



Buck and Ball

2020
Executive Officers

Newsletter of the Civil War Round Table of the Ozarks
www.cwrto.com December 2021

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Jacque Finger

Website
John Rutherford

Program Chair
Connie Langum

Membership Chair
Walt Hamer

Fundraising
TBA

Book Raffle
Bill Piston

Next Meeting

Wednesday, December 8

5:30 pm

Library Center, Community Rooms A and B



Please note change of time and place!

Bring your favorite dish!

President's Message

December 2021

Hello to All,

Another year has passed, and it is time for me to turn in my gavel. It has been a great pleasure to be your President these past two years. I am looking forward to a new year filled with great speakers and wonderful fellowship with everyone. I hope that our numbers will grow next year as hopefully, all the pandemic situations will disappear.

I thank every one of you who have participated in our meetings and especially those who have stepped up and given us great programs! The refreshments!! Thank you, Jacquie and Karen, for giving us so many great treats for our meetings. You have given generously of your time and efforts and we do appreciate it very much. Bill Piston, we thank you so much for your dedicated service in bringing us great books for our book raffle. Your knowledge of the books is very much appreciated by all.

Thank you, Bob Faenger, for being a great Vice President and leading the meetings when I couldn't be there for July and August meetings. Congratulations to Tim Noonan for doing a superior job taking care of our finances!

John Kinsley, thank you so much for taking meticulous notes of our meetings and passing them on to Nancy Piston to put in our Newsletter. Nancy Piston deserves a "Greatest Editor" award for our newsletter! We appreciate your dedication to giving us the news, advertising our meetings and program content. Membership management shout-out to Walt Hamer! Thank you for a great job!

Our next meeting on December 8 is our Christmas Party. It will be in Community Rooms A & B at the Library Center on Campbell in Springfield. We will meet at 5:30 and have a great meal and fellowship. Please bring your favorite dish!

We will also elect our officers for the coming year. The nominations were held at last meeting.

We will also have a silent auction for a few great pieces of Civil War history.

Warm holiday wishes to all!

Janet Perry
President
Civil War Round Table of the Ozarks

CWRTO Meeting 11/10/21

Meeting called to order by Pres. Janet Perry.

Opening prayer by Walt Hamer.

Minutes of October meeting approved as written in the Buck & Ball.

Treasurer's report by Tim Noonan.

Membership report by Walt Hamer.

Discussion about the Dec. Christmas party which will be Dec. 8.

Membership voted to have the party at the Library Center, rooms A & B.

Members and spouses are invited.

The round table will provide a ham and Walt volunteered to bring a turkey.

All members attending should bring a side dish, coordinated by Janet.

The holiday dinner will begin at 5:30 p.m.

Janet conducted the nominations for new officers for the 2022 campaign year.

The following people were nominated: President, John Kinsley; Vice-Pres., Bill Piston;

Secretary, Bill Perry; Treasurer, Tim Noonan; Program Chairman, Janet Perry.

Election will be held at the Dec. meeting.

Janet thanked Connie Langum for her years as program chair and she was given a round of applause for her service.

Jim Gallion reported on the Luminary event at Wilson's Creek to be held on Saturday, Nov. 13, 2021 from 5:30-9:00 p.m. The event this year will also honor Veterans Day as well as the fallen at Wilson's Creek.

Bill Piston reviewed the books to be raffled; total money raised was \$45.

Our speaker for the evening was our own Tim Noonan, introduced by President Janet Perry. His topic was "Thomas Hart Benton, (1777-1852), Missouri's first U.S. Senator and his Yankee and Rebel kin." Tim's well-researched presentation was most informative and received well by those present. Tim spoke on Benton's belief in manifest destiny and his accomplishments for the common man. There were many people in his inner circle who went on to accomplish much in American history. Thomas Hart Benton, the artist, was a great nephew of Senator Benton. Thank you and a very good presentation, Tim.

Submitted by CWRTO Secretary

John Kinsley

A Confluence of History

An Address Delivered 10 August 2021 at the Wilson's Creek National Battlefield,
Marking the 200th Anniversary of Missouri Statehood
and the 160th Anniversary of the Battle of Wilson's Creek

It would be wonderful to be in multiple places today, to witness not only the ceremonies here, but also those taking place in Jefferson City, Columbia, St. Louis, and elsewhere to mark Missouri's bicentennial. Imagine standing today on the banks of the Mississippi River at St. Louis, beneath the Gateway Arch, contemplating the state's riverine history, from the active, far-travelling steamboats of Mark Twain's day to the firmly-anchored present-day river palaces devoted to gambling. Imagine standing at this moment on the banks of the Missouri River at Jefferson City, contemplating how often in the past people passed by that spot while travelling upriver, whether by keelboat with Lewis and Clark, or, much earlier, by canoe, at a time when, for mile upon seemingly endless mile, the banks were free from human habitation, home only to ducks and geese, deer and black bear. But as a historian, I can think of no place I would rather be on this August 10 than here, where we can commemorate simultaneously the 200th anniversary of Missouri statehood and the 160th anniversary of the Battle of Wilson's Creek. For here we confront issues that mark Missouri's unique history and heritage from its founding through our great national tragedy of civil war.

What should we commemorate at this dual anniversary? That question raises another: just what is Missouri? How do we define it and understand it? The answer, of course, is that Missouri is a combination of fascinating elements.

For example, Missouri is geography. It is the mighty Mississippi and Missouri rivers. It is modest streams such as Wilson's Creek -- more accurately, "Wilson Creek," with no apostrophe "s," although I defer to popular usage of "Wilson's." Missouri is urban and rural. Did you know that St. Louis was larger than Chicago at the time of the Civil War? That Springfield was smaller than Hannibal? Or that Missouri's white population was larger than that of Virginia? Just barely. Missouri geography is the Ozarks, where we stand today, a subregion with its own complex culture and heritage, so eloquently chronicled in multiple volumes by historian Brooks Blevins.¹ Missouri is boundaries, specific lines on a map, the result of political rivalries and

conflicts that were themselves the heirs, the progeny, of an experiment in democracy inaugurated in 1775 by a seacoast people who were just beginning to dream in terms of a continent. Geography made Missouri part of the first American West, a West filled with hope and sorrow, an elusive dream and a harsh reality, ever shifting toward the setting sun, invoking the best while excusing the worst, dooming Native Americans. Geography made it impossible for Missourians to remain on the sideline during the Civil War. Union forces operating to restore the Union could not avoid utilizing the Mississippi River on Missouri's eastern border, could not avoid passing through Missouri in order to reach Arkansas and Louisiana. And Missouri's western border with Kansas meant that the passions and animosities of the "Bleeding Kansas" period of the 1850s would be reawakened, as Missourians learned when Kansas Jayhawkers sacked and burned the town of Osceola in September 1861. Missouri geography provided thickets and river bottoms that concealed guerrillas. Missouri geography also included as well the once un-named hill over my right shoulder, the one we now label Bloody Hill as a testament to the horror and courage that occurred on its slopes and hilltop.

Missouri is ecology, predating human residency but impacting Missourians in both profound and subtle ways down to the present. Ecology is familiar to us in relation to issues such as water pollution. When I first viewed Wilson's Creek in 1988, the stream was so polluted that it featured an ugly, thick, brown foam, a foam that floated slowly downstream, eddying along the creek bank where soldiers once dipped their canteens in desperate haste before facing the trial of battle. I am happy to note the difference today. Ecology is less familiar to us as local history of 1861, as studied by historian Mathew M. Stith in his work *Extreme Civil War: Guerrilla Warfare, Environment, and Race on the Trans-Mississippi Frontier*.ⁱⁱ I recommend it to you.

Missouri is weather. Missouri is heat and humidity, the relentless August sun that in 1861 caused death by heatstroke within the ranks of the soldiers who fought here. It is also the thunder, lightning and (as it turned out) brief and gentle rain that caused the Southern forces camped here at Wilson's Creek on August 9 to cancel their plans to attack Springfield, thereby leaving them vulnerable to the surprise attack by the Union forces of General Nathaniel Lyon at dawn on August 10. It was Missouri weather, then, that determined that this specific spot where we stand today, rather than another, would be hallowed by human courage and sacrifice.

Missouri is ethnicity, things that make people similar and things that make them different, or at least appear to, in the eyes of some. Missouri's history includes the Osage and other Native Americans who resided here before people of European origin – Spanish, French, English – arrived to impose their own culture upon what was already an ancient land. Missouri is also witness to the Trail of Tears, the forced migration in the 1830s of the Cherokee from their southeastern homeland, to an area labeled “Indian Territory” by a government that excluded them from the democratic process. One branch of that trail passed through, or close to, the Wilson's Creek National Battlefield. Yet twenty-three years after the Trail of Tears, a small number of Cherokee joined the Southern cause, fighting alongside the Missouri State Guard here at Wilson's Creek. Moreover, the ranks of Colonel Elkanah Greer's Texas cavalry regiment included two young Native Americans who enlisted when the Texans passed through the Choctaw Nation while *en route* to Wilson's Creek.

Missouri is immigration, a topic fraught with political ramifications today. Missouri has welcomed immigrants and opposed them, celebrated immigrant distinctiveness and reduced immigrants to stereotypes. Stereotyping in 1861 included labelling German-born persons “Dutch,” or more often “Damned Dutch,” when they identified their homeland in their own language as Deutschland. Lost among current rhetoric is the memory that conflict in regard to immigration has been almost a constant in American history, as those whose ancestors made America their home often objected to others doing the same. On the eve of the Civil War, Missouri's history included the American or Know-Nothing Party, an openly anti-immigrant, anti-Catholic party that elected candidates across the nation. Let me recommend to you Vanessa Varin's master's thesis entitled “‘Pure Americanism’: Building a Modern St. Louis and the Reign of Know Nothingism.”ⁱⁱⁱ

Immigration mattered at the Battle of Wilson's Creek. It really mattered. Lyon's Union army included St. Louis regiments raised almost exclusively from among the city's large German immigrant population. Two companies within the First Iowa infantry were also composed of German immigrants. The First Kansas, representing a state less than six months old, was, according to its muster rolls, composed of individuals born in twenty-eight countries. It is likely that no other major engagement of the Civil War contained such a high percentage of immigrant soldiers as did the Battle of Wilson's Creek. The powerful role of ethnicity in the

Civil War is underscored by the fact that, although he performed badly at the Battle of Wilson's Creek, Lyon's German-born subordinate Colonel Franz Sigel ended the campaign a hero among German-Americans in Missouri and across the nation. Historian Edward M. Coffman reminds us in his work, *The Old Army; A Portrait of the American Army in Peacetime*, that throughout much of American history, a majority of enlisted men in the United States Army were foreign born.^{iv} This was presumably true for the hundreds of United States Regulars in Lyon's command. (If you are curious, the percentage of foreign-born personnel in our current armed forces is about 3 percent.)

Missouri is medicine. It is the state-of-the-art facilities found along Springfield's Medical Mile, facilities that have a regional impact on health care. Missouri's history is also the shocking absence of health care at the Battle of Wilson's Creek, the failure of either side to anticipate and plan for mass casualties. Some 1,800 soldiers were left bleeding on the battlefield, men who waited among the heat and flies for the attention of the few surgeons available, soldiers in fear and pain who sometimes received their first medical attention from the farm women of the surrounding community, women who came forth to render aid once the guns fell silent. Yet Missouri's history is also the grim reality that war spurs medical innovation, producing by 1863 a series of specialized hospitals in St. Louis. In addition, floating hospitals based in St. Louis plied the Mississippi River, while renovated railroad cars were used to evacuate sick and wounded soldiers from points across the state. All of which constituted a Nineteenth Century state-of-the-art medical system that attracted study by European doctors. The best physicians of Europe came to Missouri to learn how to become better physicians.

Missouri is religion. Our state is home to many faiths, reflecting an ongoing globalization of religious practices. At Missouri State University, and at campuses across Missouri, organizations exist to provide a place, and a safe atmosphere, where students can share their beliefs and learn about one another. This stands in sharp contrast to Missouri in 1861, where prejudice against Catholics was particularly strong. Although muster rolls do not reveal religious affiliation, the muster rolls of the troops fighting at Wilson's Creek contain a large number of soldiers listing Ireland, an overwhelmingly Catholic country, as their place of birth. While this Irish presence was strongest among Lyon's Union troops, Irishmen were also present in significant numbers among

the coalition of Southern forces on the battlefield: Sterling Price's Missouri State Guard, Nicholas B. Pearce's Arkansas State Troops, and Ben McCulloch's Confederates. The Missouri State Guard included the Washington Blues, a predominantly Irish prewar militia unit from St. Louis, organized and led by Captain Joseph Kelly. Wounded at Wilson's Creek, Kelly was an Irish-born grocer who defied stereotypes regarding Irishmen and alcohol by his support of the Temperance Movement.

Missouri is gender. The state's Civil War heritage embraces the mothers, daughters, sisters, and grandmothers who sewed uniforms and flags for the men who fought at Wilson's Creek. It includes women who saw their property confiscated, damaged, or destroyed as a result of the battle – women such as Roxanna Ray and her three daughters, Martha Gibson and her five daughters, Rebecca Short and her two daughter, and Mary Sharp and her two daughters. Not least of all, Missouri's gender history includes Rhoda and her three daughters, African Americans held in bondage by the Ray family. The names of other slaves residing in the area impacted by the battle are lost to history. Also lost are the names of the women employed as spies by both Ben McCulloch and Nathaniel Lyon. Not lost to us, however, is the initiative of Mary Whitney Phelps, who, when Union forces retreated, took charge of Nathaniel Lyon's body and interred it at her farm home, now the location of Phelps Grove Park, until the general's Connecticut relatives arrived to take him back east. A grateful United States Congress awarded Mrs. Phelps \$20,000 for her work, money she selflessly used to establish in Springfield an orphanage for children who lost their parents during the war.

But if Missouri has been many things, there is no question that, in the 19th Century, the state was impacted most of all by persons and events relating either directly or tangentially to the institution of slavery. Slavery was a complex institution. By the time white Missouri residents began to consider statehood, slavery as an economic system was increasingly interwoven with the national economy, at the same time that the institution was coming under growing criticism. The first petition for Missouri statehood reached Congress in 1817. When the House of Representatives passed the required an enabling act, Congressman James Tallmadge Jr. of New York offered his famous amendment, which would ban slaves being brought into Missouri and gradually free the African Americans already enslaved there. In addition to the issue of slavery's future, in

Missouri and potentially elsewhere in the remainder of the Louisiana Purchase area, Tallmadge's proposal raised thorny questions. Did the right of Congress to legislate for the nation's territories include land that had not been part of the United States when the Constitution was written? On such a profound issue as slavery, should decisions be made in Washington, or by the local people who would be immediately and intimately impacted by the issue? And what about the morality of slavery? "Restrictionist" and "Anti-restrictionist" societies sprang up, not only in Missouri but also across the country, testaments to growing place of the slavery issue in the national conscience. All of which ended, as we know, in the famous Missouri Compromise, or Compromise of 1820. By that agreement, slavery was allowed in Missouri and the territory to the south, but excluded from the Louisiana Purchase area north of Missouri's southern border. At the same time, Maine entered the Union as a free state, thus preserving the Free State/Slave State balance nationally.

Historians, including myself, cite the Missouri Compromise as the first in a series of events related to slavery and national expansion, events leading down a dark road ending with Fort Sumter and civil war. There is the annexation of Texas in 1845, the subsequent war with Mexico, and the Mexican Cession, which gave the United States a boundary on the Pacific Ocean. Then came "Popular Sovereignty" and the Compromise of 1850; the unsettling Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854; the consequential Bleeding Kansas; the Supreme Court's *Dred Scott* decision in 1857; and, finally, John Brown's 1859 raid on Harper's Ferry, Virginia. Missouri had a role, directly or indirectly, in most of these, and that list is not a bad way to summarize complex events when you have a lot of other things to cover in class. But we should recall that the Missourians who lived through the years 1821 to 1861 did not do so with any sense of trajectory toward doom. They lived day to day, preoccupied with many issues in addition to slavery, issues such as banking regulation and internal improvements, issues little remembered today which stirred up tremendous commotion at the time. Historian Christopher Phillips reminds us that many Missourians possessed a western identity, one that was stronger, at least for a long time, than affiliation with North or South. Even Claiborne Fox Jackson, the politician who as governor in 1861 negotiated secretly with the Confederacy to take Missouri out of the Union, made statements during his earlier career to the effect that as a western state, Missouri might stand between North and South, a neutral party that

might cool rising passions regarding slavery. See Phillips's' book *Missouri's Confederate; Claiborne Fox Jackson and the Creation of Southern Identity in the Border West*.^v

When I speak of Missourians here, I am, of course, referring primarily to white Missourians. We must turn to the excellent work of historian Diane Mutti Burke, entitled *On Slavery's Border; Missouri's Small Slave-holding Households*,^{vi} to understand complexity of the peculiar institution in the Show Me state. Let me also recommend to you a book entitled *Narrative of William W. Brown, A Fugitive Slave*, written in 1847 by an African American who escaped slavery in Missouri and published his memoir in order to shed light on the brutality and degradation of racial bondage as it was practiced in Missouri.^{vii} Wells went on to write a play, publish a memoir of his travels in Europe, and, in 1867, produce the first history of African Americans in the Civil War.

Remarkable people. Remarkable events. Missouri's story is indeed fascinating. Missouri has a goodly heritage, worthy of the honor we accord it today. Here, at this dual anniversary, we confront what Missouri was, what Missouri is, and what Missouri may become. Missouri's saga is a distillate of the human condition, a confluence of geography and people, containing within its discrete boundaries the ancient verities that have no boundaries: love, honor, courage, and faith. Missouri's saga is the tragedy and triumph of fallible, imperfect human beings, in partnership and in conflict, expressing all the foibles that Man is heir to: hatred, bigotry, prejudice, and selfishness. But expressing also – man, woman, child – the potentiality lying amid that very strife and imperfection, expressed as we see it here today, at this National Park: a determination to preserve and celebrate Missouri's complex heritage, to learn from that heritage, to utilize it to teach successive generations of Missourians, to strive for a better future for all.

--William Garrett Piston, Professor Emeritus, Missouri State University

ⁱ Brooks R. Blevins, *A History of the Ozarks, Volume 1: The Old Ozarks* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2018); *A History of the Ozarks, Volume 2: The Conflicted Ozarks* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2019).

ⁱⁱ Matthew M. Stith, *Extreme Civil War; Guerrilla Warfare, Environment, and Race on the Trans-Mississippi Frontier* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2016).

ⁱⁱⁱ Vanessa Varin, "'Pure Americanism': Building a Modern St. Louis and the Reign of Know Nothingsim," unpublished master's thesis, Louisiana State University. 2012.

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- ^{iv} Edward M. Coffman, *The Old Army; A Portrait of the American Army in Peacetime, 1784-1898* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).
- ^v Christopher Phillips, *Missouri's Confederate; Claiborne Fox Jackson and the Creation of Southern Identity in the Border West* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000).
- ^{vi} Diane Mutti Burke, *On Slavery's Border; Missouri's Small Slaveholding Households, 1815-1865* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010).
- ^{vii} William W. Brown, *Narrative of William W. Brown, A Fugitive Slave* (Boston: Published at the Anti-Slavery Office, 1847). For a modern reprint see the edition published by the University of North Carolina Press in 2011.