

War and pieces

The State Historical Society opens three Civil War exhibits

■ "REMEMBERING GEN. ORDER NO. 11"

The State Historical Society of Missouri's master work is a sight to see all its own. George Caleb Bingham's iconic painting *General Order No. 11* appears in numerous books on Missouri Civil War history and the covers of several, Art Curator Joan Stack says.

Viewers have the chance to delve deeper into history with the society's special gallery additions for the exhibit "Remembering Gen. Order No. 11," such as James J. Froese's contemporary rendition and actual pistols used in the Battle of Wilson's Creek. The artwork represents a time before Kansas Jayhawkers backed down from battles with Missouri guerrilla fighters, a time with more than athletic pride and hurt feelings on the line.

"These images are more than just artwork," says Mary Ellen Lohmann, coordinator of publications and media relations. "There is a feeling of history and longevity when you can actually see where our forefathers brought us from."

The exhibit opened June 29 and will close in December.

■ "MONEY, MAIL AND MEMORIA: EPHEMERA OF THE CIVIL WAR ERA"

Civil War-era letters, currency, newspapers and cards serve as visual cues in the exhibit "Money, Mail and Memoria: Ephemera of the Civil War Era." The hallway gallery walls are lined with depictions of Old Glory flying on Union postcards that state "Death to All Traitors" and a copy of the 13th Amendment signed by James Rollins, Missouri's representative at the time.

"It was marketing at its finest," Lohmann says. "This is what people were seeing in everyday life."

Twelve pieces will feature General Nathaniel Lyon and his media portrayal as a national hero after his death at the Battle of Wilson's Creek, a definitive Civil War battle that took place in the Show-Me State.

"The exhibit is a commemoration, and some people that come in and see it are still mad and feeling emotions about it," says Kevin Walsh, art gallery security guard.

The exhibit is open until Aug. 31.

■ "THE MISSOURI STATE CAPITOL IN ART/ART IN THE MISSOURI STATE"

"The Missouri State Capitol in Art/Art in the Missouri State" parlays the theme of media and government in the portrayal of art in history. It focuses on how state-sanctioned art and the changing nature of the official vision of Missouri is promoted by our government. Bingham's paintings of Thomas Jefferson, George Washington and Lyon, Thomas Hart Benton's murals and contemporary art depicting our capitol building fill the gallery.

"These works represent the way Missourians construct our identity and visualize and represent our history," Stack says.

Among the three exhibits, it is hard not to feel a sense of Americana, especially when looking at the pieces of "Money, Mail and Memoria." Viewing items that people actually used during the 1860s gives a sense of immediacy to the exhibit and tangibility of the Civil War.

"These exhibits and pieces will give viewers a feeling of what it means to be an American, a Missourian and feel the effects of the Civil War," Stack says.

The exhibit is open until December.

• LAUREN STEELE



George Caleb Bingham's *General Order No. 11* depicts the consequences of General Thomas Ewing's harsh Civil War edict: civilians shot and their possessions seized.



Currency circulating during the Civil War helps present-day Missourians understand the social, political and cultural climate of the era. Other visual cues are also on exhibit.



The Missouri State Capitol building, officially dedicated in October 1924, marks the Jefferson City skyline. Here, the illustration shows the western side of the town.