



May, 1994

Vol 2. No. 5

THE BORDER STAR

A Publication of the CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE of
WESTERN MISSOURI 1209 Skyline Dr. Liberty, MO 64068

THE CAPTURE OF THE MISSOURI SWAMP FOX

by Ed Harris

One summer evening in 1863, General M. Jeff Thompson was staying at the St. Charles Hotel in Pocahontas, Arkansas. The General had made arrangements with some of his staff to meet him in Pocahontas to plan a recruiting tour of Missouri. Soon after Thompson's arrival, Captain Reuben Kay, A.A.G., of his staff, arrived. For two days Thompson was engaged in writing letters while Capt. Kay drew and examined maps.

"Monday evening (August 22, 1863) found them still at work, they thinking themselves safe from war's alarms, General Davidson's army, as they were informed, having left that part of the country. About dusk, the two men heard a noisy tramping of horses outside, creating more than ordinary confusion. Captain Kay whispered, 'What is that?' 'Oh,' replied Jeff, 'it's some of our boys, perhaps, who have heard that we are here.'"

"Thompson was sitting near a window facing the street. A horseman rode up, and poking his insinuating face inside the window, said 'Where is General Thompson?' 'I am General Thompson, sir,' replied Jeff. 'Then you are my prisoner, sir. Why, how are you Jeff?' 'Hello! Gentry, is that you?' replied Thompson, nothing disconcerted, although he recognized Capt. Gentry of the second Missouri State Militia Cavalry, and commenced tearing up his letters. As Captain Gentry dismounted, Captain Kay whispered, 'By thunder! Here's the Feds!' 'Don't say a word,' replied Jeff. 'but take those maps and put them in the kitchen stove as quickly as possible,' all the while tearing up his letters."

"Jeff says he could have escaped, but for those infernal letters, for he had his horses on the other side of the river, intending, if danger of capture presented itself, to make his way out of the back door of the hotel, swim the river, and once over, the devil (could) not have caught him. But that pile of letters -- not less than fifty, implicated parties in this state (Missouri) and elsewhere, which would get them into trouble, and he determined to destroy them."

"Thus his chances of escape momentarily lessened, until Captain Gentry entered the room, tapped him on the shoulder, shook hands with him,

and 'claimed him as his own.' Captain Gentry said he was in command of an expedition... In search of Colonel Barbridge, who they had learned was in that neck of the woods, but when seven miles from Pocahontas, a man told him J. Thompson was in town, telling the very house where he could be found."

"*'He had come after a colonel,' said Jeff, 'and caught a general. He didn't go on the principle of the man who went a-fishin and threw all the catfish he caught back into the river, saying, 'When I go a-cattin, I go a-cattin, but when I go a-fishin, I go a-fishin.' He took whatever he caught; and by Jove, he took me!'*"

"Not long after his capture...an amusing incident occurred. Lieutenant Miller, ordinance officer of Gen. Crandal's command, hearing that Jeff was in Pocahontas, went in to see him. Unaware of the presence of federal troops, he rode quite unconsciously into the town, by mere chance passing the pickets in the dark, and proceeded quite leisurely to the hotel... At the door he was stopped by the guard, who told him he could not get in unless he was an officer. 'I am an officer,' replied Miller, 'and I must go in.' He passed in and saluted Jeff, remarking, 'Ah, you've got some Feds, I see,' observing a number of gentlemen in the room with blue uniforms..."

"*'Yes, I have,' replied Jeff, 'and a damned big lot of them, too!'* Just then Capt. Gentry walked up to Miller and said, 'you are my prisoners!'... 'Ain't he joking, General,' Miller appealed to Jeff. 'Yes,' replied Thompson, 'but it's a confounded serious joke.' Then the truth flashed on the benighted and confused mind of Miller that he was in a town surrounded by federal cavalry."

General Thompson and Capt. Kay were escorted to the Gratiot Military Prison in St. Louis. He spent time at prisons in Alton, Johnson Island, Ft. Delaware, and Charleston harbor. On August 3, 1864, Thompson was exchanged. He died Sept. 5, 1876 and is buried in the Mount Mora Cemetery in St. Joseph, Missouri.

Source used for this article: *The Liberty Tribune*, Sept. 4, 1863. (from the *Missouri Republican*)

BOOK REVIEWS

One of the things we've heard recently from several members is their interest in being guided towards books pertaining to the Civil War in Missouri (and eastern Kansas). In upcoming issues of the newsletter we will try to provide a varied list of books on the subject. You are encouraged to contact the newsletter about books you have read so that we can pass it along to the membership.

INSIDE WAR, The guerrilla conflict in Missouri during the Civil War. Michael Fellman, Oxford University Press, New York, 1989.

This is an excellent book on the subject. Although a bit dry and scholarly, Fellman paints a vivid picture of the horror of being a civilian in Missouri during the war. Based on civil court records, Fellman tells fascinating stories of how Missourians coped with the outrage and violation from both sides in the conflict.

CIVIL WAR ON THE WESTERN BORDER, 1854-1865, Jay Monaghan, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1984.

A classic. Very readable and well written.

1994 CIVIL WAR ACTIVITIES IN AREA

May 11	CWRTWM meeting
May 21	Tour battle of Albany
June 8	CWRTWM meeting
June 10-11	Weston CW encampment
July 9	CWRTWM tour Cass county sites
July 13	CWRTWM meeting at Little Blue
July 23-24	Windsor MO CW camp
August 6-7	Grand Island NE CW camp
August 6-7	Ft. Kearney, Pioneer vil. tour
August 10	CWRTWM meeting at Big Blue
August 20	Pony Express days St. Joseph
September 14	CWRTWM meeting. Civil War 101.
September 17-18	Lexington MO CW camp
September 17-18	Parkville Days
October 1	CWRTWM tour KS monuments
October 12	CWRTWM meeting. Women in the War years. The Platte Purchase Players.
October 29-30	Mine Creek KS CW camp
November 5	Loose Park battlefield tour
November 9	The Battle of Westport.
December 10	CWRTWM 2nd annual Christmas party

Weather dates for outdoor meetings following Wed.

THIS MONTHS TRIVIA

- 1) What event near the community of Blooming Grove, Kansas, in 1858, inspired John Greenleaf Whittier to write a famous poem?
- 2) Who said *"Either attack Richmond or give up the job"* and who did he say it to?
- 3) What percent of the U.S. population were listed as slaves in the 1860 census?
- 4) What percentage of the Missouri population were slaves in 1860?
- 5) What was the average number of slaves per slaveholder in Missouri in 1860?
- 6) What were the two biggest commodities produced for trade in Missouri in 1860?

Statistically, the average Missourian in 1860 was a Methodist from Kentucky who owned a 215-acre family farm, owned no slaves, produced most of the family's subsistence, sold products and purchased goods to external markets, primarily in St. Louis and the East.

With the exception of St. Louis there were no cities in Missouri in 1860. Only 25 towns had a population of more than 3,000 people. None except St. Louis had more than 10,000.

In the 1850's, approximately 75 percent of Missourians were of southern ancestry. Of those Missourians born outside the state, nearly all came from Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and North Carolina.

In The 1860 presidential election, Lincoln received 17,028 votes in Missouri, mostly in St. Louis. Lincoln only received approximately 27,000 votes from ALL of the slave states.

**The Civil War Round
Table of Western
Missouri, 1209 Skyline
Dr., Liberty, MO 64068
(816) 781-7322 (Sonny)
(816) 363-4072 (Fred)
(913) 345-1853 (Ed)**

Board of Directors

President - Sonny Wells
1st Vice Pres. - Fred George
Co-2nd Vice Pres. - Sue
Valentine and Connie McQuain
Secretary - Karen Wells
Interim Treas - Fred George
Historian - Tim Cox
Dr. Gerald Anderson-Ed Harris-
Robert Benson- Troy Chrisman -
Howard Thompson - Phyllis
Thompson.

Newsletter Staff

Editor- Ed Harris
Contributors-Sonny Wells

Membership

Total Membership -651

Annual Dues

Individual membership --\$15
Family membership --\$22.50
Student membership -- \$5

**The newsletter staff
welcomes suggestions and
contributions of material to
the newsletter.**

**Please address all
inquiries for newsletter
to:**

**Ed Harris
11508 W. 113th Street
Overland Park,
KS 66210.**

**For information about
programs write or call:**

**Fred George
5442 Tracy
KCMO 64110
(816) 363-4072**

THE PRESIDENTS CORNER

by Sonny Wells

The president's corner will return next month.

Saturday, May 14, 1994, William Jewell College will dedicate their new rock patio at the chapel. You all may recall the ruckus last year relating to the placement of the patio on the site of the Union trenches. The college contacted Sonny a couple of weeks ago to see if he would be interested in participating in the placement of commemorative markers at the redoubt and the mass grave site. This was a big turnaround from the previous college administrators. Sonny, because of a previous commitment, will be unable to attend. Fred George was asked to deliver a short talk about the significance of the two sites and then the plaques will be unveiled. The ceremony will begin about 9:30 am with Fred scheduled to speak about 10:00am.

Our roundtable can take pride in the fact that partly because of our effort and interest the new William Jewell administration decided to commemorate the two civil war sites. They were very impressed with our group photo standing along the trenches. Members are encouraged to attend.

Next month's newsletter will have a full report of the ceremony and, hopefully, photographs!

You may have noticed the new logo on the front page. If not, look now to see the new official CWRTWM logo. A vote was held at the April meeting and Tim Cox's design was chosen. Thanks to all the entrants for their time and interest. Ed Harris.

The May meeting will be at the Truman High School Library, 3301 S. Noland Road, May 11, 7:00 pm. Our meeting this month will be "THE BATTLE OF ALBANY" and on Saturday, May 21, the round table will conduct a tour of the battle site as well as many other civil war related sites in Clay county.

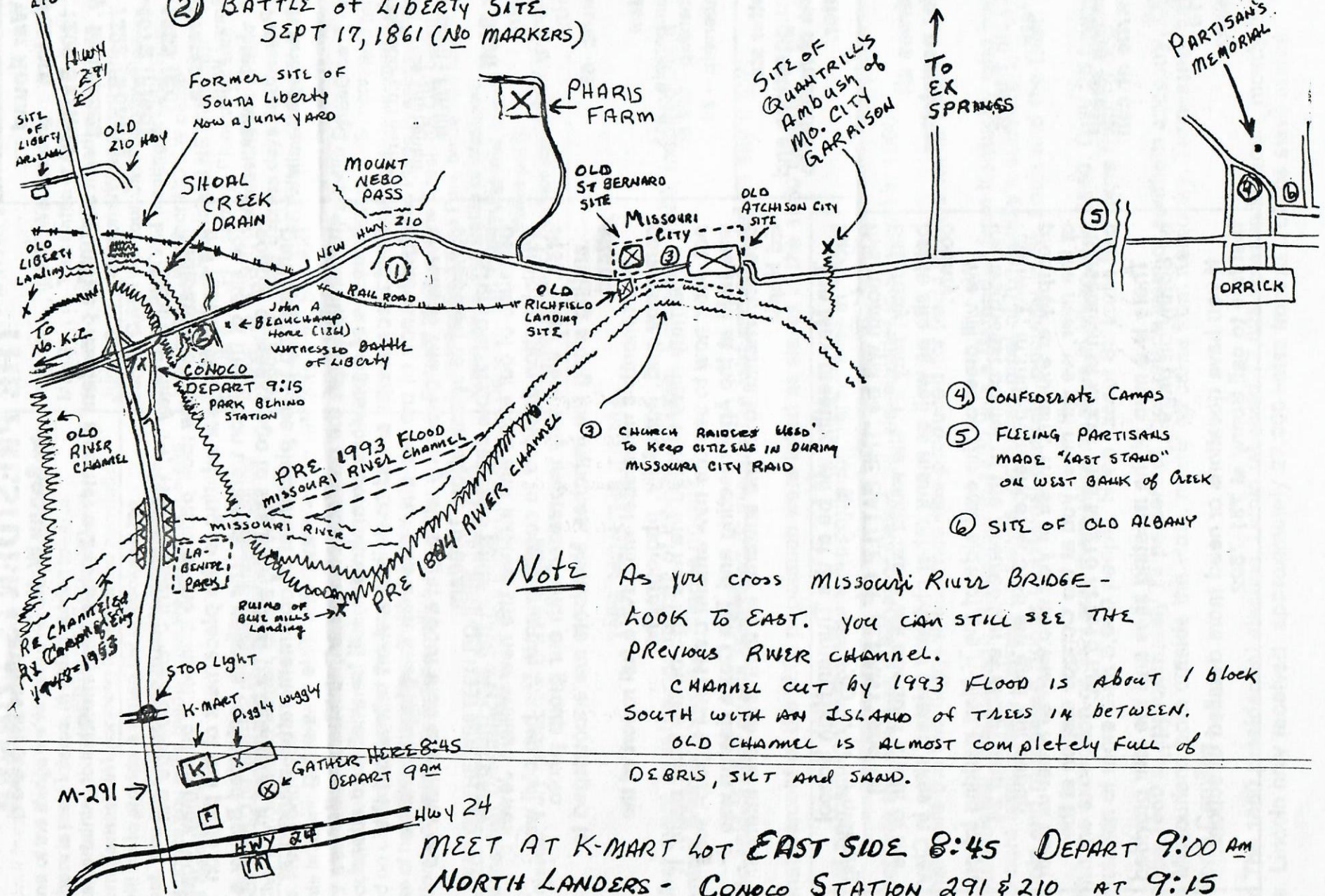
We will meet on the east side of the K-Mart parking lot on the northeast corner of the intersection of M-291 and 24 Highway, in Independence, at 8:45 am and will depart promptly at 9:00am. Those of you who wish to meet us north of the river, we will meet you at the Conoco station at the intersection of M-291 and M-210 at 9:15 am.

There is a map of the meeting sites and the tour provided by Sonny on page 4.

If you have questions or need more detailed directions, feel free to call Sonny at 781-7322.

① NEBO PREHISTORIC INDIAN EXCAVATION SITE
IN VALLEY BETWEEN TWO MOUNDS

② BATTLE of Liberty SITE
SEPT 17, 1861 (NO MARKERS)



④ CONFEDERATE CAMPS

⑤ FLEEING PARTISANS
MADE "LAST STAND"
ON WEST BANK OF CREEK

⑥ SITE OF OLD ALBANY

Note

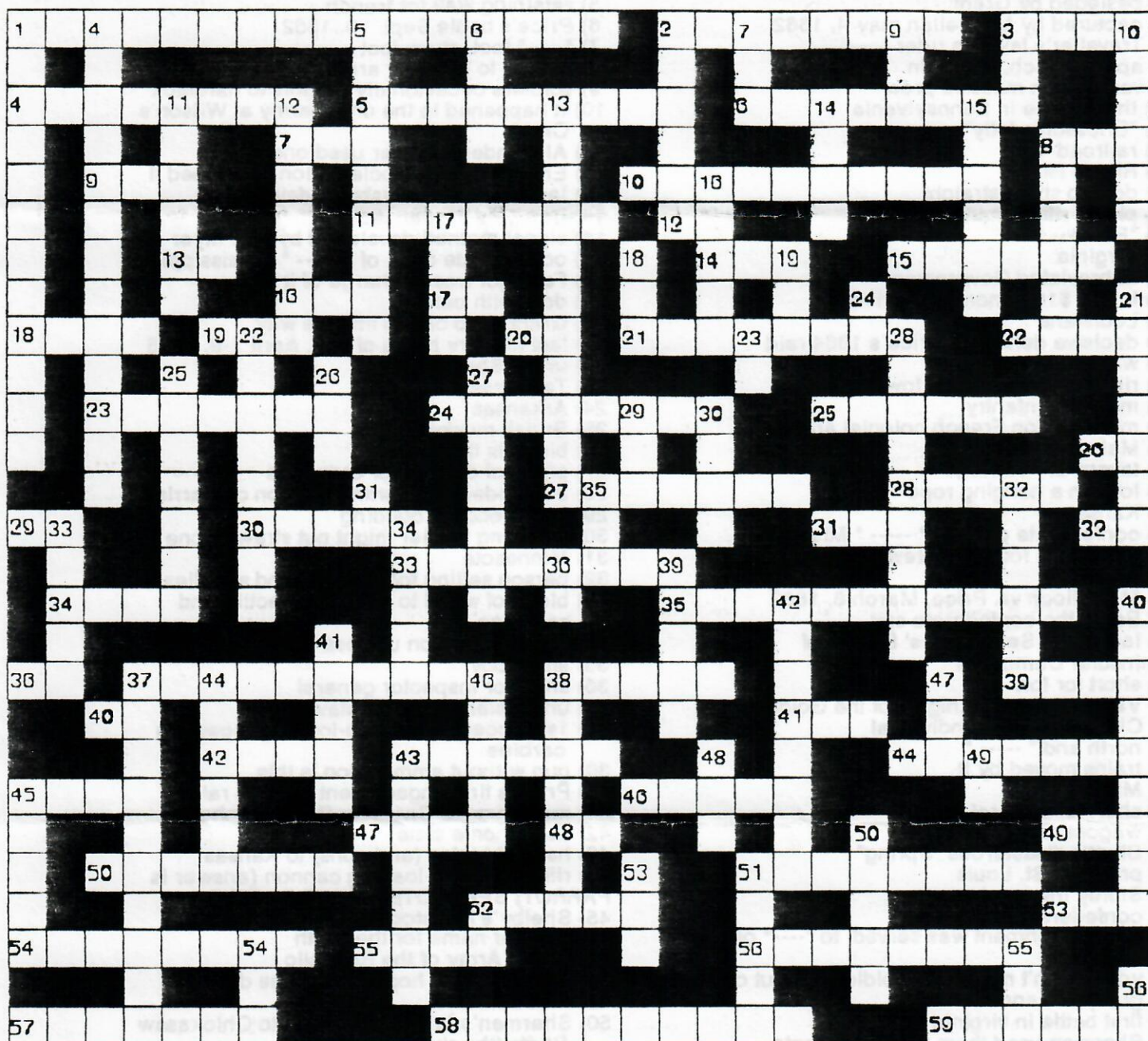
As you cross Missouri River BRIDGE -
LOOK TO EAST. YOU CAN STILL SEE THE
PREVIOUS RIVER CHANNEL.

CHANNEL CUT BY 1993 FLOOD IS ABOUT 1 block
SOUTH WITH AN ISLAND OF TREES IN BETWEEN.
OLD CHANNEL IS ALMOST COMPLETELY FULL OF
DEBRIS, SILT AND SAND.

MEET AT K-MART LOT EAST SIDE 8:45 DEPART 9:00 AM
NORTH LANDERS - CONOCO STATION 291 & 210 AT 9:15

CWRTWM CIVIL WAR CROSSWORD PUZZLE CONTEST

The person who most correctly completes this puzzle and submits the completed page to Ed Harris at the June meeting (June 8, 1994) will win one of our new T-shirts (T-shirts will be available later in the summer).



A FEW NOTES ABOUT THIS PUZZLE

- 1) where the name of a state appears, think of abbreviations
- 2) some answers are battles which are two words. There will be no space between the two words in the answer.
- 3) There is no 11 down. This will not affect solving the puzzle.
- 4) The answer to 44 down is misspelled so I am giving you the answer. PARROTT

The winner will be picked by a panel of judges (named by the board) and their decision is final.

ACROSS

- 1) battle, may 1-4, 1863
- 2) naval gun, "soda-water bottle"
- 3) used to make wagons, toothpicks
- 4) abolitionists, Sumner, Stevens, Chandler
- 5) besieged by Grant
- 6) captured by McClellan may 4, 1862
- 7) Traveller's favorite rider
- 8) apple, peach, pumpkin
- 9) vessel with massive prow
- 10) the big one in Pennsylvania
- 11) "Ericsson's folly"
- 12) railroad
- 13) Rhode Island
- 14) do it to shoot straight
- 15) pistol, rifle, cannon
- 16) "Bull ---"
- 17) Virginia
- 18) abbreviated Government
- 19) it was \$16 a month for privates
- 20) Louisiana
- 21) decisive defeat for Price's 1864 raid
- 22) war is "-----"
- 23) rings on cannons for towing
- 24) mounted infantry
- 25) modelled on French colonial armies
- 26) Maine
- 27) tavern at Pea ridge
- 28) loop in a hanging rope
- 29) Kansas
- 30) confederate dept. of "-----" Mississippi
- 31) its' cadets fought at New Market
- 32) Kentucky
- 33) McCulloch vs. Price, March 8, 1862
- 34) Belle, the confederate spy
- 35) last of the Seven Days' Battles of Peninsular Campaign
- 36) short for fort
- 37) Vandalia's Knights of the Golden Circle. slang for individual
- 38) north and "-----"
- 39) trains moved by it
- 40) Missouri
- 41) short for general
- 42) wagons moved by it
- 43) Blunt's disastrous "Spring"
- 44) prison in St. Louis
- 45) Sibley invented one
- 46) confederate and "-----"
- 47) how punishment was served. to "-----" out
- 48) Colorado
- 49) you weren't much of a soldier without one
- 50) group of cannon
- 51) first battle in virginia
- 52) Sherman used them to burn Atlanta
- 53) James Ewell Brown Stuart's nickname
- 54) hollow cast-iron projectile filled with shot
- 55) rebels often did it when attacking
- 56) type of cannon or French dictator
- 57) every army must have them
- 58) Quantrill was one, so was Anderson
- 59) ordnance used to open gates and walls

DOWN

- 1) northerners in the south after the war
- 2) another name for knife
- 3) what the north eventually did
- 4) infamous Georgia prison
- 5) retaining wall for trench
- 6) Price's battle Sept. 19, 1862
- 7) " --- " foot, straw foot
- 8) pledge to not bear arms
- 9) soldiers occasionally did this to hardtack
- 10) it happened to the union army at Wilson's Creek
- 12) Alexander Gardner used one
- 13) Emancipation Proclamation addressed it
- 14) landmark at Gettysburg, day three
- 15) iron gets it when wet
- 16) signal method developed by A.J. Myer
- 17) confederate dept. of "-----" Mississippi
- 18) Farragut was in charge of it
- 19) do it with oars
- 20) Grant used one to find his way
- 21) last infantry battle of war, April 1-9, 1865
- 22) union Sharpsburg
- 23) Tennessee
- 24) Arkansas
- 25) British musket
- 26) blood is this
- 27) place of deposit for ordnance
- 28) 2 cylinders supporting cannon on carriage
- 29) best wood for building
- 30) a drilling soldier might put straw in one
- 31) Minnesota
- 32) person selling food, drink, and supplies
- 33) block of wood to attach projectile and cartridge
- 34) renders cannon useless
- 35) small boy
- 36) short for inspector general
- 37) union slang term for slave
- 38) 1st successful breach-loading repeating carbine
- 39) gun without ammunition is this
- 40) Price's first engagement in 1864 raid
- 41) most famous Civil War Photographer
- 42) Lee's home state
- 43) he sent bibles (and guns) to Kansas
- 44) rifled, muzzle-loading cannon (answer is PARROT) SEE NOTE UNDER PUZZLE
- 45) Shelby's last stop on way to Mexico
- 46) popular name for the south
- 47) Grand Army of the Republic
- 48) every soldier hoped his shoes did this
- 49) Alabama
- 50) Sherman's failed expedition to Chickasaw Bluffs (the river)
- 51) cylindro-conoidal projectile designed by a French captain
- 52) Florida
- 53) United States of America
- 54) if shot off, you wouldn't hear as well
- 55) another term for lice
- 56) Maryland