

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 21, 2011

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## **Galena to commemorate Civil War sesquicentennial**

*Special events honor 150th anniversary April 12, 15-17*

GALENA, Ill. – Today children climb upon it and peer down its empty tube, but 150 years ago the Blakely Rifle was a fearsome weapon used with deadly accuracy in the Confederate assault upon the federal troops at Fort Sumter. The bombardment heralded the start of a four-year battle to preserve the Union. How it came to be in Grant Park will be one of many stories told at the Galena-Jo Daviess County Historical Society's Grant Birthday Weekend and Civil War Sesquicentennial commemoration April 12, 15-17, 2011 at various locations in Galena.

On Tuesday, April 12, the actual anniversary date of the Fort Sumter attack, period-attired interpreters will enlighten the public and Galena Junior High students at 1 p.m. in Galena's Grant Park on Park Avenue. In addition to the Blakely saga, three other stories will be told: Generals Grant and Lee; Dr. Mary Walker and the role of women during the war; and the fate of the common soldier. The program, which will be repeated at 1 p.m. Saturday, April 16, is free and will last about 90 minutes. The public is invited to bring lawn chairs.

General and Mrs. Grant will welcome guests into their home, now known as the Ulysses S. Grant Home State Historic Site, from 6 to 8 p.m. Friday, April 15. The Spirits of the Museum will host the lamplight tour at 500 Bouthillier St., Galena; donations will be accepted at the site now managed by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency.

Programming on Saturday will debut new technology enhancements to the Galena History Museum exhibits, including a hologram of Ulysses and Julia Grant, a touch screen interpretation of the iconic *Peace in Union* painting, and new videos about lead mining in the Driftless area and mid-19th century Galena commerce.

A new temporary exhibit will open to the public Saturday, April 16, entitled *Images of U.S. Grant: Soldier*. Included among the fifty artifacts, on loan by Grant collector Bill Margeson of West Dundee, Illinois, are images of Grant during both the Mexican-American War and the Civil War. Margeson has been collecting Grant images for more than forty years. He is donating some of his items to the Historical Society, which will sell them at a live auction on the evening of Saturday, April 16 at the DeSoto House Hotel. Reservations are required for the 6 p.m. event, "Dinner with the General and his Collector," featuring General and Mrs. Grant, President and Mrs. Grant, President and Mrs. Lincoln, plus Mr. and Mrs. Margeson. A choice of three mouthwatering entrees is available for \$50 per person. Auction items may be viewed on the museum's website ([www.galenahistorymuseum.org](http://www.galenahistorymuseum.org)) or at the gift shop of the Galena History Museum. Absentee bids will be accepted. Proceeds from the dinner and auction will benefit educational museum programming.

Both the Blue and the Gray will be represented during the weekend, with the 3rd Iowa Artillery on display on the Museum grounds, and the 2nd Kentucky Calvary on patrol from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. both Saturday and Sunday. A homemade pie auction on Saturday at 11 a.m. in Washington Park on Main Street will feature guest auctioneers Ulysses and Julia Grant, Abe and Mary Lincoln, and other period dignitaries.

First-person portrayals at the museum on Saturday include Clarissa Gear Hobbs, an early Galenian, Loreta Velazquez, a female soldier, and a vivandiere, a woman who worked closely with soldiers. President and Mrs. Lincoln will present *A Few Appropriate Remarks: the Genesis of the Gettysburg Address*; President and Mrs. Grant will discuss *From Hardscrabble to the White House*; General Grant will discuss *Chattanooga and Appomattox*, two of the most important events of the Civil War.

Sunday's presentations include an interview with Northern and Southern women; Rose Greenhow, a female confederate spy; Adele Gratiot Washburne, wife of the powerful Congressman; and Jennie Hodges, a female soldier. A detailed schedule of events is available online at [www.galenahistorymuseum.org](http://www.galenahistorymuseum.org).

While living in Galena, the Grants attended the Methodist Church and had a dedicated pew for their lively family of six. A 10:30 a.m. Sunday morning church service harkening back to the Bible-thumping days of 1860 will take place at 125 S. Bench St. in Galena, followed by a delicious pot luck luncheon.

All events are open to the public and free of charge. The Galena History Museum at 211 S. Bench St., Galena is open 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily year-round; admission fees will be waived the Saturday and Sunday of Grant Birthday weekend. The event is sponsored by the Historical Society and the Community Development Fund of Galena. For more event information or to purchase dinner tickets, contact the Museum at 815-777-9129 or visit [www.galenahistorymuseum.org](http://www.galenahistorymuseum.org). For information about room availability, shopping, dining, attractions, events and more, go to [www.galena.org](http://www.galena.org), the Web site of the Galena/Jo Daviess County Convention & Visitors Bureau, or call 877-464-2536 toll-free.

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Photo Cutline: The Blakely Rifle, which fired on Fort Sumter, will be featured during the Galena-Jo Daviess Historical Society's Grant Birthday Weekend and Civil War sesquicentennial events April 12, 15-17 in historic Galena, Illinois.