



The Border Star

Official Monthly Publication of the Civil War Round Table of Western Missouri

• ***Founded 1992***

• ***Incorporated 1994***

"Studying the Border War and Beyond"

February 2005

The Civil War Round Table of Western Missouri

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Meetings

2nd Wednesday of the month - 7:00 pm
Old Blake Museum - 106 E. Walnut
Independence, Missouri

Visitors Always Welcome!

Annual Dues

Individual ----- 15.00
Family ----- 22.50
Student (under 21) ----- 5.00
Newsletter Only (no meetings)-- 9.00

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I'VE SEEN THE ELEPHANT, AND. . .

Thoughts from Tim Cox, President

I've seen the elephant, and so did the other members of The Round Table at our January monthly meeting. Premonitions of the past crept in and time stood still, as Van Wiskur, Mike Calvert, Harold Dellinger, and Betty Key, among others, entertained us with books, stories, and legends of the Civil War during the "Open Round Table" portion of the meeting.

One of the highlights was certainly Van's exhibition of a 12 pound ball. Be it Civil War cannon ball or 20th century industrial grinding ball, that was the question of the evening? Engineer Van and his guest, Kelly, presented the artifact, recently found by Kelly, imbedded in the ground in the north Kansas City/Independence area west and north of Kentucky Road, near the railroad tracks.

The object certainly merits further study. Do you clean it or not? Do you contact Fort Sill, Oklahoma for verification? It weighs 12 pounds and is the circumference of a real 12 pounder. Time will tell as Van continues to look into the matter. Anyone with any other suggestions for verification please contact Mr. Wiskur, or someone in the Round Table.

In the meantime, Betty will continue to enjoy her "Godey's Lady's Book," Harold the new books for sale at The Blue and Grey Book Shoppe (including thoughts of Quantrill's Bones), and Mike his battlefield computer software programs, and rare book collection. Elephantine kudos to all!

Wow, Are We Busy Planning Future Events

Do not carve these dates in stone, but John Martin, The Board, and I are busy planning the following Round Table tentative field trips/events for the coming year as well as our monthly speaker schedule:

Cole Camp Field Trip:	04/23/05 or 04/30/05
Little Blue Seminar:	05/12/05 or 05/17/05
Little Blue Battlefield Tour:	05/21/05
Fairview Cemetery (Liberty) Tour:	08/10/05

We are working with Bob Owens to plan the Cole Camp field trip. The Independence Heritage Commission, Jackson County Historical Society, and the City's Historic Preservation Office, have asked us to help participate in May's Historic Preservation Month events in Independence by including The Little Blue Battlefield activities noted above. Also, Pat Gradwohl, our new Board Member and Clay County Historical Society volunteer, has offered to help us conduct a Fairview Cemetery Tour. Stay tuned as details unfold!

Until next month, stop and think from time to time about those that went before us, when they truly "seen the elephant."

Next CWRTWMO Meeting

Don't forget 2/9/2005 – Next Meeting's Speaker - Connie Langum from Wilson's Creek

Calendar

CWRTWMO – February Regular Meeting

Wednesday, February 9th, 7:00 p.m.

Program: “American Battlefield Protection Program” and Wilson’s Creek by Connie Langum

Connie is the Midwest Coordinator, employed by The NPS at Wilson’s Creek Battlefield

Blake Museum – 106 E. Walnut Street, Indep., MO

CWRTWMO – February Board Meeting

Wednesday, February 16th, 7:00 p.m.

17313 E. 51st Terr. Court, Independence, MO

GUARDIANS OF THE LITTLE BLUE BATTLEFIELD

Monday, February 28th, 7:00 p.m.

Blue Hills Elementary School

1911 N. Blue Mills Road

(Just north of Blue Mills Road and 24 Highway)

CWRTWMO – March Regular Meeting

Wednesday, March 9th, 7:00 p.m.

Program: “Guerrillas in Elmwood Cemetery” by Richard Stewart

Richard is a volunteer historian with Elmwood Cemetery

Blake Museum – 106 E. Walnut Street, Indep., MO

CWRTWMO – March Board Meeting

Wednesday, March 16th, 7:00 p.m.

17313 E. 51st Terr. Court, Independence, MO

CWRTWMO – April Regular Meeting

Wednesday, April 13th, 7:00 p.m.

Program: “Union Soldiers at Pisgah Cemetery” by Brian Smarker and John Martin (Sons of Union Veterans)

Blake Museum – 106 E. Walnut Street, Indep., MO

New Grinter Farm Development

By Tim Cox, President

There literally may be a “new development” in regards to the Grinter Farm battlefield site. To date almost all of the land that probably comprised the Grinter Farm, where Quantrill and his men were ambushed by Wagner’s 2nd Colorado boys, has been developed with home construction.

However, I received a call last week from an individual who may try to purchase the remaining parcel of ground, on the northwest corner of Lee’s Summit road and Gregory, and get this, if he buys the land, “wants to

place a memorial or monument at the site!” Can you believe it, a developer wanting to honor events of the past?

Hopefully, there will be more good news to report on this. We’ll keep you advised. At this time, the builder seems to be open to possibly doing some metal detecting at the site, building the monument, and having a memorial ceremony.



2nd Colorado Cavalry Memorial in Woodlawn Cemetery, Independence, Missouri.

This four foot tall, white tapered shaft on a block base is believed to be the first memorial to those killed in action in the Civil War erected west of the Mississippi River. It is also one of the first to be erected in the entire country that has the names of those killed inscribed on it. The lettering gives the names, ages and date of death of the popular Captain Wagner and six of his men killed at the engagement at the Grinter Farm, six miles south of Independence on Lee’s Summit Road on July 2, 1864. The monument was dedicated that same month on July 31, 1864 by the men of the 2nd Colorado Cavalry. Details of the ambush were told in the unit’s newsletter, “The Soldier’s Letter.”

Guardians Meeting

By Tim Cox, President

The recent Guardians of The Little Blue meeting was a good one and I think it is safe to say there is some momentum building in regards to preservation work there. We will brief you soon on efforts to create a “Memorial Wall” as a signature landmark near the old bridge location at The Little Blue River. We were also excited to have Wendy Shay, Independence Historic Preservation Manager, and Steve Noll, Executive Director of The Jackson County Historical Society in attendance at the meeting.

Meeting Site

The Civil War Round Table of Western Missouri meets at the Old Blake Museum, 106 E. Walnut Street, Independence, Missouri (northeast corner of Walnut and Main). Parking for the meeting is at any street parking near by and a few spaces across the street at the Plasterers' Union building, 301 S. Main. Please do not use any other private parking until we receive permission from business owners.

Dues, Subscriptions and Notes

by Beverly Shaw

Annual dues for active membership in the CWRTWMO are \$15.00 for individuals and \$22.50 for families. If you cannot attend meetings but would like to receive the monthly newsletter, we have a subscription rate of \$9.00. Please mail your check, made payable to "Civil War Round Table of Western Missouri," to 17313 E. 51st Terr. Court, Independence, Missouri 64055 or bring it to the February 9th meeting.

We have received notes from the following individuals as they sent their checks;

David Kesinger from Warrensburg thanked Beverly for her service to the group and said that Sonny would be proud of our Round Table.

Fred McBurney of Slater invites us to come to Arrow Rock for a tour.

Joan Russell of Raytown enjoyed the trivia quiz and is interested in books about Dr. Katherine Richardson who founded Children's Mercy Hospital and about the Delaware Indians. Joan's father was nursed by Dr. Richardson when he was quite ill at the age of 10 and she later found him a home with loving parents. His grandfather was of Delaware Indian heritage.

Steve and Beverly Sutterfield (formerly of Blue Springs, now residing in Georgia) say they enjoy reading the newsletter and wish they could be with us.

Howard and Phyllis Thompson of Lee's Summit lost their son in May and feel his loss tremendously. Phyllis had open heart surgery and is now almost fully recovered. She is pumping on six new valves.

Karen Wells had a wonderful trip to Hawaii with her family and then journeyed to South Padre Island, Texas to celebrate a high school class reunion. It's funny how those *Huskers* manage to go some place warm for reunions in the middle of winter.

Speaking of Nebraska, we have word from the Sentry Civil War Round Table-Omaha that on Lincoln's birthday, February 12th, there will be an honor guard posted at his statue in front of the Capitol in Lincoln, Nebraska from dawn to Noon. Now that our Round Table has historically accurate Civil War flags and staffs, perhaps we should consider doing something like this in the future for a Lincoln statue in our area.

Congratulations to Charlotte Tindall for being recognized by Mayor Stewart for 21 years of volunteer service at the Bingham-Waggoner Estate.

The Missouri Irish Brigade

For information about the Missouri Irish Brigade, please E-mail the MIB at: jpbairkc@yahoo.com or visit their website: <http://www.geocities.com/missouriirishbrigade/index.html>

Bingham to Benton: The Midwest as Muse

The paintings of George Caleb Bingham and Thomas Hart Benton are featured at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art through July 31, 2005. The show, free of charge, exhibits 100 years of art inspired by this region.

Bleeding Kansas '05

Courtesy of the newsletter of the William Clarke Quantrill Society, we have a schedule of free programs which will be held at the Constitution Hall State Historical Site in historic LeCompton, Kansas (just northwest of Lawrence) at 2:00 p.m. the following Sunday afternoons;

February 13 – "Franklin Pierce and the Coming of the Civil War" by Brian Matthew Jordan, author and senior at Talmage (OH) High School. Book signing to follow.

February 20 – "Steamboating on the Kaw: A Frontier Adventure" by Sonie Liebler, historian and author. Book signing to follow.

February 27 – "Go Back in Time...On-line!" by Matt Veatch, co-project leader of *Territorial Kansas On-line 1854-1861* and assistant director of the Library and Archives, Kansas State Historical Society.

March 6 – "Misinterpreted Martyrs: The Doly Family and the Pottawatomie Creek Massacre" by Michelle Martin, Instructor of History, Fort Scott Community College.

For additional information, please call (785) 887-6520 or visit www.kshs.org or www.lecomptonkansas.com.

Symphony Designers' Showcase Volunteers

The Board of Directors chose the date of Thursday, April 28, 2005 for our docent night at the 36th Annual Symphony Designers' Showhouse from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. The house is located at 5300 Bellevue in the Sunset Hills area of Kansas City, just west and south of the Plaza. We would like to invite 10 or more members who enjoy old houses (1914) to join us in helping visitors to the house to savor its history and interior design. You will be able to tour the house for free (a \$15.00 savings) before starting your duties and will be rotated periodically so you get to experience different design spaces. Our Round Table is recognized in the official program book and you have the added knowledge that you helped raise \$100,000 or more for the Kansas City Symphony. Connie McQuain already knows she wants to work at this house because she has been there numerous times when it was the residence of the Japanese Consulate. Please call Beverly Shaw to volunteer or for additional information: (816) 478-7648.

150th Anniversary of the Civil War

In just six short years, the United States will observe the 150th anniversary of the beginning of the Civil War (1861 – 2011). This momentous period in the history of the nation will merit observances and projects similar to the Lewis and Clark celebration in 2004. The *Missouri's Civil War Heritage Foundation*, with headquarters in Columbia, Missouri, is willing to be a clearinghouse for activities in partnership with the Missouri Division of Tourism. It is not too early to have a say in what is done to bring attention to the importance role of the Civil War that took place in Missouri. You can visit the award-winning website at www.mocivilwar.org

Missouri Civil War News Fighting nature - Efforts to Preserve Civil War Sites Advance

By Wally Kennedy, Joplin Globe, 1/28/2005

NEWTONIA, Mo. — A local group's vision to preserve one of the most significant Civil War battle sites in Southwest Missouri is taking shape faster than it dreamed possible.

"We only got control of the Ritchey Mansion three years ago — not quite three years ago — and all of this has happened," said Larry James, president of the Newtonia Battlefields Protection Association. "It has really moved very quickly. We started the association 10 years ago with nothing."

The group had planned to use small donations from its membership base to renovate the mansion's exterior in phases. The first phase would have replaced the roof. The next project would be tuck-pointing the brick work, followed by reconstruction of the front porch.

That changed in December, when the group received a \$25,000 gift from an anonymous donor. What might have taken years to accomplish will now be completed in weeks.

That's not the only new development, either.

On Dec. 23, the sites where battles between Union and Confederate forces raged in 1862 and 1864 were listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Placement on the list provides protection for the fields in the future.

The association recently took control of the Ritchey family cemetery on the west side of the mansion.

This spring, the state of Missouri is expected to erect two battlefield markers on the mansion property that will describe the battles. The sites also will be listed on a state map of Civil War sites in Missouri.

David Weems, the group's secretary, said: "We want to create a lasting site for the visitors who come here. The mansion was badly in need of work. We took off the big columns on the front of the mansion. They were not original, and they were putting a strain on the building.

"We have replaced the roof. There were three layers of roof on it. We put new sheeting down. This will help preserve the building. We are now tuck-pointing the brick work.

"We never thought we would be able to do the whole thing at once."

Any money that is left over will be used to replace the porch.

Tom Higdon, treasurer of the group, said efforts to place the battlefields on the National Register of Historic Places started about three years ago.

"It's been a long-term project that gained momentum in the last year or so," he said. "It was not difficult to do because of the significance of the second battle, which was the last battle of Price's raid through Missouri. It is one of the last battles in the war west of the Mississippi."

Historians say the 1862 battle was unique in that American Indians served on both the Confederate and

Union sides. It was unusual for them to be organized in battle for either side. The 1864 battle was the last engagement of Maj. Gen. Sterling Price's Confederate raid into Missouri.

One could have seen both battles unfold from the windows of the Ritchey Mansion, which was placed on the national register in 1978.

The association acquired the mansion and about 20 acres in 2002. The group assumed a debt of about \$300,000, but it received a grant from the National Park Service that covered about half the debt.

Newtonia has become a regular stop for Smithsonian bus tours, and for Civil War history groups. The group recently received donations totaling \$1,500 from the St. Louis Civil War Roundtable and the Chicago Civil War Roundtable.

Work on the mansion is being done by Branco Construction Co., Neosho, but the historic house requires a delicate touch.

"For example," Higdon said, "if we use the wrong mortar, it will pop the front off the old brick when it freezes."

Slate-gray shingles have been used on the roof. They resemble the wood shingles that would have been on the original roof. None of the roofs that were removed was original, Higdon said.

Weems said the Ritchey family cemetery was not acquired when the mansion was purchased because state law forbids the sale of a cemetery.

"Over the last couple of months, we have got quit-claim deeds from the heirs of the family," he said. "That has given us control of the family cemetery. We thought that was important. We want to preserve it, too. More than 30 members of the family are buried there."

Walter Walker, a Neosho lawyer, assisted the group with that project.

There are, in fact, two cemeteries west of the house. One features the ornate headstones of the Ritchey family. The other has plain, uncut stones that mark the spots where slaves were buried. Not included is the Civil War cemetery north of town. Higdon said that could be a future project.

The group recently completed a plan for the future of the site.

Weems said: "It involves looking way into the future. We want to put in walking trails and signage to highlight the important spots, such as the location of the stone barn and the rock walls that figured in the battles. We also want a visitors center."

James said: "Who knows where we will be in five to 10 years? We never know. The way things are going, this thing might come along quicker than that. A grant or another donation could come along and speed the process up."

Jim Denny, a history expert with Missouri's state parks system, said Newtonia is on the fast track for the erection of interpretative panels as part of the system's Civil War marker project. "These are Missouri's most significant battles," he said. "Newtonia is on that at last."

The panels, which are about 3 feet by 4 feet, will have text, graphics and maps that describe the battles. About 50 panels are being erected at sites across Missouri in preparation for the 150-year anniversary of the Civil War.

Denny said: "The problem with Missouri's version of the Civil War is that there were none of the grand, epic battles on the scale of Shiloh or Gettysburg. But, we had a tremendous number of battles, something over 1,100. We rank third after Virginia and Tennessee in total number of conflicts."

Denny said the war engulfed the entire state, but that the southern half was especially ravaged.

"There was an awful lot of raiding going on down there," he said. "It was a hotbed of guerrilla warfare. A good chunk of the Ozarks was a wasteland. It was depopulated. Courthouses were destroyed. They laid waste to that region."

About the effort at Newtonia, Denny said: "The Newtonia Battlefields Protection Association is one of the most effective Civil War groups in the entire state. They have acquired land to protect significant portions of the battlefields. The Ritchey Mansion is under their ownership.

"They have commissioned some of the finest study of the battles in terms of archaeology. There's an amazing group of people down there."

Missouri Civil War News

Government Could Soon Buy Private Civil War Collection

By Tony Beason, KYTV, Springfield, MO, 01/26/2005

REPUBLIC, Mo. – Tom and Karen Sweeney Have Spent 45 Years Accomplishing Their Dream.

Dr. Tom Sweeney and his wife, Karen, have a collection of Civil War artifacts that is like no other collection. Some visitors have called it "incredible" and "unexcelled by any I have seen even at Gettysburg" National Battlefield in Pennsylvania. The National Park Service soon could purchase the Sweeneys' museum and collection and add it to Wilson's Creek National Battlefield, which abuts the Sweeneys' property on Highway ZZ. If the purchase is made, their 20 acres and home likely would become the park's headquarters. Tom Sweeney bought his first Civil War artifact at age 12. He wanted to be an archeologist but opted for medical school. The retired radiologist began collecting about 45 years ago.

Sweeney wanted to live next to a Civil War battlefield. He and Karen made that dream come true when they found a home next to Wilson's Creek and built General Sweeney's Museum next door to house the collection. It has almost 4,000 pieces, including more than 2,000 photographs, several thousand volumes of books -- all authentic; actual value: priceless.

About 40 percent of the collection is not on display, filed in the basement. Sweeney says what drove him to collect these pieces was the desire that they would be preserved and brought together to tell the story of the war west of the Mississippi River.

Sweeney says it was his practice of medicine that gave him the ability to make the collection.

"If I had stayed in archeology, I would never have been able to put this together," he said. "It would be ridiculous to go into medicine for that reason. It's a very jealous mistress, medicine is. It demands a lot of your time and effort. But it also provided me with the means to follow this dream and put this collection together."

Congress has already passed a bill that will allow purchase of Sweeney's dream and land and home. But the Sweeneys say it would be a good completion to the dream.

"It is a bit sad but, while it may be said that we owned it, I've always felt that we were the caretakers," said Karen Sweeney. "We're caretakers of history. And we know

that we can always come back and visit and we can always talk about it because we were the original caretakers of it and we learned their story. And we'll always know that."

Wilson's Creek Battlefield's leaders would like to hold a ceremony for the Sweeney acquisition by August, the 144th anniversary of the Battle of Wilson's Creek. The museum is closed from Nov. 1 to March 1 to, as the Sweeneys describe it, give the collection a rest. They turn the lights out, which helps stop any deterioration process that takes place just in the norm of having the lights on and people come through.

♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ Civil War Valentines ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥

Valentine cards have been a popular form of sending greetings of affection for many years and began long before the Civil War. By the time of the Civil War many manufacturers were marketing valentines to soldiers who were far away from loved ones. The following are just three such Civil War era Valentines;

MY VALENTINE

Fondly I gaze in thy sweet face,
And clasp thy little hand in mine,
Love swiftly speeds us to the place
Where I shall claim my Valentine.

FAITHFUL IN DEATH

'To horse!' the bugle
sounds the call,
The foemen rage like
waves at sea;
If cruel fate should
bid me fall,
My last fond thought
shall be of thee.

MY LOVE

'Mid bugle's blast and cannon's roar,
And 'mid the battles angry flame;
'Mid clashing sabres red with gore,
I fondly breathe thy much-loved name.
I feel thee near at dead of night,
When I my vigil lone am keeping--
Thy image guards me, angel bright,
In dreams when wearied I am sleeping,
Each northward wind wafts on its breath,
To thee a yearning kiss of mine--
On glory's field or bed of death,
I live or die thy Valentine.