



April 2004

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"

The Civil War Round Table of Western Missouri

2004 Officers

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The Border Star Editor

Dennis Myers
 18034 Kent Circle
 Independence, MO 64057
 (816) 257-5754

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

For information:

Tim Cox ----- 478-8833
 Beverly Shaw ----- 478-7648
 Art Kelley ----- 373-4101

Mailing Address:

C.W.R.T. of Western Missouri
 4947 S. Peck Avenue
 Independence, MO 64055

In Memoriam



Harold "Sonny" Franklin Wells, Jr., age 64, of Kearney, MO, died Tuesday, March 16, 2004, at his home. Funeral services were Sunday, March 21, 2004, at the First Christian Church, Kearney, MO with Rev. Doug Gilpin officiating. Music by Jane Worley, Martha Armstrong and Diana Withford, Pianist. Casket Bearers were Tim Cox, Art Kelley, Terry McConnell, Charles McCorkendale, Robert "Lucky" Mason and Larry Daniels. Honorary Casket Bearers were Bob Werline and Richard Abbott. Burial was at the Glenridge Cemetery, Liberty, MO. Friends called on Sunday, March 21st at the church. The family suggests memorial contributions to the preservation of the Little Blue Battle Field, in eastern Jackson County, in care of the Civil War Round Table of Western Missouri, 17313 E. 51st Terrace Court, Independence, MO 64055 or the First Christian Church of Kearney.

Sonny was born September 3, 1939 in Lincoln, NE, the son of Harold F. Sr. and Jane Wilson Wells. He was married to Karen Kay Klamert in 1961 in Tilden, NE. They moved to Kansas City, KS in 1966, to Liberty in 1978, and to Kearney in 1997. Sonny was a firefighter with the Kansas City, KS Fire Department from 1972 to 1974. He owned and operated a Chicken Delight franchise in Kansas City, KS from 1966 to 1973. He had worked for the American Red Cross as Safety Director of Wyandotte County, KS from 1971 to 1976. At the time of his death, he operated the Civil War Shoppe and Wells Tours. He was the Midwest representative for the Medal of Honor Society, and a member of the Board of directors for the Congressional Medal of Honor Society. Mr. Wells was co-founder and had served for ten years as president of the Civil War Round Table of Western Missouri. He was a member of the Clay County Archives, the Clay County Museum and Historical Society and the Union Cemetery Historical Society of Kansas City. He was a member of the Westport Historical Society, American Society of Necrolithologists, the Quantrill Society, Missouri Historical Society, Confederate P.O.W. Society, and Civil War Associates. He was the Event Coordinator for several Missouri Civil War reenactments. He compiled "Civil War Monuments and Memorials of the Kansas City Area," as well as numerous other historical books. He had received numerous awards for civil and charitable work including Honorary Kentucky Colonel for his work this past year in returning remains of a Civil War veteran to his native state. He was a member of the First Christian Church of Kearney.

Sonny is survived by his wife of 42 years, Karen Wells; two sons, Kevin Wells, His fiancée', Jodi Leon, and her son, Cole of Parkville, MO, Kurt Wells and his wife, Kathy, Liberty, MO; his mother, Jane Wells, Bella Vista, AR; a sister, Joan Peterson, Lincoln, NE; two brothers, Cal Wells, Lincoln, NE and Dave Wells, Omaha, NE; grandchildren, Jennifer Griswold and Carson Wells; and great-granddaughter, Kaitlyn Griswold.

*"Poor is the nation that has no heroes;
 Shameful is the nation that has them and forgets."*

We Remember Sonny...

One day Sonny just got out of the hospital and went to the store with his wife. He bought a cookie tin and when they got home, he stuck it under his wife's pillow. BANG! Karen hit the tin and bounced up in bed. Sonny laughed so hard his stitches came out and he had to go back to the hospital. ~Vanessa Erskine

Words cannot describe how much Sonny will be missed by the two of us. I realize now that I did not thank him often enough. ~Charles and Claudetta McCorkendale

Sonny was someone I could always count on seeing at reenactments and living histories. He will be sadly missed. ~Marissa (Gooch) Gregorwich

Sonny was the most interesting person I have ever known; I could sit and listen to him for hours. ~Linda Smith

Sonny was a true gentleman, a treasure to the reenactment and historic preservation communities, a "vacant chair" that will not soon be filled. We will miss him terribly but are comforted by the fact that he is no longer in any pain. ~Max and Donna Daniels (*The President and Mrs. Lincoln*)

I will never forget all the shows and events I did with Sonny. He always made me laugh and have fun. ~Benny Gibson

Sonny was my friend, my mentor and my teacher. While we are all human and have flaws, Sonny was a bigger than life: character, one of those 5 or 6 people you will know personally in your life-time that lights up a room with his or her presence. More than ever, it is Sonny the person that I loved and will miss the most, not Sonny the Civil War textbook. ~Tim Cox

Although I never got to meet Sonny, I feel as though I knew him through his work with the Congressional Medal of Honor Committee. Rest in peace, Sonny and be assured that others will never forget all that you did. ~Connie Nisinger

His dedication and knowledge of the Civil War and other interests are to be commended. He will be missed by so many people. ~David and Delores Gallagher

If Sonny didn't know about it, it probably didn't happen. He was a genuinely good man and we will miss him. ~Sandra and John Martin

Sonny was a wonderful "people" person. He had a way of making everyone feel like a friend. Our daughters will never forget the reenactments they participated in with Sonny and Karen and family. They, too, remember his love of Runza's and of Karen! The Wells' family has been a blessing to us! ~Patty Schram

Even though we are relative new to the group and did not know Sonny very long, we were so impressed with his friendliness, hospitality and concern for us. He was dedicated to the group and his enthusiasm was catching. He will be sorely missed by all of us. ~ Claudine Herbert and Lee Jackson

Sonny presented history in a way that truly made you see what actually happened. He presented everything he did with a passion for history. In an area where opinions and naysayers run rampant, he stuck to his guns and did his research. And above all else, he always let you know that the passing of his knowledge was something he loved to do. The area has lost a true historian and a loving person. But what Sonny leaves behind is not only his writings and information, but also a wealth of people that strive to gather and preserve mere fractions of the information and stories he did. We are losing historical sites and structures more and more each year, but losing people like Sonny Wells is what really makes us value the treasures we have while they are still here. ~Troy Chrisman

Sonny was the best; he'll be missed by all. ~Skip Merriman



Santa

Sonny

Art and I were working at a small cemetery in Independence in the early 1980's when Sonny entered our lives. It seems there was one lone confederate soldier buried there, and Sonny wanted to find the gravesite. We poured over records, disbelieving all the time, that we could have a burial from that time period. The cemetery wasn't that old but you know the results – we found the grave! Sure enough, he was a Confederate officer. For the next few years, when graves were decorated for Memorial Day, Sonny made sure that we had a Confederate flag for this one grave. You could not have contact with Sonny without becoming totally absorbed. I had been my family's historian for some twenty years when we met, and had various documents regarding the military service of my ancestors, but had never really considered what I had or where they had been. Sonny instilled an interest to trace these documents, regiments, family members and events. We took tours on buses, stood with groups in circles in cemeteries, ate hotdogs and marshmallows around campfires while Sonny and others told stories. We ate hardtack and held our ears while cannons fired, scratched mosquito bites and waded through muddy cornfields to view a gravesite. Art even got to eat a Runza! Even my fifth grade son wanted to attend reenactments and see the action while he was studying the Civil War in class. His teacher was very excited with the books and medals he brought to class to share. What impressed us most was Sonny's way. He lived life to the fullest. He was curious, investigative, inspiring and he brought all of us around him to a higher plateau to do the same. I guess I will always think of Sonny, as I pour over my family research and make sure, one more time, that what I have is proven and accurate. But more than that, I will share what I learn. After all, the history of our ancestors will only live again, if it is told and Sonny taught us that. He always gave freely, lending his expertise and expansive collection of documents without hesitation, even suggesting further locations of possible discoveries for our research. If Sonny ever had a motto, it would have been: Learn from yesterday, Live for today, Hope for tomorrow. God Bless Sonny!

~Sharon and Arthur Kelley

Thoughts and Memories about Sonny...

- ▶ His big floppy hat he wore on field trips
- ▶ Making history fun for everyone
- ▶ His Santa hat he wore at Christmas parties
- ▶ Tenderness in teaching school children about pioneer dress and customs
- ▶ His work ethic, making sure all details were covered in sponsoring or leading a field trip, lecture, etc.
- ▶ His tents
- ▶ Woodworking craftsmanship, especially his wooden toys
- ▶ His love for Nebraska and the Huskers
- ▶ His love for Missouri (an acquired love although he may never have admitted it)
- ▶ His love for Runzas
- ▶ His respect for those who gave service in our country's armed forces
- ▶ His generosity in donating books, papers, etc. to different individuals and organizations as well as opening his home on countless occasions to friends for gatherings and special events
- ▶ His diligence in making sure the Round Table's Coffee Fund was "in the black"
- ▶ His bravery in standing up to criticism, especially in the early days of the founding of the Civil War Round Table of Western Missouri
- ▶ His love for the companionship of friends, especially in the Round Table
- ▶ His narration of a Civil War cavalry maneuver over the loudspeaker
- ▶ His call of the Virginia Reel
- ▶ Going stomping for graves
- ▶ Saying that Confederate headstones came to a point so Yankees could not sit on them

2004 Dues

Many thanks to those who have already paid their 2004 dues. If you have not done that yet, you may bring them to the next meeting or mail a check to:

C.W.R.T.W. MO
c/o Beverly Shaw
17313 E. 51st Terr. Court
Independence, MO 64055

Dues are \$15.00 per calendar year for an individual, \$22.50 per family or \$5.00 for students (under 21). Those who wish to receive the newsletter but cannot attend meetings can make use of the \$9.00 per year subscription fee. If dues or subscriptions are not received by April 30th, you will not receive the May *Border Star*.

New Meeting Site

The Civil War Round Table of Western Missouri has a new meeting site and that is at the Old Blake Museum (also known as the Stillwell Gallery), 106 E. Walnut Street, Independence, Missouri (northeast corner of Walnut and Main). The meeting room is up a short flight of stairs. If you need handicapped accessibility, please come to the front door and we will assist you to the courtyard door with ramp access.

Parking for the meeting:

* Street parking for three vehicles in front

* About ten spaces across the street at the Plasterers' Union building, 301 S. Main.

For now, other street parking is on your own, as close as you can get. Please do not use any other private parking lots until we receive permission from business owners.

April Calendar

Wednesday, April 14th, 7:00 p.m.

Regular Monthly Meeting
The Old Blake Museum – 106 E. Walnut Street
Program: The Battle of Lone Jack with Alinda Miller and Charlotta Remington of "Friends of Lone Jack."

Saturday and Sunday, April 17th and 18th

Missouri Irish Brigade Civil War Encampment at Trenton, MO.

Contact the MIB at jpbairkc@yahoo.com or visit www.geocities.com/missouriirishbrigade/index.html

Wednesday, April 21st, 7:00 p.m.

Board Meeting at Beverly's House

Thursday, April 29th, 2004, 7:00 p.m.

Guardians of the Little Blue
Blue Hills Elementary School – Blue Mills Road,
one block south of 24 Highway.

Symphony Designers' Showcase XXXV

The Round Table will be docents at the Showcase Home again this year. Our date will be Thursday, May 6th from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. Please call Beverly at (816) 478-7648 to sign up.

Guardians of the Little Blue

The next meeting of the Guardians of the Little Blue will be on Thursday, April 29, 2004 at 7:00 p.m. at the Blue Hills Elementary School, located one block north of the stop light at 24 Highway and Blue Mills Road. All are encouraged to attend as we work to protect and preserve this important Civil War battle site.

The Border Star

Dennis Myers will serve as Editor of "*The Border Star*." Deadline for submission of articles is the 25th of each month. You may contact Dennis at:

Dennis Myers Phone: (816) 257-5754
18034 Kent Circle
Independence, MO 64057 word-craft@juno.com

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Harold
"Sonny"
Franklin
Wells, Jr.



Sept. 3, 1939

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

March 16, 2004

WHO WE ARE

The Civil War Round Table of Western Missouri is a non-profit organization dedicated to the promotion and understanding of all aspects and phases of the U.S. Civil War period, especially WESTERN MISSOURI and the "BORDER WAR" conflict.

Re-enactors - (Men, women, children, and families portraying Civil War era personalities - Both Union and Confederate).

Geneologists - (Family history researchers - Many related to Civil War veterans).

Historians - (Veteran and novice researchers of local and national Civil War history).

Preservationists - (Interested in battlefield, cemetery, monument, artifact, and historic site preservation).

Teachers - (Area high school and grade school teachers and other educators).

Authors - (Published writers of both local and national Civil War history).

Anyone interested in Civil War history. Meetings open to both members and non-members. COME ONE, COME ALL!



WHAT WE DO

Monthly Meetings - Featuring "Speaker of the Month" or "Round Table Sessions," refreshments and socializing with others of like interests.

Field Trips - Excursions to local history sites, first-hand learning, refreshments.

Annual Picnic - Complete with Civil War fare, when we dare, games, usually a cannon or two, dancing the "Virginia Reel."

Christmas Party – Prizes, Christmas feast, celebration of Christmas past, costuming.

Monthly Newsletter – “The Border Star” for our members, Civil War trivia, puzzles, border warfare articles, national Civil War articles.

