Camp Utley Historical Marker Dedication

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Thursday, June 18, 2026
4:30 pm

1805 Wisconsin Avenue
Racine, Wisconsin

Preservation Racine ★★★ City of Racine

Preservation Racine Board of Directors, 2026-2027

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Camp Utley marker dedication committee, 2026

Scott Leonard Mary Waid Joan Rice Steven Rogstad
Bill May, Veterans Center ★★★ Vivian Merlo (marker text, 2025)

WILLIAM L. UTLEY BIOGRAPHICAL POINTS

- Born in Monson, Mass., in 1814.
- Childhood in Ohio; educated by his father in woodsman skills, but also as a portrait painter, violinist, and carpenter.
- Traveled a bit and then arrived in Racine in 1844.
- Ran our first large hotel, Racine House.
- First marshal of Racine.
- Wisconsin State Assembly, 1851-53.
- Appointed Third Adjutant General by Governor Farwell, 1852.
- Wisconsin State Senate, 1861-63.
- As Governor Randall's Seventh Adjutant General in 1861, recruited and organized Wisconsin troops in response to the War of Rebellion.
- In June 1861, influenced creation of training camp in Racine which was named Camp Utley.

PROGRAM BEGINS AT 4:30 PM:

Opening music, *Hail Columbia*	Mark Paffrath
Welcome	Scott Leonard, president, Preservation Racine
Invocation	Danielle Michaels, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW)
Presentation of colors	SUVCW
Remarks	County Executive Ralph Malicki
Remarks	Mayor Cory Mason
Keynote address	Steven Rogstad
Unveiling of marker	Joan Rice and Mayor Mason
Remarks	Colonel Utley (Bill May, Veterans Center)
Wreath laying	SUVCW Auxiliary
Benediction	Danielle Michaels, SUVCW
Conclusion	Scott Leonard
Closing music, reprise	Mark Paffrath

WILLIAM L. UTLEY BIOGRAPHICAL POINTS

- Commissioned Lieutenant Colonel, 1862-64, 22nd Volunteer Infantry and sent to war front, where he was known as the "Abolition Colonel" who protected escaped slaves who followed his troops.
- Prisoner of war at the infamous Libby Prison in Richmond for three months in 1863; exchanged out for health reasons and returned to Racine.
- Reorganized and redeployed 22nd Regiment out of St. Louis in 1863, but resigned commission for health reasons in 1864.
- Bought the *Racine Daily Journal* in 1865 with his son, Hamilton Utley, and edited and published it until 1873.
- Postmaster of Racine, 1869 and 1878.
- Edited *Utley's Dollar Weekly*, 1884-87.
- Died in Racine in 1887 and buried in Mound Cemetery.
- Member locally of Grand Army of the Republic, Free Masons, Old Settlers Society, Unitarian Church; and owned and raced horses.

CAMP UTLEY MARKER TEXT

Starting in June 1861, new units gathered, trained, and were equipped at Camp Utley, before joining the Civil War. It was named for Racine citizen and State Senator William L. Utley, then Adjutant General for Wisconsin, later the Twenty-Second Wisconsin Regiment's commanding officer. The 75-acre camp lay south of Racine city limits on the farm of Truman G. Wright. Approximate borders were Main Street, 16th Street, Center Street, and DeKoven Avenue (bordering Racine College).

A fence separated Main Street from a private race track, which became the camp's parade ground. Originally, recruits lived in tents west of the track. There were wooden buildings for the kitchen, dining room, commissary, and quartermaster. The dining room was 100 by 75 feet, with 10 long tables each seating 100 men.

Some 1,500 artillery men were stationed here in winter 1861-62. Tents were replaced with wooden structures, each with a cook's room and sergeant's room flanking a bunk room. In February 1864 three new buildings were constructed for the arrival of the Seventh regiment.

There were two off-site target ranges for artillery practice. One was west of Green Bay Road and one north of Rupert Boulevard.

Camp Utley served as the place of rendezvous for five Wisconsin regiments – the Fourth, Nineteenth, Twenty-Second, Thirty-First, and Thirty-Third. It was the camp of instruction for eight of Wisconsin's thirteen batteries of light artillery. During the last year of the war, it was used by the Seventh Wisconsin – part of the "Iron Brigade" – and the Thirteenth Wisconsin Regiments.

In memory of Charlie Rice

City of Racine ★★★ Preservation Racine