



# The Border Star

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

March 2000

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## THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE OF WESTERN MISSOURI INC.

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### ANNUAL DUES

Individual	\$15.00
Family	\$22.50
Student (under 21)	\$5.00

### MEETINGS

2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of month at 7 PM  
Truman H.S. Library, 3301 S.  
Noland Rd., Independence, MO

July	- Annual Picnic
September	- Cemetery Tour
December	- Christmas Party

**VISITORS  
WELCOME!**

## NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, March 15, 2000

At

George Caleb Bingham 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Center  
Speck Road & 78 Hwy. (23<sup>rd</sup> St.)  
Independence, Missouri

**Time:** 7:00 p.m.

**Program:** *Battle of Albany &  
Death of Bloody Bill*

**Presenter:** *Sonny Wells, CWRT-WMo*

The Lincolns have postponed their visit to Independence because of family obligations. They will not be in the area until later in the month. Therefore, you will note a change in the March program. Sonny Wells has graciously agreed to step in and give the program. This program was given several years ago; however, Sonny has new maps, pictures, etc. from a descendant that had breakfast with Bloody Bill on the morning of his death and information about the girl "Bill" was dating at the time. He also has additional information on the battle from people who actually wrote about it years later.

*Refreshments to follow*

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**Hope to see you there!**

**Map on Page 4**

A map giving directions to the Bingham school is on page 4  
of this issue of The Border Star.

**\*\* The March Board meeting has been moved to Wednesday,  
March 22, 2000, at the usual site, Truman Campus, Rm. 101.**

## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

### March 2000

- 15 7 PM – CWRT-WMo Meeting – “Battle of Albany & Death of Bloody Bill” by Harold (Sonny) Wells  
Location: George Caleb Bingham 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Center  
Speck Rd. & 78 Hwy (23<sup>rd</sup> St.), Indep.  
See Map on Page 4
- 16 Open to the Public – Annual dinner at Leavenworth Country Club. Program: Loren E. Pennington on the Alf Landon Civil War collection. Landon is grandson of Pleasanton. Cost: \$20 – Call 913-682-7759 for info.
- 22 7 PM – Board Meeting – Truman Campus, Rm. 101
- 23 5 PM – St. Mary College in Leavenworth – Opening up the amazing Lincoln Memorabilia & Civil War artifact collections. Lincolns will attend this event.

### April 2000

- 1 War West of the River – Wilson’s Creek National Battlefield -Greene County Library Center, 4653 S. Campbell Ave., Springfield, MO  
Cost: Free – Pre-registration required.  
Contact Sonny or Tim to carpool.
- 12 7 PM – CWRT-WMo Meeting – Program to be Announced  
Truman High School Library,  
3301 S. Noland Rd.
- 19 7 PM – Board Meeting – Truman Campus, Rm. 101

### May 2000

- 6-7 10-5 (Sat.) and 11-3 (Sun.) – Civil War on the Border Mahaffie Farm, 1100 Kansas City Rd., Olathe, KS  
(For info. call (913) 782-6972)
- 10 7 PM – CWRT-WMo Meeting – Truman High School
- 17 7 PM – Board Meeting – Truman Campus, Rm. 101

## Upcoming Local Missouri Reenactments

May 13-14	Carthage
June 16-17-18	Wilsons Creek
August 19-20	Lone Jack
September 16-17	Lexington
October 14-15	Booneville
December 2-3	Prairie Grove (Arkansas)

## Museum of The Confederacy

The Museum of the Confederacy in Richmond, Virginia, is holding a year-long commemorative event in honor of Robert E. Lee.

A large and significant collection of Lee’s artifacts will be exhibited for the first time. This museum has the largest collection of Lee’s wartime possessions.

For anyone interested in visiting this site or for further information, contact the museum at 1201 E. Clay St., Richmond, Virginia, 23219. Phone number is 804-649-1861, or their website at [www.MOC.org](http://www.MOC.org).

## Four Myths About The Civil War

**Myth 1** - Most of the wealth of America was in Northern states just prior to the Civil War.

**Fact:** While industrial growth in the North had exceeded that in the South, the southeast had experienced an era of economic prosperity in the middle of the nineteenth century and, as a result, six of the ten wealthiest states in the Union in 1860 were below the Mason-Dixon Line.

**Myth 2** – Due to the lack of major industry, there were no large cities in the South at the outbreak of the Civil War.

**Fact:** It is true that most of the large cities in the country were along the eastern seaboard during the 1850’s. However, according to the 1850 census, New Orleans was the fifth largest city in the U.S., ranking just behind Philadelphia. The population of this major Southern port city at the time was 116,375.

**Myth 3** – Most Southern families were slave owners just prior to the Civil War.

**Fact:** The majority of the white Southern heads of households never owned a slave. This is substantiated through a study of slave census records.

**Myth 4** – Most American males were involved in some kind of military action between the American Revolution and the Civil War.

**Fact:** There were a number of wars on Southern soil, between 1783 and 1865, including battles of the War of 1812, the War with Mexico and several Indian Wars. However, the majority of males in this country never participated in any kind of military action beyond a militia drill during this time period.

Source: Betty Swisher, State Registrar (DAR)

# Lies Across America

by Beverly Shaw

James W. Loewen is the author of Lies Across America, What Our Historic Sites Get Wrong (The New press, 1999, 480 pp., \$26.95 retail or \$18.86 from latest Hamilton Bookseller mail order catalogue and from public libraries). It was reviewed in the Jan. 3, 2000 issue of the Kansas City Star, and Mr. Loewen was interviewed on "Public Interest", a National Public Radio Station program, on Jan. 5, 2000 (cassette copy made by Beverly Shaw). Mr. Loewen is also the author of Lies My Teacher Told Me.

As you may surmise from the titles of James Loewen's books, he is a "troublemaker." He is your own worst nightmare if you should be the hapless tour guide at a historic marker or property. In reality Mr. Loewen is a bit acerbic and definitely has a point of view, but what he points out is something all of us interested in history should be aware of, especially those who have a bumper sticker that says, "I brake for historic markers."

Mr. Loewen applies his skepticism to more than 100 historical sites, markers and outdoor museums. He gathered the information from 1994 to 1998 through travel and reading the "marker records" of each state (except New Jersey which has lost its files). For a change of pace he reviews markers from West to East to point out that the first inhabitants of our continent probably came from the West across the Bering Strait and that our first "history" should begin there. He is also emphasizing the fallacy that underlies so many markers using the word "discovered" to mean the first time a European visited a site (often with the help of Native American guides.) This dehumanizes Native Americans and scorns the culture in existence before the arrival of Europeans.

There are two stories to every marker, according to James Loewen—the event described and the prevailing perception of that event when the marker was erected. These stories may be widely separated by time. Generally the quicker a monument is erected, the more likely it is to be a personal or family remembrance such as grave markers. The more time that elapses, the more danger of falling into the "heritage" versus "history" morass. In other words, we erect markers to make us feel good about the people and events described. More importantly we are more likely to instruct visitors how to think and feel. Words are meant to inspire rather than inform. Important parts of the story are left out if they are too painful.

One example from the state of Missouri is the Hannibal cottage industry based on Mark Twain and his writings. The author says that the story of Huckleberry Finn as interpreted in Hannibal eliminates Jim, the runaway slave, and thus removes the ethical dilemma that was central to the book. Twain is reduced to being a genial humorist.

Contrary to the usual wisdom that it's the victors of war who get to write the history, in the case of the Civil War it was the Confederates and neo-Confederate organizations like the United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Sons of Confederate Veterans who erected the most monuments from 1890 into the 1920's when white supremacists had disfranchised African Americans and terrorized white Republicans into submission.

One example of revisionist confederate history is the renaming of Calhoun County, Alabama, in 1858. The historical marker in the center of Jacksonville, Alabama reads as follows:

## JACKSONVILLE—FIRST COUNTY SEAT CALHOUN COUNTY, 1833-99

...Calhoun Co. originally was Benton Co., named for Col. T. H. Benton, Creek War officer, later U.S. Senator from Missouri. Renamed in 1858 for John C. Calhoun, champion of South in U.S. Senate. Benton's views by then unpopular in South.

Both Thomas Hart Benton and John C. Calhoun had been slaveholders, gradually they diverged in political philosophy and became arch-enemies. Benton became more and more convinced that the U.S. should be a free nation, that slavery was wrong whereas Calhoun agitated for secession. Benton thinks that the renaming of Benton County revealed more about the man who did it in 1858 than about Thomas Hart Benton and John C. Calhoun.

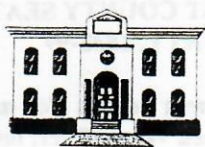
But why should we care about inaccuracies and outright lies on historic markers? Most of us are too "nice" to embarrass hapless volunteers just espousing that they have been taught. After all, we may soon be in a hot seat giving a tour when some loudmouth in the rear says, "You're about \_\_\_\_\_?" Historian Paul Gagnon says, "We do not have a bodyguard of lies. We can afford to present ourselves in the total honesty of the facts."

If nothing else, Lies Across America will make you look at history in a whole new way. Perhaps it will also help us be more critical and erect in our own time.

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## Ten Questions to Ask at a Historic Site

1. When did this location become a historic site? (When was the marker or monument put up? Or the house "interpreted"? How did that time differ from ours? From the time of the event or person commemorated?)
2. Who sponsored it? Representing which participant group's point of view? What was their position in social structure when the event occurred? When the site went "up?"
3. What were the sponsors' motives? What were their ideological needs and social purposes? What were their values?
4. Who is the intended audience for the site? What values were they trying to leave for us, today? What does the site ask us to go and do or think about?
5. Did the sponsors have government support? At what level? Who was ruling the government at the time? What ideological arguments were used to get the government to acquiesce?
6. Who is left out? What points of view go largely unheard? How would the story differ if a different group told it? Another political party? Race? Sex? Class? Religious group?
7. Are there problematic (insulting, degrading) words or symbols that would not be used today, or by other groups?
8. How is the site used today? Do traditional rituals continue to connect today's public to it? Or is it ignored? Why?
9. Is the presentation accurate? What actually happened? What historical sources tell of the event, people, or period commemorated at the site?
10. How does this site fit in with others that treat the same era? Or subject? What other people lived and events happened then but is not commemorated? Why?



## Designers' Showhouse!

On May 11 members of the Civil War Round Table of Western Missouri will have the opportunity to act as docents at the 31<sup>st</sup> annual Designers' Showhouse at #96 Janssen Place in the Hyde Park neighborhood of Kansas City, MO. The hours will be from 4 PM (or as soon after work as you can arrive) until 8 PM. No special training is needed although you will be given a history of the house and a program book. Your main duty is to stand in an area and guide visitors along the path of the tour.

The Designers' Showhouse is a benefit for the Kansas City Symphony and Children's Concerts. It is a 1911 neocolonial revival house with large rooms and mahogany woodwork. Area decorators have each taken a room or an area to furnish and display trends in interior design.

Visitors come to admire the architecture and artistic use of paint, paper, and furniture. Volunteers will be able to tour the house free of charge. Call Beverly Shaw to volunteer and arrange for carpooling to the house. Her number is (816) 478-7648.

## Civil War Slang

Chief Cook and Bottle Washer	- person capable of doing many things
Bread Basker	- stomach
Arkansas Toothpick	- large knife
Skedaddle	- run, scatter
Possum	- a buddy, pal
Scarce As Hen's Teeth	- rare or scarce
Grab a Root	- have dinner, [potato]
Wallpapered	- drunk
Pepperbox	- pistol
Quick-Step	- diarrhea
Sunday Soldiers, Kid Glove	- insulting words for soldiers
Boys, Parlor Soldiers	
Fresh Fish	- raw recruits
Horse Sense	- smart, on the ball
Blowhard	- big shot

Source: [www.geocities.com](http://www.geocities.com)



## Final Reminder – dues

are due! Send check to CWRT-WMo, c/o Beverly Shaw, 17313 E. 51<sup>st</sup> Terr. Ct., Independence MO 64055, or pay at the next meeting.

Single	\$15.00
Family	\$22.50
Student	\$ 5.00

Dues are now payable for the year 2000. Those who do not pay by April 15 will be dropped from the mailing list.

## Coins for Community

A "Coins for Community" bank will be available at the March meeting for individual contributions to the restoration of the Truman Memorial Building and Palmer School in Independence, Missouri. Since 1926 the Truman Memorial Building has anchored the Square as a civic center and memorial to local citizens who lost their lives in battle. The nearby Palmer School has served the education needs of generations of Independence School District students. Today these facilities need significant renovations to meet the community's changing needs.

By contributing to "Coins for Community" you can help restore these buildings which will:

- create a permanent memorial to local war veterans
- provide a multi-purpose center for youth and family programs
- showcase performing and cultural arts
- honor ties to the Truman legacy
- house a senior adult nutrition and recreation center.

You might be asking what interest our Civil War Round Table has in this project! The answer is...our Civil War Round Table might be able to use the facilities created by this community renovation.

## POLL TAXES

For those genealogists in the CWRT group, here's another suggestion for finding your ancestors. Just because your ancestors never owned land doesn't mean they didn't pay taxes. Even if they were renters, men usually paid a 50-cent poll tax so they could vote in local elections. Poll taxes are a great way of locating people who weren't especially wealthy and didn't own property. Many poor immigrants lived in

boarding houses but wanted to vote as new citizens. Paying taxes (and voting) was also a way of gaining citizenship as well as a requirement for obtaining jobs in large cities where employment was controlled by union bosses.