than 30 movies. His talk will reveal the personal issues of the soldiers. He is a retired American history teacher.

