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Newsletter of the Civil War Round Table of Kansas City



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385th REGULAR MEETING

TUESDAY, SEPT. 27, 2005

Homestead Country Club

6510 Mission Road, Prairie Village, Kansas

Social Hour-Cash Bar-6:00p.m.

Dinner-6:30p.m.

Dr. Bruce A. Tap

Over Lincoln's Shoulder: The Committee on the Conduct of the War

Our speaker this month is Dr. Bruce A. Tap who will discuss the respective roles and relationship between civilian political leaders and military leaders in our democracy. We are pleased to welcome Dr. Tap to the Civil War Round Table of Kansas City.

Following the Union Army's defeat at Bull Run, the United States Congress established an oversight committee known formally as the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War. Initially the committee was charged with investigating military contracts, trade with the enemy, treatment of the wounded, and the causes of Union military defeat.

The committee increasingly directed its attention toward a more vigorous war effort. The committee's actions included advocating emancipation of slaves, arming blacks as soldiers and promoting particular generals over others. It's meddling in military affairs caused President Lincoln great alarm and consternation.

Our speaker will examine the conflict between Congress's constitutional right to investigate and the impropriety of its actions. His address to *Cont. on page 2*

Civil War Round Table
Of Kansas City
P. O. Box 6202
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An IRC 501(c)(3) charitable
organization

*Please be sure that we have your reservation by Sept 23. Return reservation in the enclosed envelope with required payment of \$20.00 per person to,
Paul Gault, 7118 N. Congress Ave., K.C. Mo. 64152, .*

If you have questions or your payment is unavoidably tardy, please contact either Treasurer Paul Gault at 816-741-2962 or Assistant Treasurer Betty Ergovich at 913 441-6462.

Attendance requires a paid dinner reservation.



Dr. Bruce A. Tap

us raises questions that are applicable today about the ability of legislative bodies to function in areas where specialized knowledge is required.

Dr. Tap's discussion is based upon his book of the same title *Over Lincoln's Shoulder* published in 1998 by the University of Kansas Press as part of its Modern War

Studies series. His work has met with critical success. Professor Albert Castel has written: "This book fills a major gap in the study of the Civil War and does so in a way that is authoritative and probably definitive. It will achieve a permanent place in Civil War scholarship."

The Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War generated controversy throughout the war, and its legacy sparks debate even today over whether it invigorated or hampered the Union war effort. Dr. Tap's conclusions, based upon careful scholarship, may raise some eyebrows with his fresh perspectives upon the role of the Republican Congress and the North's military officers. He focuses upon the nature of the committee's power and influence on military policy in order to show conclusively what the ultimate impact really was.

The committee's principal members entertained simplistic notions about warfare that led to rash judgments about its conduct, and because its goals were congruent with Republican ideology, its principal criterion in evaluating military leadership was adherence to antislavery beliefs. As a result, the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War polarized Congress and the army, limited strategic options, demoralized the Union's top generals, and inflated the reputations of incompetent soldiers. The Committee was in many ways a serious impediment to the war effort, due not to its fanaticism or vindictiveness, as some historians have suggested, but rather to its members' total ignorance of military matters.

Dr. Tap resides in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in May 1995. In 1998 his book *Over Lincoln's Shoulder* was selected as a Choice Outstanding Academic Book. He has also been published in *Civil War History*, *Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association*, *Illinois Historical Journal* and

American Nineteenth Century History. In addition to his publications, he has spoken to several Civil War Round Tables including the Chicago Round Table. His presentations have included "A Tale of Two Senators: Stephen Douglas and Charles Sumner given in April 2001 at the Stephen A. Douglas History Symposium.



Those of you who did not make the last summer session meeting missed a very good talk from our very own Orvis Fitts on Civil War Chaplains. It just so happens that I have a story given to me by Robert Wandel, Department Chaplain of the Sons Of Union Veterans in the Lawrence area. I thought that this might work in well at this time.

What was the Civil War Chaplain's Life Like?

I will try to explain using text and quotes from the book While God Is Marching On by Steven E. Woodworth.

"Our chaplain, J. D. Rogers is as a father to me and keeps me straight" wrote the Thirty-third Indiana's John J. Hardin in February 1862. "Our chaplain appears to have forgotten us entirely," wrote Daniel Hughes of the Twenty-fifth Indiana in November of that year.

So we see that there were those who did a good job and those who did not do the work they were hired to do. Congress authorized one chaplain for each regiment during the Civil War. Their primary task was to tend to the spiritual well being of the soldiers. The pay for a Union chaplain was \$145 per month but out of this he had to pay for food for his government provided horse. He was not provided a uniform and only drew rations as if he were a private.

Good men of the cloth were hard to find and compounding the difficulties of finding enough chaplains was the fact that a sizable number of pastors who did see fit to leave their congregations and go off to war enlisted as combat soldiers. Once an enlisted man it was hard and almost impossible to get the office of chaplain. Chaplains were not expected to live on quite the same level as the private soldiers did, but they could still expect to sleep on the ground rolled in a blanket, with canvas overhead or the stars. They did not have to march but had to spend time in the saddle and they were exposed to the same diseases the soldiers faced and sometimes even hostile fire.

In June 1862 the U. S. War Department reported that only 395 of the 676 regiments had a chaplain. The chaplains were to maintain "the social happiness and moral improvement of the troops" and to report the regularly on the "moral and religious condition" of the

men. Congress, at the urging of Abraham Lincoln, in 1862 added a provision for hospital chaplains.

Gambling, swearing and immoral living were the main concerns the chaplains had about the men. The majority of the chaplains worked at a killing pace. Some served in nearby hospitals, carried mail to and from the local towns, carried large sums of money to be mailed home for the soldiers, held services on Sundays, admonished and encouraged the troops as well as held funeral services for those killed in action and some even wrote letters home to families of the deceased. But the most important duty of the chaplains was praying with the men who desired it, particularly in times of distress and or sorrow and above all, when death approached.

After the battle of Chancellorsville, Chaplain Thomas Ambrose 12th New Hampshire stayed behind with the wounded Union soldiers who fell into Rebel hands. He and a single surgeon were the only help available for a sizable encampment of badly wounded, almost helpless men, and they worked literally around the clock, bringing food and drink to the wounded, putting up tents to shelter them, and trying to keep them out of the mud and standing water during a night of torrential rain. He also went to J.E.B. Stuart and Lee's camp to request a wagonload of cornmeal for the men, which was approved. Unsure when the wagon would arrive, and knowing that some wounded might not last that long, Ambrose carried a fifty-pound sack of cornmeal back to the camp some two and a half miles. Later in the Civil War Ambrose was mortally wounded at Petersburg on July 24, 1864.

The proper role of the chaplain when his regiment went into battle was not clearly defined, and the Civil War saw great variations among chaplains in how they handled this difficult situation. Some did remain safely in the rear, but others did not. A fair number believed that their rightful place was similar to that of the rest of the regimental field and staff officers. There they would walk unarmed to help wounded when they fell. Some of the chaplains joined in the fighting, one such individual of the Eighty-third Indiana blazed away with a rifle of his own, repeating, each time he pulled the trigger, "God bless your soul".

Just as there were good chaplains and bad chaplains, some chaplains retained more of the soldiers' respect than did others. As a group, however, chaplains performed well in the war, notwithstanding the relatively small number of obvious failures, and fared well in earning the respect of the soldiers. They taught the Bible, along with that they showed kindness, patience, generosity, cheerfulness, courtesy, resolution and energy in very trying and dangerous times.

Many chaplains were killed in battle and three of them received the Medal of Honor. Chaplain John Whitehead, Chaplain Francis B. Hall, and Chaplain

Milton L. Haney. More to come on these individuals in future issues of the Sunflower Pickett.

II Timothy 4:2 are a good example for the Chaplains work and it is also a good example for us. Hopefully we will be able to say, as Paul did in verse 7, I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.

Robert Wandel

Department Chaplain



MINE CREEK BATTLEFIELD STATE HISTORIC SITE

"THE UNTOLD STORY"

by Orvis N. Fitts

Part 4

In early 1999, 80 acres adjacent to the east of the visitor's center became for sale. This property was a key part of the battlefield over which the Fort Scott road ran. It was identified as part of the battlefield by the archeological survey conducted in earlier years by Dr. Bill Lees. Knowing there was no hope of an appropriation of funds to purchase the property by the Kansas State Legislature, a Limited Liability Company was formed to purchase the 80 acres until the Mine Creek Battlefield Foundation could be formed. Leading the charge was Dr. John Spencer, a Fort Scott physician whose great grandfather fought in the battle with the Union First Missouri Cavalry. Joining Dr. Spencer was Dale Sprague, a Linn County banker, Charles Conley, a Pleasanton businessman, and Bill Pollock, CEO of Key Industries. These men made a \$20,000 down payment until arrangements for a \$108,000 loan from the Farmer's State Bank in Pleasanton could be made. Elliot Gruber, vice president of the Civil War Trust in Arlington, VA, said, "the purchase of such land by individuals was all but unheard of. That is dedication".

After the formation in 1999 of the Mine Creek Battlefield Foundation, grant applications were made to the Civil War Trust, Land and Water Conservation Program, Baehr Trust of Paola, and in May 2000 the TEA-21 Transportation Enhancement Funds administered by the Kansas Department of Transportation. All grant applications were approved. The TEA-21 application was approved for \$618,000 with part of the grant subject to matching funds. Those matching funds were raised by the Foundation. Over a four-year time period a total of 320 acres were purchased more than the size of the original 280 acres. A statement by Arnold Schofield, Historian at the Fort Scott National Historic Site and a board member of the Mine Creek Battlefield Foundation, in essence told the story of the land acquisitions, "this was prime development land that, if it

had been developed, would have absolutely destroyed the primitive nature of the property and its historic significance".

A recreation of the Union veteran's reunion of 1884 took place at the Mine Creek State Historic Site on 22 May 1999. The events scheduled were designed to reflect the actual features of the 1884 reunion. Volunteers, both men and women, were dressed in period clothing. Men portrayed the returning veterans of Jewell Post No. 3 G.A.R. Women represented the Ladies Auxiliary of the G.A.R. and were battle eyewitnesses. The photo taken of the veterans in 1884 was reenacted with the banner of Jewell Post No. 3 G.A.R. displayed as it was in 1884.

On 2 May 2000, the Mine Creek Battlefield Foundation was recognized by the City of Fort Scott with certificates of appreciation for the selfless dedication in working to preserve history in neighboring Linn County.

The Mine Creek Battlefield Foundation received permission from the family of Lumir Buresh to reprint his book in a paperback edition. The second edition, "October 25th and the Battle of Mine Creek", was published early in 2001. An educational brochure with detailed maps of the Price campaign and the Battle of Mine Creek was produced with funding from the American Battlefield Protection Program of the National Park Service. In partnership with the Kansas State Historical Society, a limber and artillery piece were purchased in 2001 to conduct firing demonstrations. Tours of the battlefield were conducted, and a Blue and Gray banquet became an annual event. A major project in May 2003 was a painting of the "Charge at Mine Creek" by the noted artist, Andy Thomas. It depicted the Union cavalry charge when it hit the Confederate battle line, and now is displayed in the visitor's center. The Kansas State Historical Society made a contribution which made the purchase possible.

Kip Lindberg, curator at the battlefield, resigned in January 2001. Earlier, Brad Woellhof had been assigned to a different historical site. Personnel staffing at the battlefield was beset with problems including available budget funds for the next several years.

A Union and Confederate soldier's monument was put in place and dedicated near the visitor's center in 2003. In 2004, a Confederate monument was placed on the battlefield and dedicated by the Sons of Confederate Veterans.

On the 140th Anniversary of the Battle of Mine Creek a major reenactment of the battle was conducted on 23 and 24 October 2004. It took place on nearby land with the owner's permission. The entire two day affair was organized and sponsored by the Mine Creek Battlefield Foundation.

Bill Kurtis Productions in producing a television series for the History channel called "Investigating History" came to Mine Creek in July 2004. For one week, using reenactors battle scenes were filmed. The finished product called the "Lost Battle of the Civil War"

was shown on National television on 15 November 2004. The Mine Creek Battlefield Foundation is to be commended for arranging this historic event.

End of Part 4



THE FORD THAT MADE THE BYRAM NAME HISTORIC

By John J. Doohan (a member of the Star staff and President of the Native Sons of Kansas City in 1963).

Byram's Ford, a name familiar in Jackson County and Civil War history, has outlasted in popular memory the men for whom it was named. These were Peter and Augustus Byram, brothers, who came to Western Missouri from Kentucky in 1839.

The ford was famous long before the Civil War. Wagons of the Santa Fe freighters drawn at first by ox teams and afterwards by mules, crossed the Blue at the ford within sight of the home of the Byram brothers.

Today the ford is of no importance. The river is a trickle there except times of heavy rain. But at the time of the Battle of Westport, in October of 1864, it was an important crossing and the scene of heavy fighting; the action there is sometimes called the Battle of Byram's Ford.

Its sight is being marked by a bronze plaque, at Manchester Trafficway just north of Sixty-third Street, by the Native Sons of Kansas City. The plaque will be dedicated at 3 o'clock tomorrow afternoon (April 28, 1963).

The Byram boys had left Kentucky in their teens because they preferred independence to a life with a stepmother. By the time of the Civil War, they had given up their farms in the battle area to enter the stagecoach business with Russell's, Majors, & Waddell. Later they ran a stage line of their own from Atchison to Denver.

On one occasion during a flour shortage in Denver, they reached the Colorado city with 100 wagonloads and sold it at a tremendous profit. They bribed Indians for safe passage by giving the chiefs sugar and bacon.

Peter Byram also carried the mail. He later married Emma Meeker, daughter of the Rev. Jotham Meeker, pioneer Baptist missionary to the Indians in Kansas.

When the Byram's began to farm their 400 acres in the vicinity of the ford (now an industrial area), they called the elevation west of the river Potato Hill. It was to be known as Bloody Hill after the Confederate forces of Gen. John S. Marmaduke and the Missouri Militia under Col. John F. Phillips, later a federal judge, fought there on an October afternoon.

Confederate General Sterling Price with 10,000 men had swept across Missouri from the southeast, won a victory at Lexington and hit Independence for a quick victory on October 21. He then moved on toward Westport by way of the road that crossed the Blue at Twenty-fifth Street and by

Byram's Ford. The Confederate forces, after crossing, jammed Byram's ford by felling trees into the stream, to block passage of Federal troops with horses and wagons.

The Confederate forces spread across the open country from what is now Swope Park to the Shawnee Mission. They bivouacked that night within striking distance of Westport, which they expected to take the next day. An attack on Kansas City seemed imminent.

But the crossing of the Big Blue at Byram's Ford would prove to be the undoing to Price's plans. Despite the obstacles, Pleasanton's cavalry thrusts its way across the river on Sunday morning, October 23, and hit the Confederates on the right flank. Records show that eight Federal officers and 114 enlisted men died at Byram's Ford, while more than 300 Confederate soldiers lost their lives.

While this action was underway on the Confederate's right flank, at the other end of the line Federal militia from Missouri and Kansas were taking the heights south of Brush Creek, above the present location of the Country Club Plaza. The Confederate forces fell back, retreating along what today is Wornall Road. The defeat ended Price's Missouri Campaign. *(Thanks Betty Ergovich & Westport Historical Society for the article)*



From The Leavenworth "Daily Conservative", 1862

THE LATEST NEWS
 RECEIVED BY
MAGNETIC TELEGRAPH.

A DAY OF VICTORIES!
 Leesburg and Winchester Evacuated!
Centreville Ours!
MANASSAS TAKEN!
THE WHOLE POTOMAC ABANDONED
 Advance of the Union Army
 in Five Columns!
**CAPTURE OF FERNANDINA
 AND BRUNSWICK!**
TOTAL DEFEAT OF PRICE!!
BATTLE LASTED THREE DAYS!!
Ben. McCulloch Mortally Wounded!!
Curtis and Sigel Triumphant!
The Enemy Flying in Direst Confusion!
THE COIL OF THAT OLD ANACONDA!

**NATIONAL PRESERVATION GROUP
ACCEPTING NOMINATIONS FOR ANNUAL
ENDANGERED BATTLEFIELD STUDY**

(Washington, D.C.) - The Civil War Preservation Trust (CWPT), the nation's largest nonprofit battlefield preservation organization, is accepting nominations for its America's Most Endangered Battlefields Report. The report identifies the most threatened Civil War sites in the United States and what can be done to save these precious links to our nation's past.

"Public awareness the most effective preservation tool in our arsenal," notes CWPT President James Lighthizer. "The Most Endangered Battlefields Report is a rallying cry to the nation that our hallowed battlefields are in imminent danger."

The Most Endangered Battlefields Report is part of CWPT's ongoing effort to protect America's remaining Civil War battlefields. Every day 30 acres of hallowed ground associated with Civil War battlefields fall victim to development and succumb to the backhoe and bulldozer. Once lost, these historic treasures can never be replaced.

The 2006 Most Endangered Battlefields Report will be released in February 2006 in Washington, D.C. Any Civil War battlefield is eligible to for nomination and consideration. The ten chosen sites will be selected based on geographic location, military significance and the immediacy of current threats.

"The task of monitoring the 10,000-plus battlefields where the Civil War was fought is enormous," Lighthizer remarked. "We simply cannot do the job without input from concerned citizens, history buffs and preservation activists."

Among the ten sites identified in the 2005 report were Franklin, Tenn.; Morris Island, S.C.; Manassas, Va. and Wilson's Creek, Mo. The report also mentioned fifteen "at risk" battlefields that, although seriously threatened, did not make the final ten. In the past year, several of these sites have achieved preservation victories. "Thanks in part to the publicity generated by the report, we expect continued successes in the remainder of the year and in the future," Lighthizer predicted.

To nominate a battlefield, individuals and groups are encouraged to fill out the nomination form available online at <http://www.civilwar.org/nominationform2006.pdf>. Applications should include photographs of the site and a detailed description of recent threats. Nominations must be postmarked no later than October 31, 2005.

With more than 70,000 members, CWPT is the largest nonprofit battlefield preservation organization in the United States. Its mission is to preserve our nations

endangered Civil War battlefields and to promote appreciation of these hallowed grounds. CWPT's website is www.civilwar.org.



MENU for September 27, 2005; Mixed Greens with Carrots, Cucumber, Tomatoes, Ranch Dressing, Smoked Brisket of Beef with Tangy Barbecue Sauce, Potatoes au gratin, Green beans Almondine, & Peach Cobbler Ala Mode.

NEW MEMBERS:

David Holloway, 504 W. 85th Terr. KCMO 64114, 816-363-7911

Alisha Cole 912 W. 34th St, KCMO 64111 816-931-4807

FOR SALE: Rare book, proceeds to go to the Civil War Round Table of Kansas City, donated by Betty Ergovich. **“October 25th and the Battle of Mine Creek”**, by Lumir Buresh, hard back with dust jacket and signed by the author! Very rare! First \$100.00 takes it. Contact Betty at 913-441-6462 or see her at the meetings.

**INDEPENDENCE BATTLE SITE
ENDANGERED**

A Civil War Battle field is among Missouri’s most endangered historic places, according to the Missouri Preservation Organization.

A battle on October 21, 1864, along the Little Blue River slowed the advance of Confederate forces up the Missouri River and was a prelude to the Battle of Westport two days later.

Civil War Round Table of Kansas City
P.O. Box 6206
Shawnee Mission, Kansas 66206



At one point in the battle, federal forces were forced to retreat westward and burned the bridge over the Little Blue to slow the enemy’s advance.

The preservation group says the site is threatened by residential and commercial development and by proposed highway development. (Matt Campbell, The Star).

DID YOU KNOW?

In George Washington's days, there were no cameras. One's image was either sculpted or painted. Some paintings of George Washington showed him standing behind a desk with one arm behind his back while others showed both legs and both arms. Prices charged by painters were not based on how many people were to be painted, but by how many limbs were to be painted. Arms and legs are "limbs," therefore painting them would cost the buyer more. Hence the expression, "Okay, but it'll cost you an arm and a leg."

**BLUE RIVER CHANNEL -
GRADE CONTROL STRUCTURE
- SUMMIT - 20 SEPTEMBER
9:00 - 12:00 ROOM 164
BOLLING FEDERAL BUILDING**

One of the main project goals for the Blue River Channel in FY06 is the completion of design documents and the possible award of a construction contract for the Grade Control Structure in the Byram's Ford Industrial Park area. This "summit" is intended to provide all stakeholders and interested parties with an opportunity to participate in discussions regarding this important component of the Blue River Channel project.

