



# BORDER BUGLE

Newsletter of the Civil War Round Table of Kansas City

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An IRC 501(c)(3)  
Charitable Organization

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## 461th REGULAR MEETING

**TUESDAY, October 28, 2014**

**Meadowbrook Country Club**

9101 Nall Ave., Prairie Village, Kansas 66207

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

Dinner - 6:30p.m.

October Speaker

Daniel L. Smith

“Battle of Westport, Mo.”

Confederate General Sterling Price's raid on Missouri nearly turns into disaster when his army is pinned between two Union forces at Westport, Missouri, near Kansas City. Although outnumbered, Price's forces managed to slip safely away after the Battle of Westport, which was the biggest conflict west of the Mississippi River.

Price's six-week raid on Missouri was intended to capture a state that had been firmly in Union hands during much of the war. Price hoped to divert attention from the East, where Confederate armies had not done well in the late summer of 1864. A blow against Northern territory could also hurt the Republicans in the fall elections, and it could raise much-needed supplies.

Continued on Page 2

## Attendance requires a paid dinner reservation.

*Please be sure our Treasurer receives all reservations by Tuesday, October 21, 2014 along with payment of \$26.00 per person. Mail to:*

***Paul Gault, 7118 N. Congress Ave., Kansas City, MO 64152***

*Meadowbrook's deadline for reservation changes is the Tuesday before the meeting, so promptly report any necessary adjustments to Paul at 816-741-2962 or 816-522-8021.*

*Use your credit card at our website, <http://www.cwrtkc.org> and hit the Meeting & Event tab fill out the reservation form and then make your payment in the box to the left on that page through PAYPAL If you are using this service please send*

*me an email so I will not miss your reservation. [pgault@sbcglobal.net](mailto:pgault@sbcglobal.net).*

Speaker: Daniel L. Smith, continued.....

Price entered Missouri from Arkansas in mid-September. His force moved through the state with little opposition, but Price failed to capture either St. Louis or Jefferson City. In mid-October, he turned west up the Missouri River and captured several small Federal outposts. At Byram's Ford on October 22, Price's men pushed aside a small Union force attached to General Samuel Curtis's army. The rest of Curtis's men waited at Westport to the northwest. Price also faced a threat to his rear because Yankee cavalry under Alfred Pleasonton were moving in from the southeast. In short, Union troops were converging on Price from two directions.

On October 23, Price tried to fight his way out of his predicament by first attacking Curtis's troops along Brush Creek, near Westport. The Confederates enjoyed some initial success as they drove the Federals across Brush Creek, but Price did not have sufficient reserves to continue the drive. Meanwhile, Pleasonton's men were attacking on the other side of the battlefield, placing Price in a dangerous position. As Pleasonton's men pushed the Confederates back, Curtis's men also turned the tide on the northwestern side of the battlefield. Price's troops broke, and a mad retreat to the southwest ensued. Price's army might have been completely destroyed if the two Union forces could have coordinated pursuit. Instead, the exhausted Yankees halted, hesitant to continue the fight.

Price's force was soundly defeated, though each side lost about 1,500 men. That was only about 10 percent of the Union troops, but it was 20 percent of the Rebel force. Price's men retreated into Kansas before the remnants of the force dispersed back into Texas and Oklahoma. In the end, Price's raid did little to disrupt the fall elections.

Mr. Smith is a trial attorney, historian and chairman of the Monnett Battle of Westport Fund. As a fifth generation Kansan and native of Linn County Kansas, he became acquainted with the saga of James Montgomery and the "Jayhawks" at an early age. While in high school he was a summer intern for Congressman Joe Skubitz in 1969 and researched the Battle of Mine Creek at the National Archives and Library of Congress. He is a past president of the Linn County Historical Society and a life member of the Kansas State Historical Society. He obtained funding for the acquisition of lands for the Mine Creek Battlefield site in 1974 and 1978. He served as president of our Round Table in 1980 and again in 2005.

## Speakers 2014

- \* **November 18, 2014: Arnold Schofield - Aftermath of Westport (Price's retreat to Texas).**
- \* **December 16, 2014: Dr. Ethan Rafuse - Sherman's March to The Sea.**

## Programs for 2015

**January 27, 2015 (confirmed):** Dr. Ethan Rafuse, of the US Army Command and General Staff College, will speak about the Petersburg Campaign and Siege. Dr. Rafuse recently published his *Guide to the Richmond-Petersburg Campaign*.

**February 24, 2015 (confirmed):** Harold Holzer has agreed to speak on his book titled: *Lincoln and the Power of the Press: The War for Public Opinion*. Lane Smith confirmed with Kraig Smith, Sr. Coordinator for Public Affairs, Metropolitan Museum of Art. The St. Louis CWRT has scheduled Harold Holzer to speak on 2-25-15.

**March 24, 2015 (confirmed):** Appomattox Courthouse. Lane Smith and Randy Dubin will present a two-part play about Appomattox. Part 1 of the play is titled: "April 9, 1865 - Road to Appomattox." Part 2 of the play is titled: "April 10, 1865 - Road from Appomattox." Lane will portray General Lee and Randy will portray General Grant.

**April 28, 2015 (confirmed):** Troy Strahan and his son, Liam, will be giving a first person presentation on Abraham Lincoln and Todd Lincoln. Troy and Liam will re-enact the famous photo of Abraham Lincoln and Todd Lincoln looking at a book together. Using this scene, Abraham and Todd Lincoln will be discussing famous people and the events that took place near the end of the Civil War.

**May 26, 2015 (confirmed):** Trial of the Conspirators. Daniel Weinberg, owner of the Abraham Lincoln Book Shop in Chicago IL, will be speaking about his book titled: *Lincoln's Assassins: Their Trial and Execution*.

**June 23, 2015 (confirmed):** Battle of Palmito Ranch, Texas on May 13, 1865: Last Battle of the Civil War, U.S.C.T. Speaker: Arnold Schofield.

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## VERY IMPORTANT CHANGES, PLEASE READ!

Meadowbrook Country Club is closing. Our dinner meeting on October 28, 2014 will be the last meeting that we will have at Meadowbrook Country Club. Therefore, we need to find another venue for future dinner meetings. Yesterday morning, the executive committee met and decided to go with the following venues for our dinner meetings on November 18th and December 16th:

November 18, 2014 - Oakwood Country Club  
9800 Grandview Road  
Kansas City MO 64137  
816-761-5501

Oakwood Country Club is located south of Bannister Road, north of I-435, east of Holmes, and west of Highway 71. Access to Oakwood Country Club is off of Bannister Road.

December 16, 2014 - Holiday Inn & Suites, Overland Park West (Sunset Ballroom on the 8th Floor)  
8787 Reeder Road  
Overland Park KS 66214  
913-888-8440

Holiday Inn & Suites is located south of 87th Street and east of I-35 and Highway 69. Access to the hotel is off of 87th Street on Reeder Road. We will be meeting in the Sunset Ballroom, which is on the 8th floor. Attendees will need to park on the south side of the hotel and use the elevators, which are located in the hotel lobby.

After the dinner meeting on December 16th, the executive committee will meet to decide which venue we will use for our dinner meetings in 2015.

Input from attendees at the November and December dinner meetings will be considered in the final decision.

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## BATTLE OF WESTPORT CWRT BUS TOUR HELD SEPTEMBER 13

Great weather, a great turnout, a great day and great history!

That was what we had on Saturday, September 13, on the CWRT bus tour as we visited the key battle sites in the Independence and Kansas City areas. The approaching 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Westport added both focus and excitement as we toured various battle sites. It was the most significant action not only in the Kansas City area but in all of Missouri and the Trans-Mississippi theater during the Civil War.

We departed from the Battle of Westport Visitor Center in Swope Park at 8:30 and headed for the site of the opening confrontation at the Little Blue River near U.S. Highway 24, east of Independence,



on the morning of Friday, October 21, 1864. General Sterling Price's troops were coming from Lexington, MO and were confronted by the troops of Union General James Blunt, who was outnumbered and he retreated. Thus, the three-day Battle of Westport began.

We also "retreated" back east through Independence and headed for Byram's Ford at 63<sup>rd</sup> and Manchester Trafficway, the next principal battle site which commenced early the next morning on the 22<sup>nd</sup>



Ross Marshall and Dan Smith with our attendees at the cannon on the south side of Loose Park.

and continued well into the next day.

Union General Alfred Pleasanton finally arrived there and Price was lucky to get his troops and wagon train across the Big Blue River crossing at the end of the day on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Price was essentially now trapped between Pleasanton and the other Union forces.

He sent Gen. Joe Shelby's Cavalry units toward Union Gen. Samuel Curtis' troops stationed near Westport and Brush Creek to buy time for the rest of Price's troops to make their escape south on the Harrisonville Road (down Prospect and across Russell's Ford near 90<sup>th</sup> St.). Excellent expert commentary was provided by Dan Smith, a Past President of CWRT, as he did the entire day.

We did a walking tour of the Byram's Ford crossing and the battle areas and headed for a great lunch at the BOW Visitor Center – thanks to the good work of Alicia Cole at the Center.

After lunch, we headed for Loose Park to view the sites of the to and fro battle between cavalry troops under Union Gen. Samuel Curtis and Confederate Gen. Joe Shelby on Sunday, the 23<sup>rd</sup> as described by Dan. One of our stops there was at the cannon and interpretive markers on 55<sup>th</sup> Street. Some of the markers are now missing and the others are definitely showing their age.

From there, we made our way south stopping briefly at the Wornall House which was a landmark during the battle and was used as a hospital by both sides. We made our way south on Prospect and Grandview, across

both Russell's Ford and the Red Bridge crossing of the Big Blue River.

We ended the day at New Santa Fe at 123<sup>rd</sup> just east of State Line Road where Price caught the Military Road south. He was overtaken a couple of days later by Union Troops at the Battle of Mine Creek, the only significant military action in Kansas during the war.

We arrived back at the Visitor Center at 5:00, ending a day of learning and remembrance.

Special thanks to Dan Smith who was our principal guide and provided, totally from memory, a very comprehensive review of the entire battle. Also to Alisha Cole, who hosted us in the morning, at lunch, and at the end of the day at the Visitor Center. And to all those who went on the tour.

Ross Marshall



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## BATTLE OF WESTPORT 150 - OCTOBER 23, 24, 25 and 26, 2014

In the fall of 1864, Confederate General Sterling Price launched an invasion into Missouri with the goal of causing a popular uprising among the state's southern sympathizers. The 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first of the engagements of Price's Raid or Missouri Expedition is being commemorated this month at Pilot Knob under the direction of Walt Busch our speaker for September.

After the Pilot Knob engagement, Price's army struck northward and westward along the Missouri River until reached Independence and the outskirts of Westport, Missouri. In the climax of the Missouri Expedition and the ten years of conflict on the Missouri-Kansas border, the Confederates clashed on October 21-23, 1864 with two Federal armies at the Battle of Westport, the largest battle fought west of the Mississippi.

For the past three years, the Battle of Westport 150 Committee of the Monnett Battle of Westport Fund of our Round Table has been meeting monthly to plan and prepare for the commemoration of 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this major battle. As many of our Table know, the Battle of Westport is one of only two battle sites in Missouri that has been



given the top designation by the National Park Service as a Class A battle.

To mark its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Battle of Westport, sometimes referred to as the Gettysburg of the West will be commemorated on October 23 through 26, 2014 on portions of the original battlefield in Swope Park and Byram's Ford with a series of engaging exhibitions, living history demonstrations, displays and reenactments which will allow visitors to step back in time to the days of the most dramatic event of Kansas City's history.

A highlight of the opening day on the precise anniversary date, Thursday October 23, 2014 will be an abbreviated walking tour of the Brush Creek portion of the battle led by Bjorn Skaptason. We are fortunate to have Bjorn guide this and several other tours during the event. His experience as both the principal of the Lincoln Book Store in Chicago, birthplace of the Round Table movement, and his experience as a National Park Service guide at Shiloh will make for an outstanding opportunity for participants. This walking tour will return to Loose Park where a special commemoration ceremony will be conducted in the late afternoon by members of the Sons of Union Veterans and Sons of Confederate Veterans.

Friday, October 24, 2014 is education day. The event is open to the public although primarily intended for students and youths in grades K through 12. Private and public school students as well as home schoolers are welcome to attend the event. There will be a number of various demonstrations of Civil War era military



activities as well as civilian and domestic artisans. The day will include a bus tour for the student's of the nearby Byram's Ford Battlefield site. An informative walking tour will also be conducted at Forest Hill Cemetery that afternoon.

On Friday evening, a brief skirmish will be presented on the Byram's Ford site. This will be followed by a barbecue dinner held on the battle site where visitors will meet and mingle with the soldiers. The dinner requires advance purchase of tickets to attend.



The Main Event of the commemoration will be held on Saturday October 25 focused in Swope Park and the Battle of Westport Visitor Center and Museum. A highlight of this day will be the presentations of Civil War medicine.

The demonstration will include talks by George Wunderlich, executive director of the National Civil War Medicine Museum of Frederick, Maryland. Illustrating these talks is an outstanding medical demonstration unit along with an embalming detail. Dr. and Mrs. Stroud will further illustrate Civil War medicine with their extensive and fascinating collection of medical operating tools and devices. The Museum will have a special loaned exhibit of recently located artifacts recovered from the Byram's Ford site including Bloody Hill. There will be guided tours of the Byram's Ford site and the area that is under restoration as part of the Monnett Fund's Saving Kansas City's Battlefield initiative.

There will a series of Chautauqua style presentations by various Civil War personalities including Gen. R. E. Lee by Lane Smith of our Round Table. A variety of musical entertainers will be presenting. Children's activities with opportunities for hands on experience will be provided near the Museum. The Mounted Color Guard from Fort Riley will encamped for the day in front of the Museum and provide cavalry demonstrations. There will be special presentations of Douglas's Independent Colored Battery which at Westport was the first black regiment to be commanded by a black officer, Lt. Patrick Henry Minor.

A definite highlight on Saturday will be two battle reenactments with cavalry, artillery and infantry regiments presented in the morning and again in the afternoon.

On Sunday morning Bjorn Skaptason will conduct a demanding three hour walking tour of the Brush Creek portion of the battlefield. In the afternoon there will be final battle reenactment in Swope Park in the area adjacent to the Museum.

Visit [www.battleofwestport150.org](http://www.battleofwestport150.org) for specific schedule times and locations for the events. Also details for purchasing tickets for the Friday evening meal with the troops on the battlefield can be found on the website. A complete schedule of events are included for those that receive the Bugle by e-mail.

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**The Westerners meeting, October:** Historian Douglas Cubbison will speak on "The Earp Brothers" at the November 11 meeting of the Kansas City Westerners. Everyone is welcome to attend. Please arrive at the Golden Ox Restaurant, 1600 Genessee, by 6:30 p.m. to place your dinner order. For more information call (816) 569-1180.

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### **Battle of the Little Blue and Second Battle of Independence**

The Civil War Round Table of Western Missouri would like to invite you to join them for a half day school bus tour of the Battle of the Little Blue (first day of the Battle of Westport in eastern Jackson County) on Saturday, Oct. 18, 2014 starting at 9:00 a.m. at the Blue & Grey Book Shoppe, 106 E. Walnut St., Independence, MO. We will travel to the site of the crossing of the Little Blue at Ripley Junction Park and follow the route of the troops to the Independence Square. The tour costs \$10 and checks may be mailed to Civil War Round Table of Western Missouri, P. O. Box 3019, Independence, MO 64055. Please give us the names of those going on the tour. The bus will return about 11:30 a.m.

We invite you to have lunch in Independence or bring a brown bag and join us at 1:00 p.m. at the Sermon Center Powerhouse Theatre, Truman Road and Noland, for a multimedia presentation of the Second Battle of Independence. We will attempt to tell the story through the eyes of civilians as well as soldiers using re-enactors, music, sound effects, and projected images of maps and illustrations. One vignette is of Mrs. Hill describing the battle in a letter to her sister. Another is of the guerrilla Dave Poole and others burying George Todd. For questions call Beverly Shaw at 816 225-7944.

The sesquicentennial celebration of the 1864 battle at Newtonia will be held on two separate dates. On Saturday, September 27, 2014, we will be part of Newtonians annual Fall Festival. This has been a ritual ever since we were founded as a support group.

We will have the Ritchey Mansion open and have several activities throughout the day.

On Tuesday, October 28, which is the official anniversary date, we will have a special event which will include some speakers and a special ceremony to commemorate the men who died at Newtonia on October 28, 1864.

The October celebration will be held on the lawn of the Ritchey Mansion, unless cold weather sends us inside. Refreshments are planned for this event.

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### **150<sup>TH</sup> Anniversary Battle of Albany, Mo. October 24, 25, & 26, 2014**

Re-enactment sponsored by the Ray County Historical Society. Saturday events from 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.,

Sunday from 9:00 a.m. -4:30 p.m. Contact David Blyth, President of The Ray Co. Historical Society, [HTTP://battleofalbany-raycountmo.angelfire.com](http://battleofalbany-raycountmo.angelfire.com), Robbie Maupin, 816-616-9339, [mop1617@yahoo.com](mailto:mop1617@yahoo.com), Linda Emley, 816-776-2305, [raycohistory@aol.com](mailto:raycohistory@aol.com).

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## Blacks in Blue at the Battle of Westport

By Joelouis Mattox, Historian, 5.20.13

Black soldiers in blue is about men who fought here in Kansas City to help re-elect Abraham Lincoln president of the United States.

The Battle of Westport (Oct. 21-23, 1864) is often called the "Gettysburg of the West." It was the largest Civil War battle west of the Mississippi. In some black history books it is referred to as "The Battle at Brush Creek." This historic three day battle, one of the most dramatic events in Kansas City, is interesting for a number of reasons:

- The Battle of Westport took place just 16 days before the 1864 Presidential election on November 8, in which voters in 25 free states would go to the polls.
- Had the confederate forces (raiding army of 12,000 cavalry men from Arkansas and Texas) won the battle, Missouri, a border state and a slave state, would likely have seceded from the Union. In addition, President Lincoln may have lost the election to Retired General George B. McClellan who advocated allowing the South to secede with 11 slave states.
- Included in Union forces at the Battle of Westport (20,000 soldiers from nine states: Colorado, Kansas, Iowa, Nebraska, Illinois, Indiana Missouri, Minnesota and Wisconsin) were the 2nd Kansas Colored Militia and the all-black Douglas Battery, also known as the Independent Colored Battery, Light Artillery. It had three black officers.

White officers had high praise for the 2nd Kansas Colored, which was organized in Oct. 1863 and later designated the 83rd U.S. Colored Infantry. One of the soldiers in this unit was the grandfather of Leon Jordan, a well known Kansas City, MO political leader of the 1960s.

Douglas Battery was organized in June 1864. The unit trained and was headquartered at Fort Leavenworth, KS. Three standouts in the light artillery unit were Captain H. Ford Douglas, 1st Lt. William D. Matthews and Private John Cleaver.

In an article in the Kansas History Journal, Vol. 23, Winter, 2001-2002. Rodger D. Cunningham writes: "Captain" Douglas (before coming to Leavenworth and taking command of his battery) had served in military

units in Virginia and Ohio. In the army he worked tirelessly to better the conditions under which his 208 enlisted men served. Douglas' father was white, his mother was black. He could pass for white.

Cunningham writes: "In 1858, Matthews was a renowned colored citizen of Leavenworth, KS. He operated a small restaurant and boarding house that became the head station/stop on the Underground Railroad in Kansas. The Underground Railroad was a network of secret routes and safe houses used by enslaved persons to escape to free states and Canada.

"Two years before the Battle of Westport, 1st Lieutenant Matthews was a Captain in the famous 'First-to fight, first to die' First Kansas Colored Volunteers Infantry and later designated the 79th U.S. Colored Infantry.

"The day "After President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation Jan.1,1863, Matthews recruited and inspired black freedmen and escaped slaves to enlist in the army with these words 'Our own exertions and our muscle make us men. If we fight, we shall be respected.'"

In his book: Out of the Shadows, Prince Hall Freemasonry Scholar and Editor of The Phylaxis magazine, Alton Roundtree writes that Matthews was a Prince Hall Mason and the first Grand Master of Prince Hall Freemasonry in the state of Kansas.

Cunningham writes that: "Private John Cleaver was born a slave in Westport, circa 1847. His mother was black, father was white. Two years before the Battle of Westport, he escaped enslavement, cast off his slave sur-name (Klabber or Klaver) and lived as a free man, as a 'Gentleman' in the Wyandotte and Quindaro communities in what is now Kansas City, KS."

At the Battle of Westport, Black Soldiers of 2nd Kansas Colored Militia helped slow Confederate advances from what is now Swope Park to the Plaza at Brush Creek. In Loose Park, Douglas Battery fired its six 10- pounder Parrot cannons on Confederate forces.

Approximately 1,500 black soldiers fought at the Battle of Westport. Casualties of the North and South were estimated to be 3,500. Some interesting and significant reasons blacks wanted to fight were:

**First:** Matthews told his troops that winning would bring President Lincoln a reelection victory in November.

**Second:** Demonstrate and prove to white officers that they were brave and could fight as well as other black soldiers like those who fought and died at Island Mound, near Butler, MO. in October, 1862, and the 54th Mass. Regiment who fought and died at Fort Wagner in South Carolina, in July, 1863.

**Third:** Avenge the deaths of black soldiers who were killed at the "Black Flag Massacre" at Fort Pillow in Tennessee, April 12, 1864. And, avenge the deaths of

black soldiers who were killed at the “Black Flag Massacre” at Poison Spring in Arkansas, July 18,1864.

The Battle of Westport was the last time the South sent an army authorized to fight in the West.

The year 1864 was a great one for President Abraham Lincoln. He won re-election and carried the state of Missouri. His supporters in Congress introduced legislation that finally became the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution which freed four million black people from enslavement.

The Battle of Westport has a visitor’s center and museum located at 6601 Swope Parkway, MO (at the West Entrance to Swope Park). Open:1-5pm, Thursday-Saturday, April to October.

Joelouis Mattox is the “Lt. William D. Matthews Scholar” at the Battle of Westport Museum. He majored in History and Government at Lincoln University, MO. He is a member of the Civil War Roundtable of Kansas City, Jackson Country Historical Society, State Historical Society of Missouri, and the Greater Kansas City Black History Study Group

-- The End ---

History lives and connects the past to the present ...  
History: love it, study it, share it!

“Professor” Joelouis Mattox from  
Cotton-picking Country

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Parrot Gun  
at Loose  
Park, Kansas  
City, Mo.  
Photo, Mike  
Epstein.

**WILLIAM CLARKE QUANTRILL SOCIETY  
REUNION, INDEPENDENCE, MO. OCTOBER 18,  
2014**

Starts the day at 9:00 a.m. with a tour of the Little Blue Battlefield, 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, then a break

for lunch and a walking tour of Independence Square and on to the Jackson County Historic Truman Court House. At 3:00 p.m. the William Clarke Quantrill Society Headquarters open at the Courthouse Exchange Restaurant 113 W. Lexington, on the square, for following programs. Western Missouri’s Burnt District by Tom Rafiner, an update on John Jarrett the long lost Quantrill raider, and remembering George Todd, new books and the annual meeting of the WCQS. At 6:00 p.m. is the awards banquet and entertainment. No contact information except an address is given, William Clarke Quantrill Society, P.O. Box 520123, Independence, Mo 64052. Reservations by October 11?

Battle of  
Westport  
Visitor’s Center  
in Swope, Park.  
Photo by Mike  
Epstein.



## PRESERVATION NEWS

Civil War News: October, 2014  
Battle of Westport Update

Nearly 40 years ago, a dedicated group from the membership of the Civil War Round Table of Kansas City formed the Monnett Battle of Westport Fund, a non-profit organization, for the purpose of creating a 32-mile self-guided auto tour of the immense battlefield constituting the Battle of Westport of Oct. 21-23, 1864.

The Battle of Westport involved over 32,000 troops on the outskirts of the village of Westport lying on the turbulent border between Missouri and Kansas.

Westport was the largest battle fought west of the Mississippi River, stretching for seven miles from east to west and five miles from north to south. It marked the climax to a decade of war beginning with the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854.

Designated as CWSAC (Civil War Sites Advisory Commission) #M0027, Westport is one of only two battles in the state of Missouri designated by the National Park Service as a Class "A" battle because of it

decisive effect upon the outcome of the war in the Trans-Mississippi.

Today, the Westport battlefield is located entirely within the urban confines of Kansas City. It is as if the City of Philadelphia had been placed on top of the Gettysburg battlefield.

Through the years, the Fund's role has evolved from the original auto tour in 1977 to encompass an organization that functions essentially as a state historic battlefield. Uniquely, it conducts its programs and preservation efforts solely with an all-volunteer staff.

In 2008 the Fund opened the visitor center and museum on the battlefield in Swope Park, the nation's second largest municipal park. The vista from the museum's east veranda stretches across the Blue River valley and the site of the engagements at Byram's Ford on Oct. 22 and 23, 1864.

The museum and Byram's Ford field are designated as a Star Site of the Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area. Information for the visitor center is at [www.battleofwestport.org](http://www.battleofwestport.org).

The Battle of Westport 150 Exhibition and Reenactment sponsored by the Fund will take place on Oct. 23-26 on the grounds surrounding the visitor at 6601 Swope Parkway, Kansas City, on the 150th anniversary of the battle.

Museum director Alisha Moore Cole is coordinating the Battle of Westport 150 (BOW 150). The schedule of events with locations, times and descriptions of activities is posted at [www.battleofwestport150.org](http://www.battleofwestport150.org)

Bjorn Skaptason of the Abraham Lincoln Book Shop in Chicago will open the event on Thursday, Oct. 23, with a walking tour of the battlefield along Brush Creek. He will conduct an in-depth three-hour walking tour on Sunday morning.

Reenactments of the battle will take place on Saturday morning and afternoon and on Sunday afternoon. A special cavalry demonstration by a unit from Fort Riley will be present on Saturday.

In addition to the military history, BOW 150 will address the aspects of the times that make the Civil War relevant for a 21st century audience.

On Education Day Friday and Main Event Day, Saturday, there will be a series of Chautauqua style presentations. Families will have the opportunity to interact with the soldiers and other living historians throughout the event. On Saturday there will be a host of demonstrators, artisans, period entertainers with a children's area and a woman's area.

Going to [www.battleofwestport150.org](http://www.battleofwestport150.org), visitors can purchase necessary tickets for the Friday evening BBQ camp dinner on the battlefield with the troops.

National authority George Wunderlich, executive director of the National Museum of Civil War Medicine, will provide engaging talks on Civil War

medicine accompanied by medical corps historians and an immense exhibit of Civil War medical devices. The battlefield museum will display a newly recovered collection of battle artifacts from the Byram's Ford site.

BOW 150 will also commemorate the contributions of African Americans in the Civil War. Westport is notable for being the first battle in which black troops were commanded in combat by a commissioned black officer during the war. This officer, Lt. Patrick Henry Minor of Douglas' Independent Colored Battery, who was educated at Oberlin College, will be portrayed during the event.

The Fund's preservation efforts have focused on the Byram's Ford site at the crossing of the Blue River and adjacent Meadow area over which 16,000 troops clashed on Oct. 22 and 23, 1864. Although the site was marred by an industrial park development, the Fund commenced preservation in 1983 by acquiring the Byram's Ford crossing, which was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Fund in 1995 transferred this tract and others containing more than 100 acres to the Kansas City Parks Department for management as the Big Blue Battlefield Park. Today a mile-long corridor along the Byram's Ford Road across the battlefield, containing more than 200 acres, is now in the public domain.

In 2006 the Fund launched its "Saving Kansas City's Battlefield" initiative, providing for the removal of all of structures from the 70 acres constituting the area known as the Meadow and remediating the landscape to its 1864 appearance. Today 60 acres of the Meadow is protected.

Saving Kansas City's Battlefield is the most challenging battlefield preservation effort in the nation except for perhaps the Battle of Franklin. At both Westport and Franklin, comparable restoration programs have begun to reverse the encroachment of the urban landscape upon Hallowed Ground.

The Saving initiative received the enthusiastic endorsement of the Kansas City Park Commissioners. Further support and endorsement of the initiative came from Paul Hawke, Chief of the American Battlefield Protection Program; Hon. Kay Barnes, former mayor of Kansas City, Mo. and Jonathan M. Kemper, CEO of Commerce Bank and past chairman and trustee of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Fund Chairman Daniel L. Smith and Director Shirley Christian, a Pulitzer Prize-winning author and historian, co-chair the Saving Kansas City's Battlefield acquisition effort. A video depicting the project is at [www.battleofwestport.org/Video.htm](http://www.battleofwestport.org/Video.htm).

Working in concert with the Fund toward the goal of a fully restored battlefield, the Kansas City Parks Department Commissioners in 2012 adopted a master plan incorporating the Fund's interpretative and acquisition plans for Byram's Ford. In 2014 this master



plan was made part of the City's overall development and land use plan.

The Army Corps of Engineers has partnered with the Fund to execute a consensus plan to preserve the site and to remediate a part of the historic landscape by removing noncontributing 20th century intrusions and reseeding it to native grass.

Since 2006, three of the initial nine structures on the Meadow have been removed. In 2012, a fourth structure, a 45,000-square-foot warehouse valued at \$400,000, on a three-acre tract, was donated by the Jackson County Land Trust to the Fund for further remediation of the site.

The Fund purchased a two-acre tract with a fifth structure in the center of the Meadow in 2010 with the substantial financial support of the William T. Kemper Foundation - Commerce Bank, Trustee, and a purchase money mortgage of \$150,000.

The Fund is seeking donations and grants to retire the mortgage debt so that removal of the structure from the site can begin. Its removal will permit an uninterrupted vista of the battlefield from the foot of Bloody Hill across the Meadow to Byram's Ford.

The Fund is also seeking partners to match and leverage funding from the Federal Highway Transportation Enhancement program for acquisition of the remaining four structures.

Contributions to these funding efforts may be made online by going to the website at [www.battleofwestport.org](http://www.battleofwestport.org).

In the words of the late Jerry Russell, "we who study, must strive to save!"

Daniel L. Smith is the Chairman of the Monnett Battle of Westport Fund, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization which preserves and interprets the Battle of Westport. He was president of the Civil War Round Table of Kansas City in 1980 and 2005 and the editor October 25th and the Battle of Mine Creek He has authored preservation plans for the battle, conducted more than 100 presentations, and led numerous tours of the battlefield since 1977.



Dan Smith at Dedication of Battle of Westport Museum & Visitor's Center in Swope Park. Photo by Mike Epstein

## MENU FOR OCTOBER 2014

(You thought I forgot again.....)

Heirloom Tomato Salad with Arugula, Radish, Pickled Red Onion, Cucumber, and Feta Vinaigrette with Assortment of Rolls. Grilled Chicken served with Hunters sauce of Tomato, Red Wine Demi, Roasted Tomato, and Rosemary,. Olive Oil Herb Grilled Vegetables and Spinach Risotto and Crème Brule Cheesecake.

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### *"The Sergeant Major's Roar"*

*Battlefield Dispatches #403*

### **"A Weary Veteran"**

The Battle of Westport, Missouri on October 23, 1864 has been called the "Gettysburg of the West" because like the Battle of Gettysburg in July of 1863, in south central Pennsylvania, the Union Victory stopped a major Confederate Campaign very deep in "Northern" Territory. The Union victory at Westport prevented the Confederate capture of Kansas City & probably an attack on Fort Leavenworth and caused Confederate Major General Sterling to turn his army south into Kansas to raise as much havoc and devastation in Kansas on its' return to friendly territory in southwest Missouri and northern Arkansas. The following are abbreviated selections from Union after action reports that describe different aspects of the Battle of Westport and are located [in Series I, Vol. 41, Part I Reports of the Official Records of the War of the Rebellion on Pages 484-491.](#)

Major General Samuel Ryan Curtis:

"Night closing the Battle of the Big Blue on the 22nd, I ordered my troops under cover of darkness to concentrate within the lines of field works that enclosed Kansas City, Mo., only a small force remaining in front of Westport near the long line of camp fires that marked the position and vastly superior numbers of Rebel forces. I replenished exhausted stores and secured my weary soldiers a few hours repose, which after so many days of marching, watching and fighting, we all very much needed.

Our regular volunteers, with the artillery, moved early in the morning of the 23rd and were deployed inline of battle two miles south of Westport on Brush Creek. McLain's Battery was on the brow of the north bank of Brush Creek and near the road. We also had about twenty other pieces of artillery, mostly mountain howitzers, with cavalry, taking position as their supporting squadrons came into line. Meantime continued firing was kept up by skirmishers and artillery on both sides, with but little damage to either.

I tried to get through the timber with Dodge's Battery and two little howitzers of my escort, but the roads were not favorable. I was directed by an old man, a MISSOURI PATRIOT of seventy five years, through a narrow defile to Brush Creek with Dodge's Battery and other forces. With trembling, sinking steps the old man directed us to a position where we immediately began to demonstrate against the enemy that occupied the inclined plain and wooded heights on the south of Brush Creek. The WEARY VETERAN refused to ride, but sunk down with delight and exhaustion when he saw the success of our guns. Like many other brave Missourians of that day he saw the rebellion vanishing before him and his home and country free.

The enemy was soon overpowered and after a violent and desperate struggle fell back to another elevation on the broad prairie and operated their artillery and cavalry to their utmost ability in a vain attempt to check our general movement."

Major General Deitzler, Kansas State Militia Reports:

"The personal presence of Major General Curtis inspired the men with confidence and the whole command moved forward through the dense underbrush and as they emerged from the south side of the creek they encountered the enemy in strong force and after a severe struggle in which our troops showed great bravery drove him from his chosen position. Taking advantage of the confusion which occurred in the enemy's line our victorious troops advanced rapidly into the open field firing volley after volley into the flying rebels killing and wounding large numbers who were left in our hands. Both armies were now in full view of each other on the open prairie presenting one of the most magnificent spectacles in nature. The enemy made several attempts to stand, but such was the dashing bravery of our troops that they never succeeded in rallying and forming their men to offer any considerable resistance. A running fight was then kept up for about four miles, the enemy slowly retreating in a southerly direction, parallel with and about a mile from the State line in Missouri. At this point became a perfect rout and the enemy, running in great confusion southward, were soon out of sight. Their course was indicated by dense volumes of smoke, emanating from their burning of the prairie, hay and grain stacks."

Colonel Jennison Reports:

"The enemy having fallen back, or lines were reformed and again advanced through the fields on the right of the road, driving the Rebels at all points. Directly in the road at the summit of a slight slope a body of the enemy seemed determined to make a stand. Then I was ordered by General Blunt to charge the enemy with his body guard and one Squadron of the Second Colorado Cavalry, all the troops available at that

instant. DRAWING SABERS and FORMING COLUMNS OF FOURS the squadron dashed with reckless courage upon the hill in the midst of the Rebels, who not waiting to ascertain our strength and hardly making a show of fighting broke and fled into some timber on the left, but the majority went down the road."

Brig. General W. H. M. Fishback, Kansas State Militia:

"Our batteries are now hurried through the corn field, followed by the militia who are supporting them. Here we have punished them severely; their dead are numerous and lie on the field unburied. Our loss compared to theirs is trifling. By 12 o'clock we have reached the open prairie four miles south of Westport, when we see on our left as far as the eye can reach a long column advancing towards us. We are inspired with the new and intense interest; we look and listen; we hear the artillery of Generals Pleasanton and McNeil, they have at last reached us and given the enemy's right a taste of their powder. We now have them: the retreat became a perfect rout; we cannot keep pace with them. The battle is over and the victory won, nobly won!"

Now then, the Battle of Westport was indeed a "Union" victory, but the result of which was not a rout as described. Eventually the Confederates retired south into Kansas in good order & Major General Joe Shelby & his Iron Brigade were placed as a rear guard which successfully defended the rear of the Confederate column as it advanced south into the Jayhawk State! Before the Battle of Westport was over General Price ordered his 500 wagon supply train to move south and it stretched over 11 miles long as it rolled into Kansas and of Course the War Went On.

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### **Talkin' Truman: Second Battle of Independence**

Saturday, Oct. 11, 2014—11:00 a.m. Truman Library, 500 West U. S. Hwy. 24, Independence, MO. Mike Calvert talks about the Second Battle of Independence which followed the Battle of the Little Blue. The admission for the Truman Library is \$8 for adults, \$7 for seniors, \$3 for ages 6-15, and free for 5 and under.

### **Walking Tour-Trails from the Square, Independence, MO**

Saturday, Oct. 11, 2014—1:00 p.m. A walking tour sponsored by the National Frontier Trails Museum. Examine the historic Courthouse Square and environs to understand the role Independence played in the opening of the West, 1827-1860. Meet at the Andrew Jackson statue on the west side of the courthouse. \$5.00 per person.

### **Brady Lecture-Battle of Westport**

Saturday, Oct. 11, 2014—1:00 p.m. Historic Truman Courthouse, 112 W. Lexington Ave., Independence, MO. Ralph Monaco, II will talk about the 150th anniversary of the Battle of the Little Blue, the Second Battle of Independence, and the Battle of Westport.

### **The Border Wars by Tom Rafiner**

Saturday, Oct. 11, 2014—2:00 p.m. Claycomo Library, 309 NE 69 Hwy., Claycomo, MO. Author Tom Rafiner discusses the Border Wars between Kansas and Missouri before the Civil War. RSVP to 816 816 455-5030.

**Climax on the Border—Battle of Westport, Oct. 21-23, 1864 Saturday, Oct. 11, 2014—2:00 p.m.** Westport Library, 118 Westport Road, Kansas City, MO. Dan Smith, chairman of the Monnett Battle of Westport Fund, will review the circumstances that caused Federal and Confederate forces numbering more than 30,000 to clash for two days along the Blue River and Brush Creek. Much of modern day Kansas City sits atop an enormous Civil War battlefield covering 35 square miles. A speaker's reception follows at the Harris-Kearney House, 4000 Baltimore, Kansas City, MO. To RSVP call 816 701-3488.

### **Trolley Tour: Kansas City Historic Cemeteries**

Saturday, Oct. 11, 2014—2:00 p.m.-4:30 p.m. Sponsored by the KansasCity Museum. See the burial sites of prominent Kansas Citians at Elmwood and Union Cemetery. Tickets will be sold the day of the event but must be reserved in advance by calling the museum at 816 513-0721 or by e-mailing Anna Marie Tuter at [anna.tutera@kcmo.org](mailto:anna.tutera@kcmo.org).

### **The Border Wars by Tom Rafiner**

Tuesday, Oct. 14, 2014—2:00 p.m. Lone Jack Library, 211 N. Bynum Road, Lone Jack, MO. Author Tom Rafiner will talk about the Border Wars between Kansas and Missouri before the Civil War. To RSVP call 816 697-2528.

### **Independence Civil War Study Group**

Wednesday, October 15, 2014—7:00 p.m., Courthouse Exchange, 113 W. Lexington, Independence, MO. Tim Westcott from Park University will be talking about the 1855 Pro-slavery Convention In Lexington.

### **Mine Creek Battlefield—150th Anniversary**

Saturday, Oct. 18, 2014—10:00 a.m.-5 p.m. Mine Creek Battlefield State Historic Site, 20485 KS Hwy. 52, Pleasanton, KS. Cavalry and Infantry encampments, gunnery crews, surgeon saddle display, 19<sup>th</sup> century skills demonstrations. Admission is \$5 for adults and \$1 for students.

**Big Shoal Cemetery Tour** Saturday, Oct. 18, 2014—12 Noon and 2:00 p.m. tours of the historic Big Shoal Cemetery on NE 64th Street in Gladstone. Stories of the earliest residents from the founder of Acme Springs to local veterans of the Civil War. Tickets are \$10. Call 816 423-4107 for tickets and directions.

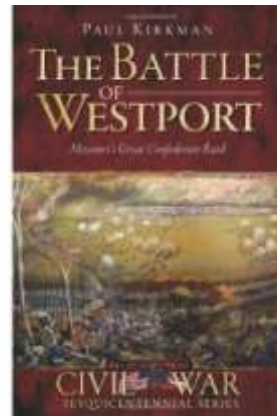
**Price's Raid of 1864 (Shared Stories of the Civil War)** Tuesday, Oct. 21, 2014—7:00 p.m. Neosho County Community College (Ottawa Campus), 900 E. Logan St., Ottawa, KS. In 1864 martial law was declared in Kansas and every able-bodied man was called to repel Confederate General Sterling Price's

10,000 troops. Learn about Price's Raid through the words of the men and women who were there.

**The Battle of Westport: Culmination of the Border War** Thursday, Oct. 23, 2014—6:30 p.m. Central Library, 14 W. 10th St., Kansas City, MO. Terry Beckenbaugh of the U. S. Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth will explain how the Battle of Westport ended the conventional Confederate military presence in Missouri and examines the worst aspects of the guerrilla war that plagued the state from 1861-64. To RSVP call 816 701-3407.

**Voices of the Past—Mount Mora Cemetery** in St. Joseph, MO Thursday and Friday, Oct. 23-24, 2014—Tours at 6:30 and 7:30 p.m. Tours begin at the Wyeth-Tootle Mansion, 1100 Charles Street, St. Joseph, MO. Participants must be 14 years of age or above. \$20 tickets must be purchased in advance at the St. Joseph Museum, 3406 Frederick Ave. or by calling 816 232-8471.

**12th Annual Walk with Civil War Spirits**—Lone Jack, MO Saturday, Oct. 25, 2014—7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m. Lone Jack Civil War Museum and Cemetery, 301 S. Bynum, Lone Jack, MO. Follow your guide's footsteps back in time to the battle which took place 152 years ago. Listen to Nancy Cave as she tells her tragic story while obeying Ewing's Order No. 11. The Spirit Walk and museum are free, but donations to the museum are always appreciated.



On October 23, 1864 the largest civil war battle west of the Mississippi river took place just a few miles south of Kansas City near the old trail town of Westport, Missouri. Author and Historian; Paul Kirkman traces the roots of the conflict through to its conclusion in *The Battle of Westport: Missouri's Great Confederate Raid*. In September of 1864 General Sterling Price had set out with several thousand men on a desperate cavalry raid into Missouri. Tens of thousands of federal troops were deployed to protect St. Louis and the capitol at Jefferson City and other potential targets from the raiders. In a sweeping arc across the state Price's army gathered loot and recruits, while eluding pursuing state and federal

forces. The armies finally met in a running battle that would leave wounded and dead from Kansas City down the Kansas state line to the Arkansas border and beyond. The History Press honors the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the War Between the States with this latest offering in its Civil War Sesquicentennial series. Contact: [thehistorypress.net/](http://thehistorypress.net/) or [paulkirkman1@sbcglobal.net](mailto:paulkirkman1@sbcglobal.net)



## 'COLORED' TROOPS AT THE "BATTLE OF WESTPORT" IN 1864

By Dr. Larry D. Coleman

I had long wondered whether black troops had fought in the "Battle of Westport?" Said long-ranging battle, involving a combined 40,000 troops, was the most prominent battle to be fought in or near Kansas City during the Civil War, 1861-1865.

No one gave me a straight answer. I intuited, however, that black troops must have done so, given the "Kansas dynamic," that tendency of bold and resolute Kansans to launch black troops into battle, whether officially sanctioned or not by Washington.

Well, I can now categorically state my intuition was accurate!

Black--"Colored"-- troops definitely fought in the "Battle of Westport," in October 1864, and did so under the command of colored officers, William D. Matthews, Lieutenant, and Patrick H. Minor, Lieutenant. The evidence is linked below. They were known as "The Independent Kansas Colored Battery." As things turned out, they were indeed truly "independent" in the sense that they were not officially mustered into the Union army, until December 1864 at Ft. Scott, Kansas.

Their status was similar to that of the "First Kansas Colored Volunteer Infantry," the first black unit to fight in the Civil War in October 1862, winning the "Skirmish at Island Mound." They defeated a much

larger force of Confederate "irregulars" in Bates County, eight miles southwest of Butler, Missouri, near the Osage River.

Both Kansas "colored" units were mustered into the Union army, long after they had already rendered signal service. The "Independent Kansas Colored Battery's" formation, however, was officially sanctioned by order of U.S. Secretary of War E.M. Stanton. Not so, for "The First Kansas Colored Volunteer Infantry". It was not only "not authorized" by Washington, but was independently formed, organized, and outfitted by Kansas U. S. Senator James Lane ("The Grim Senator") at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas before Abraham Lincoln issued the 1863 Emancipation Proclamation . In fact, General Lane directly disregarded Lincoln's countermanding directive not to go forth. The First Kansas Colored Volunteer Infantry was mustered in January 13, 1863. <http://www.kshs.org/kansapedia/first-kansas-colored-infantry/12052>.

The "Independent Kansas Colored Battery," long before it was officially mustered into the Union Army, had already fought with the Kansas militia as part of the Third Federal Brigade, under the command of Major General Samuel R. Curtis, the same commander of Ft. Leavenworth, who had requested and received

permission for its formation, as a "colored battery" under "colored officers." In the Battle of Westport, the Union forces defeated and diverted Confederate General Sterling Price's last desperate offensive foray into Missouri, and sent him retreating "back to Arkansas."

The unit was mustered in under the command of Hezekiah Ford Douglass. All of its officers were black, which was an exceedingly rare occurrence during the Civil War, or any American war!



Bent Ward House, 55<sup>th</sup> & Ward Parkway, Confederate Line, M. Epstein