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SEMO Station Features Civil War Series

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CAPE GIRARDEAU, Mo., March 30, 2011 – Southeast Missouri’s public radio station is preparing to mark the 150th anniversary of the Civil War with a three-part series on the war.

KRCU at Southeast Missouri State University announces plans to air a three-part series from “Backstory with the American History Guys” on the 150th anniversary of the firing on Fort Sumter that began America’s civil war. The series will air Sunday mornings at 9 a.m. beginning April 3.

April 3: The Road to Civil War

In hindsight, it’s easy to see the Civil War as a conflict just waiting to happen. But to Americans in the spring of 1861, disunion was anything but inevitable. In the days leading up to the firing on Fort Sumter, in fact, Virginia officials rejected secession by a two-to-one margin. Even among those who expected war, few imagined the scale of devastation that was just around the corner.

Taking as a starting point this uncertainty about what was to come, this episode focuses on the dramatic six months between Abraham Lincoln’s election in November 1860 and the outbreak of war in April 1861.

April 10: Why They Fought

One hundred 50 years ago, the Union went to war with the Confederacy. Ever since, Americans have been debating the causes of that war. Most historians today agree that it was fundamentally about slavery. And so what are we to make of the fact that most Southerners didn't own any slaves, and most Northerners were not abolitionists?

Historian-hosts Brian Balogh, Peter Onuf, and Ed Ayers turn the question of the Civil War's causes on its side, asking instead why Northerners and Southerners took up arms to fight one another. What causes, in other words, were they willing to die for?

April 17: The Civil War at 150: Questions Remain

As a companion to the two Civil War episodes, BackStory will offer a special listener Q&A edition of the program. For the duration of the hour, historian-hosts Peter Onuf ("18th Century Guy"), Ed Ayers ("19th Century Guy"), and Brian Balogh (20th Century Guy) will draw on their trans-century expertise to answer questions from listeners on all aspects of the Civil War.

Photo Above: The 150th anniversary of the Firing on Fort Sumter that began the War Between The States will be observed in April. KRCU, the public radio station at Southeast Missouri State University, will feature a three-part series on the war in April. Southeast Missouri was central to the war effort in Missouri. Three unknown Union soldiers are buried at Sadler's Chapel Cemetery northwest of Dexter. (SMT file photo by Annabeth Miller)

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