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The Civil War, from a medical point of view

By **TORIANO PORTER**
 Special to The Star

Michael Monaco's fascination with medical history began long before he became a doctor of internal medicine.

Monaco was reared in Jefferson City in an Antebellum home built in 1848. It was also a dwelling where Union troops were stationed during the Civil War.

On more than a few occasions Monaco's family and neighbors discovered Civil War-era artifacts on their properties.

"We'd garden in the backyard and dig up horseshoes," Monaco said. "My neighbor dug up a cannon ball when she planted her tomatoes."



Michael Monaco

After becoming a doctor, Monaco developed in 1994 a presentation on the medical practices of the Civil War era and how those practices evolved into modern medicine.

"I went to a Civil War presentation (in 1994) and I really enjoyed it," Monaco said. "I thought 'I'm a doctor, I can do this.'"

Monaco, a Lee's Summit resident with a private practice at Menorah Medical Center in Overland Park, presented "Medical Practices During the Battle" on Sunday at the John Wornall House Museum in Kansas City.

Monaco's lecture was part of the museum's 150th celebration of the Battle of Westport. The Wornall House was used as a field hospital for both Union and Confederate soldiers. Other events in the monthlong tribute include medical re-enactments of surgery by candlelight and the mourning practices of residents during the



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Mason Lumpkins discussed Civil War medicine with visitors to the re-enactment of the field hospital that was at the Wornall House during the Battle of Westport. Garrett Lovell and James Crofutt helped in the demonstration of surgical techniques of that time.

Civil War.

All programs take place at the John Wornall House Museum located at 6115 Wornall Road. Tickets are \$15 per person per program, and children under 10 are free.

Monaco is an instructor at the University of Missouri-Kansas City's School of Medicine and team physician for the Kansas City Chiefs. His presentation included a lecture and a look at the medical tools of the era.

"Most of the people who died in the Civil War died primarily from illness and infections," Monaco said. "They used to say more soldiers died from 'being' than bullets because they would get sick. The Civil War is actually the end of what I call the Medical Middle Ages. The concept of surgery and the skills and observation of how to do a better job came to pass because of the Civil War."

Kerrie Nichols, executive director of the Wornall House, said Monaco's exhibit added texture to the Farmstead to Field Hospital series that began Oct. 4.



Paul Byrne napped on the lawn of the Wornall House while he awaited "treatment" on Saturday.

"There were a lot of surgeries performed at the Wornall House and a lot of amputations," Nichols said.