



November 2003

The Border Star

Monthly publication of the Civil War Round Table of Western Missouri, Inc.

Officers for 2003

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The Border Star

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Board Members

Dr. Gerald Anderson

Mike Calvert

Tom Carroll

Harriett Lionberger

Lucky Mason

Terry McConnell

Kelton Smith

Charlotte Tindall

Randall Todd

Meetings

Second Wednesday

of the month at 7 pm

at Blue Ridge Mall,

40 Hwy & I-70, in
the Community Room,

Visitors

Always

Welcome

for more information

Sonny Wells 628-9910

Tim Cox 478-8833

Beverly Shaw 478-7648

from the Pres...

As our eleventh year comes to a close I find it heart warming to sit back and think about the way the Board stepped forward and kept things running after I had to slow down these past few months.

I am so deeply appreciative of Beverly Shaw's assistance. She has helped in so many ways I cannot even begin to list them on just four pages.

And Art Kelley who has assisted in many, many ways, from helping load the van to passing out minutes and name tags.

Terry McConnell agreed to help out when needed. Luckily, we did not have to call on him too much, but when we did, he was there.

Paul Tate has had some medical problems but has still managed to get our archives in order, a long tedious task.

Kelton Smith has helped in times of crisis, some of which were kept out of the limelight because of his experience in executive matters.

Lucky, Randall, Tim, Charlotte and Harriett have all helped to make decisions and determine the proper course of action.

And how can I leave out Karen. She is my honey-baby-sweetiepie-get it done lady. On days when I could not get out of the rocker, she stepped forward and did it all. Coffee, and all the accessories, minutes, sodas, mail, and correcting me when I've said a boo-boo. I'd be lost without her.

I really mean it when I say this Board has been a joy to work with and helped make a difficult summer go by reasonably well.

It is time for new leaders to step forward. It has been difficult to find and place in nomination those new leaders, and it is not done yet.

The November program will be a bit different. "Brother Dave" will speak on the problems associated with the making of a new CD about "The Music of the Boys in Blue".

I managed to get an article on the Little Blue Battlefield in the Liberty Tribune and the 5 Sun papers. I have received several comments about the articles but all seem to be asking the same question...Can anything really be done? The last article had that quote about "Historians are seeking to document what happened here" (See page 4 for entire article).

On Monday, August 6, the doctors tripled the amount of the anti-biotic I was taking and ordered me to stay down for the next 15 days. I was also told to cut back further on outside activities until the leg heals. Resting, keeping the leg up and the new pills have helped considerably. But they have also limited my movements. I am most grateful for all the calls, cards and words of encouragement. Words cannot adequately describe how much I will miss all the gang at the Round Table but I look forward to the day when I can again get out in the evenings and participate with the group.

On the Calendar

November

Tuesday, November 4th, 1 pm
Mid-Continent Library, Lee's Summit
"Researching your Confederate Kin"

Thursday, November 6th, 7 pm
Jackson County Genealogical Society
Program on Battle of the Little Blue
at Truman Train Depot

Monday, November 10th
Veterans Day Holiday
Take the day off

Tuesday, November 11th
Armistice Day/Veterans Day
Fly the Colors

Wednesday, November 12th, 7 pm
Regular Monthly meeting
Blue Ridge Mall Community Room

Tuesday, November 18th, 1 pm
Mid-Continent Library, Lee's Summit
Researching your Federal Kin

Wednesday, November 19th, 7 pm
Board Meeting

Thursday, November 27th
Thanksgiving

December

Saturday, December 13th, 11:30-3pm
Annual Christmas Party
at Harris-Kearney House,
4000 Baltimore, in Westport

Wednesday, December 24th
Tis the night before Christmas

Ho, Ho, Ho, Merry Christmas

At the Board Meeting

The Board met on Wednesday, October 15th, at 7 pm, at Beverly Shaw's residence. Eight were present. Special thanks to Beverly and Jerry for the use of their home for the meeting.

Minutes of previous meeting were passed out.

REPORTS...

Newsletter Report--100 printed and 93 mailed out.
Cost of printing rose to 7 cents per page per side
Bill submitted and paid.

Historian's Report--Almost all of the old **Border Star** newsletters have now been located.

Treasurer--Report submitted.

Coffee Fund--Previous Bal. \$.82, Spent \$6.58
In Donation Jar \$ 7.00-- New balance \$ 1.24

2nd V. P.--Reported 18 present at last meeting.

1st V. P.--Reported on several meeting he has attended and contacts he has made relative to the effort to save the Little Blue Battlefield.

President Working on Nominations for 2004.

NEW BUSINESS

We received a *Thank You* card from the Civil War Round Table of St. Louis for the books we sent them, with some complimentary words (The Board had voted to send them a monuments book and a Battle of the Little Blue booklet at the September meeting.)

Monument books are now for sale at the Blue-Grey Book Shoppe in Buckner.

The Christmas Party will be held at the Historic old Harris-Kearney House in Westport on Saturday, December 13th, starting at 11:30 am.

New site, new scenery, but we need volunteers to help out Beverly and Ann. House will already be decorated, chairs and tables already in place, tour of the house is included, small kitchen is available. A donation will be tendered to the Westport Historical Society for the use of their facility.

Received *Thank You* card from the 1894 G.A.R. Hall and Museum in Nebraska City, Nebraska, for sending them a monuments book for their library.

Tim requested a copy of the monuments book and the Battle of the Little Blue booklet be sent to Gregg Wolk in St. Louis, Chairman of one of the several Civil War grant committees. Board approved.

Sold 3 Little Blue booklets at weekend event on the Independence Square

Our November Program

A new Civil War C.D. appeared on Ebay this week. It is music and verse of the G.A.R., the Union veteran's organization.

The idea behind this C.D. is "Brother Dave", or so he calls himself.

The C.D. has been available in some areas, mainly Omaha and Nebraska City, for about two months but has now gone nationwide.

It is a good bet you will not know most of the songs on the disc. They are mostly from G.A.R. reunions, conventions and other similar types of gatherings.

"Brother Dave" will do a program about the making of the C.D. at our meeting on November 12, in the Community Room at the Blue Ridge Mall, starting at 7 pm. Use the entrance between Appleby's and the former Wards store.

He will have disc's for sale and will autograph them when asked.

He is a member of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War at Nebraska City and is on the board of the 1894 G.A.R. Hall and Museum in that city.

Meet our New Members

A warm welcome is extended to Bob & Pat Dye of Independence. The Dye's live on Blue Mills Road, close to the "I" route of the proposed new highway.

Book Store to return to Independence

The Blue-Grey Book Shoppe will be back in Independence in the spring of 2004.

The Book Shoppe will be a joint tenant in the old Blake Museum Building which was recently purchased by Ted Stillwell.

Ted will have a gallery of his paintings on display when the business opens.

Dues for 2004 are due

HELP-HELP-HELP

Research involved in the recent transfer of the remains of Preston Loughborough, of Clay County, back to Kentucky, has resulted in the discovery of several letters written in the early 1860's to the family back in Louisville.

One is dated December 12, 1861. It makes mention on a roundup of men in Independence in which the Federalists are set free and the Sessionist are held prisoner while a group of black men, under orders from Gen. Lane's troops, burns their homes.

It also mentions an uncle who was captured. The uncle asks Lane's men if they really made prisoners dig their own graves and then kneel in them waiting to be shot.

The Red-Leggers admitted they did it and even openly boasted of it, the letter states.

The writer is the sister of Elizabeth Loughborough Price, sister of Preston, who is writing to the third sister telling her what "Sister" (Elizabeth) wrote to her last week.

Elizabeth was married to Isaac E. Price, who had 8 sons and nephews serving in the Confederate Army of Missouri, under Gen. Sterling Price.

One of her brothers, John, was on Price's staff. After the War he settled in Little Rock and became a state senator.

I called two other people who are known to have studied the War in this area. Neither of them had ever heard of this incident.

One of them even went through several books about the War in this area and came up with nothing.

There is mention of an incident on April 5th in Independence, in the History of the 1st Kansas, but it is nothing of the scope of the incident mentioned in this letter.

If you are aware of any information which will further the research into this supposed incident, please let me know.

Another of the letters is dated August 27, 1863. This one tells how the Federalists are upsetting the citizens by their constant harassment and burning of homes. It goes on to mention that Quantrell is getting even as he recently went to Lawrence, Kansas, and burned the city to the ground.

The obvious over statement in the 1863 letter may be an indication of the same in the 1861 letter. I am having both letters transcribed.

Never the less, this bears looking into. Folklore rather than fact? Very possibly, but let us take the time to check it out before we totally dismiss it.

Civil War battlefield in trouble

JACK "MILES" VENTIMIGLIA

EDITOR

A Clay Countian has joined Jackson Countians in doing battle with a Mid-America Regional Council plan to direct a highway through one of Kansas City's most significant Civil War battle sites.

The new road would cut through the Little Blue battlefield, said Sonny Wells, Kearney, president of the Civil War Roundtable of Western Missouri.

MARC plans an expressway to move traffic in eastern Jackson County, MARC Transportation Director Mell Henderson said.

"It includes improvements to Chouteau and Front streets ... and construction of a new roadway from Front Street and I-435 east along the southern bank of the Missouri River and across (Route) 291, where it would begin curving to the south," Henderson said. "Then it would cross 24 highway and continue south, and connect in at 39th and the Little Blue Expressway."

Wells said the Battle of Westport started with the fight between Union and Confederate forces near Little Blue River, on land that is in the road's path.

"Much more happened here

See BATTLEFIELD, 5A

Battlefield in path of planned road

Continued from Page 1

that first day than happened at any of the battle sites in Kansas City," Wells said. "It's the only battle where all of the famous Confederate generals were present."

Gen. Sterling Price, a former Missouri governor, and Gen. John Marmaduke, a future Missouri governor, had gathered about 8,000 poorly equipped Confederates. Gen. Jo Shelby, who also joined the battle, after the war would help convince a jury that the outlaw Frank James had not committed a murder.

The Union's 6,000 better-equipped soldiers also presented prominent leaders, including Col. James Ford, who commanded troops that occupied Liberty in 1863, and the notorious Col. Charles Jennison, whose 15th Kansas Cavalry harassed area civilians, including Clay Countians, Wells said.

"He was the one who went around burning houses in southern Jackson County, and in Cass and Bates counties," Wells said.

Jennison would find houses owned by Confederate troops and give families 15 minutes to leave.

"The smoking chimneys that were left standing out in these fields were known as 'Jennison monuments,' meaning he had burned your house," Wells said.

After the war, even the North disavowed Jennison's actions by court-martialing and throwing him out of the military, Wells said.

The Little Blue Battle started with a mistake by Union forces.

"At Little Blue, the Confederates charged across the hill and then they charged across the river," Wells said.

They could charge across the river because Union forces waited too long before trying to torch the bridge, he said. Advancing Rebels next reached a ridge where the McKune Home for Boys now stands.

Union Col. Thomas Moonlight had troops positioned along the ridge.

"Shelby's cavalry charged from the south and they were beaten back by Moonlight," Wells said.

"But when Marmaduke's infantry charged from the middle, Shelby crossed behind them and came up on the north side of the battlefield and rode right

into the middle of the Union lines. It is said to be one of the most daring cavalry attacks in the entire Western theater. This caused Moonlight to fall back and regroup along what we now call Little Blue Road."

After the Yankees retreated, the South followed up with another cavalry attack that ended in a second Union retreat.

Although winning the initial confrontation, the South had no reinforcements, but men from Kansas and Lexington flocked to the Union banner. When the armies again clashed farther south, at Westport, Shelby's had far fewer men, about 12,000, versus about 20,000 commanded by Gen. Samuel Curtis.

Shelby's forces hurled themselves at the Union soldiers, failed to break through and ultimately had to turn tail, with Marmaduke captured in the process.

"The Confederates retreated all the way to Texas," Wells said.

The clash at Little Blue is significant as the start of the confrontation that led to the Battle of Westport, which in turn is one of the most important battles of the Civil War, Wells said.

"In 1993, a committee listed all of the Civil War battle sites in the United States and categorized them in importance. The Westport battlefield was ranked 37th out of 14,000," Wells said.

Other states preserve their Civil War battlefields and promote them as tourism sites. Whether Missouri officials are as interested in historical preservation remains to be seen, Wells said.

"Missouri is putting a new super highway through there. The new highway will, among other things, destroy one of the major battle sites," he said.

In addition to historic concerns, area residents also take issue with having a highway close to their residences, passing through what for now is pristine ground.

Henderson said MARC is paying attention to what residents and historic preservationists have to say about the road plan. He said he does not know how concerns will mesh with MARC's plans for the road.

"My understanding is (historians) are trying to document the events that occurred there," he said.



LIBERTY recognizes its Civil War past with a monument. There is none for the Little Blue Battle.

Check out the last paragraph

"... trying to document the events that occurred there."

Just exactly how much documentation does he want?