

Donation of the Month

Civil War Re-enactor Items
Donors: Mr. & Mrs. Keith Burt
In Memory of Steven Gordon Burt



In memory of their son, Steven Gordon Burt, Mr. & Mrs. Keith Burt of Rogers donated a collection of reproduction Civil War re-enactor items to be used in educational programming, exhibit displays, the research library and family day activities. These items will greatly enhance the teaching materials used by the education department for school programs. There was also a collection of books which will be used in the research library.

Many of the items donated were reproduction uniforms Steven Burt wore as a Union Infantry soldier. These items include 4 Union Infantry coats, 3 pairs of trousers, 5 shirts, a vest, socks, gloves, undergarments, shoes and hats. The museum will be able to use these items to show the children how heavy Civil War uniforms could be. Many of the items are made of wool, which is very scratchy, but was very common for Civil War uniforms.

Soldiers wore different insignia on their uniforms to indicate what branch of the service they were in and their rank. The infantry wore blue patches and piping on their uniforms, artillery wore red, and cavalry wore yellow. We received 3 sets of sergeant's chevrons from the Burt family. Two of the sets were blue infantry sergeant's chevrons and the other was a set of red artillery chevrons. The enlisted men also wore brass letter and number insignia to indicate which company and regiment they belonged to. There were 11 such insignia in this collection. A pair of brass epaulettes was also included along with

hardware to attach them to the shoulder of the uniform coat.

Civil War soldiers had to carry a lot of equipment. They would carry extra clothing and personal items in a knapsack like the oil cloth knapsack in the Steven Burt Collection. He also had an oil cloth haversack with tin cup, hardtack, coffee, tin plate, and utensils. Soldiers used these separate bags for rations and cooking utensils. There are also 2 cast iron skillets and a small tin cooking pot with a hinged lid. A canteen, in this case with a white canvas sling and blue wool cover, was very important so the soldiers could carry water with them. They would also have to carry their weapons and we received 2 rifle slings and 2 Union equipment belts. One of the belts has a brass US buckle, percussion cap box with caps, and bayonet scabbard. The other belt has a cartridge box containing cartridges, Minié balls, round balls, and tin inserts. The collection also includes a package of .577 or .58 caliber expanding balls and 7 loose .58 caliber Minié balls.

Steven also had some of the personal items a soldier would carry with him including a razor with case, silver period eyeglasses with cardboard case in Steven's prescription, a bar of lye soap, and 3 medicine bottles. There is a writing kit with paper and pencil for writing home. Soldiers would have to mend their own clothing so he had a white cotton patch, blue cotton fabric piece, needle and thread, and a package of buttons. A deck of cards, cloth checkerboard, and a purple leather bag of checkers are included to keep the soldier occupied between battles. There is also reading material including The Soldier's Prayer Book, Hardee's Rifle and Light Military Tactics, Vol. I-III, and several editions of The New York Times and Harper's Weekly. There are 7 candles and a timer candle holder for use at night. Steven even had a canvas tent and 4 bent tent stakes, which will allow the museum to set up a campsite at times for educational purposes.

In addition to the items listed above the Museum also received from Steven's personal library 26 Civil War or Arkansas related books, including two American History textbooks.

Steven Gordon Burt passed away April 29, 2011, at the age of 43. Steven was a graduate of Purdue University with a degree in Organizational Leadership and Supervision. He was a retired commissioned artillery officer in the U.S. Army Reserves. Steven also served with the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary for many years and devoted some of his time to substitute teaching in various school districts in Northwest Arkansas. He was employed as a Transportation Coordinator with Transplace Texas in Lowell after moving over from J.B. Hunt Truck Lines as a Casualty Claims Investigator. Bursting with a lifelong love and deep passion of the military, Steven was in the process of going back into the National Guard, before he became ill.

An avid Civil War historian and re-enactor he devoted untold hours in research, re-enacting, and lecturing at many local Civil War events including the Rogers Historical Museum family day in June of last year. The Rogers Historical Museum is very proud and honored to accept Steven's collection on behalf of his parents and the staff looks forward to using his collection in future programming.