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## Orland Park History Museum Hosts Civil War Journalist Impersonator with Related Exhibit



Civil War stories will come to life when the Village of Orland Park History Museum presents a Civil War role-play presentation and exhibit at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 27 at the museum, 14415 S. Beacon Avenue.

Scott Dominiak, of Oak Forest, will inhabit the persona of Civil War reporter Henry Villard and recount Villard's experiences as he traveled with the Union's Army of the Potomac. Dominiak's presentation and the Civil War exhibit are free and open to the public.

"Henry Villard enjoyed an exciting career covering major events during his lifetime," said Orland Park Mayor Dan McLaughlin. "It's exciting to welcome Scott Dominiak to the museum to bring

these stories to life."

After the one-hour presentation, the museum will unveil an exhibit of part of Dominiak's collection of Civil War artifacts. The exhibit will be open through November.

Villard, born Fredinand Heinrich Gustav Hilgard in 1835 in the Kingdom of Bavaria, immigrated to the United States as a teenager. Upon arrival in the U.S., the young man changed his name and moved west to Illinois, where he briefly studied law but eventually turned to journalism. He reported on the Lincoln-Douglas debates of 1858, Lincoln's 1860 campaign for president, and President-Elect Lincoln's train trip to Washington in 1861.

Villard next covered the Civil War for the New York Tribune, a pivotal experience in his life. The young reporter's wartime experiences made him a dedicated pacifist.

After the war, Villard reported from Washington, D.C., for the Chicago Tribune and married Boston-born Helen Frances Garrison, daughter of famed abolitionist and journalist William Lloyd Garrison. Much later in life, Mrs. Villard would become a leader of the woman's suffrage movement, a WWI protester, and a co-founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

"When you look at the significant world events that Villard covered for the major publications of that era, it's amazing," McLaughlin said.

In 1866, the Chicago Tribune sent Villard to Europe to cover the Austro-Prussian War and the 1867 Paris Exposition. Upon his return to the U.S., Villard retired from journalism and went to work for the American Social Science Association, a society for the study of social issues.

In 1874, Villard began assembling a small empire of railroad and steamship lines in the American West. He also acquired the New York Evening Post and The Nation, and founded

the firm that was the predecessor of General Electric. He died in 1900 at his country estate in New York.

Residents with collections related to the history of Orland Park, Chicago, Illinois or of any specific historical event, movement, or period, as well as any aspect of everyday life in the past, such as sports, schooling, farming and homemaking are invited to temporarily loan the collection to the museum. If interested, call (708) 873-1622 or email [museum@orlandpark.org](mailto:museum@orlandpark.org).