



## Buck and Ball

2023

Newsletter of the Civil War Round Table of the Ozarks

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[www.cwrto.com](http://www.cwrto.com)

January 2023

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Reminder –

**No meeting in January!**

Next meeting

February 9, 2023



## **President's Message, January 2023: The Missouri State Guard's Winter of Content**

Shakespeare's *Richard III* opens with the line "Now is the winter of our discontent." In the nineteenth century, armies routinely went into quarters during the winter, waiting for spring, when unpaved roads became passable once more. Winter battles were rare during the Civil War, the most famous exception being the Battle of Stones River, fought on December 31, 1862 and January 2, 1863. Winter was most often characterized by boredom, although soldiers sometimes manufactured their own fun. There are accounts of spontaneous, large-scale snowball fights between units of the Army of Northern Virginia. Anything to alleviate discontent.

For the Missouri State Guard, the winter of 1861-1862 was actually a winter of content rather than discontent, for the Southern cause in Missouri appeared to be ascendent. There had been Southern victories at the battles of Wilson's Creek, Lexington, and Belmont. A rump session of the state legislature had voted to take Missouri out of the Union, and in December the Congress in Richmond voted to add Missouri to the Confederacy.

The State Guard occupied several locations across the state that winter, but a thousand or more soldiers spent the cold, rainy Ozarks winter in "shebangs," built just west of Springfield's town square. Etymologists do not agree on the origin of the word, but a shebang was a combination hut and tent, begun by digging two or more feet into the ground. Available wood, often stolen fence rails, provided walls a few feet higher, while an army-issue tent provided a roof. There are no photographs or descriptions of the shebangs in Springfield, and the State Guardsmen were never issued tents, but their shebangs were doubtless variations on the style built elsewhere during the war. When the State Guard departed and Federals occupied Springfield in February 1862, the Federals described the abandoned Southern camp as looking like a field of giant gopher holes.

This year the Civil War Round Table of the Ozarks is returning to its previous practice of staying home, and hopefully safe and warm, during the month of January. I look forward to our February meeting and an exciting year during 2023.

-Bill Piston



## **A 2023 Wilson's Creek National Battlefield Calendar Is Yours When You Renew Your Membership!**

The 2023 Wilson's Creek Calendar, produced by the Wilson's Creek National Battlefield Foundation, features photographs of documents, journals, diaries, daguerreotypes, flags, uniforms, and weapons that tell the story of the men and women impacted by the Battle of Wilson's Creek. Compiled with the assistance of the Battlefield's curatorial staff, and expertly produced by Foundation Board Member Steve Ross, the 2023 calendar lists the meetings of the CWRT Ozarks each month.

As in the past, the Round Table made a donation to defer the cost of the calendars, and now has calendars to give to new members and to current members when they renew. If you have already paid your 2023 dues, contact Bill Piston at [number5study@live.com](mailto:number5study@live.com) to make arrangements to receive your calendar.

Couple: \$35

Individual: \$25

Full-time student: \$10

Payable to: CWRTTO

CWRTTO, P.O. Box 3451,

Springfield, MO 65808-3451

## **Join us next month for our February Speaker**

Michelle Brooks has been studying the history of Jefferson City and Lincoln University for more than 20 years, first as a reporter for the *Jefferson City News Tribune* and today as a published author. Her books include *Hidden History of Jefferson City* and *Lost Jefferson City*, with The History Press, and *Interesting Women of the Capital City* and *Buried Jefferson City History*, through Kindle Direct Publishing. She is a research analyst at the Missouri State Archives.

She will speak on FINDING THE FOUNDERS: 62ND U.S. COLORED TROOPS. All but a handful of the surviving soldiers of the 1st Missouri Infantry of African Descent, later the 62nd U.S. Colored Troops, had some degree of literacy. Fighting in the last battle of the Civil War – The Battle of Palmito Ranch – may have been their foremost military accomplishment, but they made an immense impact in their Missouri communities as preachers, teachers, farmers and political leaders. They also influenced the future of all Black Missourians by founding Lincoln Institute in 1866 in Jefferson City. They trusted Richard Baxter Foster, a white lieutenant with the 62nd, with their dream and their significant contributions. Foster was a school teacher who rode with John Brown in Kansas before the war and returned there to found several pioneer Congregationalist churches after establishing the school. Sgt. Major John

Jeffries, who earned the highest noncommissioned rank among the 62nd soldiers, was among Lincoln Institute's first students and then an early instructor. He then moved to Rolla to establish a school there and then opened his own business. He is the epitome of the 62nd USCT's story. Meet these individuals who were freed from slavery by military service and returned from war to build their communities.