



THE BUGLE CALL

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WILSON'S CREEK NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD FOUNDATION

SUMMER, 2010

A CHANGE OF CONVICTIONS? THE MYSTERY OF GEN. F.C. ARMSTRONG

By Jeff Patrick

Many unusual stories about people and events have come out of the tumultuous years of the Civil War. Circumstances where brother fought brother or friends found themselves on opposite sides were fairly common, but some soldiers may have even struggled over their own loyalty to the North or the South. In a story worthy of the best Civil War trivia book, Frank Crawford Armstrong was reported to have fought as a Union



Frank Crawford Armstrong
1835 – 1909

officer at the Battle of Bull Run outside Washington in July 1861, then quickly headed west and participated in the Battle of Wilson's Creek as a Confederate officer less than a month later! Even more amazing is the detail that he supposedly resigned his commission in the U.S. Army three days after he fought at Wilson's Creek, technically serving in both armies at the same time! It makes a great story, but did Armstrong actually fight in the first two major battles of the Civil War—but on opposite sides?

See *Armstrong* on page 3

REPUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS NAMED AFTER WILSON'S CREEK GENERALS

The four kindergarten through fifth grade elementary schools in Republic, Missouri will be named after generals who fought in the August 10, 1861 battle at nearby Wilson's Creek National Battlefield. With some encouragement from Battlefield Superintendent, Ted Hillmer, Republic School Board members decided to capitalize on the city's proximity to Wilson's Creek when renaming its schools next year. The current E-I building will become Schofield Elementary; the current E-II building will be McCulloch Elementary; E-III will be named Lyon Elementary; and the building that is the current middle school will become the fourth elementary school, and will be Price Elementary.

Superintendent Vern Minor said the board made its decision after several other ideas were considered. A lottery was held and the administrators drew to pick names for their respective buildings. Wilson's Creek National Battlefield will be providing plaques to be placed inside the each of the four schools highlighting the accomplishments of the namesake Civil War Generals.

All four men were respected leaders on and off the battlefield. John Schofield was a diplomat to France and later served as Secretary of War. Ben McCulloch traveled with Davy Crockett and served in the Texas legislature. Sterling Price was a popular Missouri Governor and U.S. congressman. Nathaniel Lyon was vocally opposed to slavery. He was the first Union General killed during the Civil War and his death at the Battle of Wilson's Creek was largely responsible for keeping Missouri in the Union.

It is hoped that the historic names will encourage the students who attend these schools to explore their local history and learn more about those who shaped it. 

ANNUAL MEETING!



WILSON'S CREEK NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD FOUNDATION

9:00 A.M. Tuesday, August 10, 2010



PLAN TO ATTEND!

IN THE VISITORS CENTER MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM AT WILSON'S CREEK NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD - ANNIVERSARY OBSERVANCE AT 10:00 AM AT THE VISITOR CENTER

WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Ken McClure



A habit at our home over the last several years has been to watch the Warner Brothers *Gettysburg* video during the anniversary of the battle on July 1 through July 3. This video, based upon Michael Shaara's *The Killer Angels*, is a fascinating depiction of that epic Civil War

battle and one that never fails to make me appreciate the dedication, commitment, and sacrifice of those who fought on both sides. With the completion of *August Light* by Wide Awake Films, we will be starting a new tradition—watching it each year on August 10, during the anniversary of the Battle of Wilson's Creek. As noted in last quarter's newsletter, *August Light* is a seventy-minute video recounting not only the actual Battle of Wilson's Creek, but also events in the months preceding the battle. Wide Awake Films has done a superb job of capturing the very essence of the battle at Wilson's Creek. The video will serve as a great teaching tool, bringing to life the people, issues, and significance of Wilson's Creek. Copies of the video can be obtained at the Wilson's Creek National Battlefield Visitor Center or by contacting the Foundation.

The battle's anniversary on August 10 of this year will mark the end of my two-year term as President of the Board of Directors. It has been a distinct honor to serve in this capacity. My fellow board members are

to be commended for the time and financial commitment they make to the battlefield. I thank them for all of their efforts and for the privilege of serving with them. The Foundation's staff is without equal. Executive Director April McDonough and Finance Director Roseann Blunt give the Foundation countless hours of their time and talent to make the Board's job easy. The Foundation's success can be traced directly to the work of April and Roseann. I am most grateful for their work and support.

The coming year will be an exciting one as we prepare to recognize the 150th anniversary of the battle in August of 2011. The events being planned by the Board's Reenactment Committee are designed to focus attention on the Wilson's Creek National Battlefield. Let me encourage you to be involved in these activities and their preparation.

Finally, thank you for your continued interest in the Foundation. It is your support of the battlefield that makes possible the many activities highlighting the significance of what happened here on August 10, 1861.

Sincerely,

Ken McClure, President

The Mission of the Wilson's Creek National Battlefield Foundation

To work in cooperation with and to support the Wilson's Creek National Battlefield, a unit of the National Park Service and its staff. To further, by all proper and legitimate agencies and means, the acquisition of Civil War historical properties and materials especially those related to the Battle of Wilson's Creek, or usable in the interpretation of the Wilson's Creek battle. To be a friend of the park whose primary purpose is to support Wilson's Creek National Battlefield in a partnership through activities which may include fund-raising, volunteerism, education, advocacy, and research.

Have any stories of local or historical interest relating to the Civil War? We're always on the lookout for new stories and unique images for *The Bugle Call*. Please send your newsletter contributions to:

Wilson's Creek National Battlefield Foundation
Attn: Bugle Call Editor
P.O. Box 8163
Springfield, MO 65801
FAX to: 417-864-7428
E-mail: info@wilsonscreek.com

Armstrong continued from page 1

A quick glance at the Official Records of the War of the Rebellion seems to confirm the story. In his official report to the adjutant general of the Confederacy in Richmond, Western Army commander General Benjamin McCulloch paid tribute to the valuable services of "Armstrong," one of his volunteer aides, at the Battle of Wilson's Creek. But is this really Frank Crawford Armstrong, the veteran of Bull Run and (at that time) a Union officer?

To answer this question, we need to examine the career of Frank Crawford Armstrong. Born on November 22, 1835, in Indian Territory (modern Oklahoma), where his army officer father was stationed, Armstrong was commissioned a second lieutenant in the 2nd U.S. Dragoons in June 1855 following his graduation from Holy Cross Academy and College in Massachusetts. By the spring of 1861, he was attached to the staff of Department of the West commander brigadier General William S. Harney in St. Louis. When the fateful order came relieving Harney of command and appointing Nathaniel Lyon in his stead, Armstrong received the envelope containing the relief order and opened it. Once he was aware that Harney had been relieved, Armstrong asked the general to return him to his regiment. A few days later, Armstrong was promoted to captain and assigned to duty again with the 2nd Dragoons. Shortly after that he was sent to Washington, D.C.

Captain Frank Armstrong did in fact lead his company of dragoons at the Battle of First Bull Run on July 21, 1861, and then returned with his men to Arlington, Virginia. By this time, apparently the young officer had firmly decided to resign from the U.S. Army and serve the Confederacy. According to one dramatic but erroneous account, on July 23 Armstrong obtained permission to visit relatives in Washington, where he handed his letter of resignation to his brother in law, then made his way to Confederate lines, with instructions not to deliver the resignation until his relatives knew he was safely beyond Union control.

The truth is less dramatic but just as interesting. Armstrong's resignation to Brigadier General Lorenzo Thomas, the U.S. adjutant general, was, in fact, dated August 13, 1861, three days after the Battle of Wilson's Creek. It was short and to the point: "Genl I have the honor to tender my Resignation as Captain 2d Dragoons My reasons for so doing are of a private nature. I am sir Very Respectfully Yr Obt. Servt Frank C. Armstrong Capt 2d Dragoons." His resignation was marked "Accepted as tendered Received A(djutant) G(eneral's) O(ffice) August 19, 1861."

So it appears that the story holds up to scrutiny. But sadly, when certain annoying historical details are considered, this "Believe It or Not" tale is ruined. Take the place where Armstrong's letter was written, for instance. The August 13 resignation was not written in Springfield, Missouri, where the officer would logically be had he fought at Wilson's Creek, but in Louisville, Kentucky, and in fact Armstrong also mentioned that "My address will be at Galt House Louisville Ky." Could Armstrong have left the Wilson's Creek battlefield and quickly traveled

to Louisville, perhaps on some important business for General Benjamin McCulloch? That doesn't appear to be the case either. Although Armstrong's whereabouts in the weeks after First Bull Run are somewhat unclear, there is evidence available to help us track his movements.

One important document is a letter dated August 23, 1861, from Anne M. Smith, Armstrong's mother, written from her home in Maryland, to Confederate President Jefferson Davis. For some months past, wrote Mrs. Smith, her efforts had been directed at getting her son Frank to Richmond so he could offer his services and "aid our noble southern friends in our just & holy cause." But the correspondence between her and her son, "which would have been held sacred by all honorable men," was intercepted by officials in Washington, allowing them to learn his intention to resign his commission. By August 23, she was apparently unsure of his exact location, but she wrote that she knew that he had been ordered to Washington and then rushed over to Arlington. The only other information she had was that she had noticed an article in the August 22 issue of a local paper stating that two dragoon officers passed through Nashville on their way to Richmond.

It is possible that Frank had some difficulty making his way to the Confederacy. The August 26, 1861, issue of the Richmond Daily Dispatch noted that two officers who had recently resigned from the U.S. Army (one being Armstrong) passed through Nashville on August 12, headed for Richmond. Both officers had been compelled to fight at Bull Run when their resignations were declined, the paper reported. Following the battle they received furloughs, traveled to neutral Louisville, Kentucky, forwarded their resignations, and headed to Richmond. A later issue of the Dispatch reported that according to his mother's hometown newspaper, Armstrong had resigned his commission and as of September 3 was in Richmond. Although the dates cited in the Richmond paper do not exactly mesh with the date of his resignation, the scenario makes Armstrong's trip to Louisville, Nashville, and Richmond quite plausible. In addition, an endorsement letter from Arkansas Senator Robert W. Johnson to the Secretary of War explained that Armstrong "had to run off, to make his escape from the enemy."

So if Armstrong missed Wilson's Creek, when did he arrive at General McCulloch's headquarters west of the Mississippi? That question is a bit harder to answer. The Little Rock State Gazette reported on September 7 that Colonel James McIntosh had arrived in town from Richmond, and that "several very accomplished officers have been assigned to Gen. McCulloch's command," including Lieut. Armstrong, recently resigned from the U.S. Army. The editor of Texas Captain John J. Good's letters believed that Good was referring to Armstrong when he wrote from Camp Jackson, Arkansas, on September 18 that "a Capt Somebody" who had been in "Lincoln's Army" had arrived in camp and been named assistant adjutant general. Supporting this theory is the fact that

the earliest document in Armstrong's Compiled Service Record is dated September 27, 1861, signed by him as an acting assistant adjutant general. Further, a card in another of Armstrong's compiled service record files states that Second Lieutenant Frank C. Armstrong was appointed to the provisional rank of major on September 14 and confirmed on December 13, 1861. The appointment was signed by Confederate Secretary of War Leroy Pope Walker and delivered to General McCulloch. It seems quite likely then that Armstrong was in Richmond by late August or early September, met with the Secretary of War no later than September 14, and by September 18 was in McCulloch's camp, more than a month after the Battle of Wilson's Creek.

Even though he missed the Battle of Wilson's Creek, Frank Armstrong saw a great deal of combat during the remainder of the war, including actions in the Indian Territory and during the Pea Ridge Campaign. In July 1862 Armstrong was appointed an acting brigadier general by Sterling Price and given command of all cavalry in the Army of the West. He led a cavalry brigade at the Battle of Thompson's Station, Tennessee in March 1863, and, after being promoted to brigadier general the following month, took command of a brigade in General Nathan Bedford Forrest's cavalry division. He led a division at the Battle of Chickamauga, Georgia, a brigade during the

Atlanta Campaign, and helped cover the retreat of John Bell Hood's Army of Tennessee after the Battle of Nashville. His last action was at Selma, Alabama in April 1865, and he surrendered the following month.

Following the war Armstrong served as United States Indian Inspector and Assistant Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and died in Bar Harbor, Maine in 1909. Interestingly, although other aspects of his Civil War service are mentioned in Armstrong's obituary, no mention is made of Wilson's Creek.

So if Frank Crawford Armstrong was not the Armstrong that General McCulloch referred to in his Wilson's Creek report, who was the mysterious "Armstrong"?

The answer is Frank W. (or Francis Wells) Armstrong, Frank Crawford Armstrong's cousin. According to Frank W.'s Compiled Service Record, he was mentioned on July 5, 1861, as a doctor and volunteer aide-de-camp to General McCulloch. He was officially appointed an ADC on December 31, 1861. Sadly, Frank W. apparently did not live long enough to document his role in the Battle of Wilson's Creek. On May 6, 1868, Jefferson County, Arkansas resident Dr. Frank W. Armstrong died in Nashville, Tennessee, after a brief illness. A "gallant soldier, generous gentleman, beloved friend and brother" and relative of the far more famous Confederate general passed into history.

So where did the legend of Frank Armstrong, Bull Run and Wilson's Creek come from? Some were already wondering about Frank C. Armstrong's participation in the Battle of Wilson's Creek as early as 1885, when a newspaper article noted that "Whether this Armstrong [mentioned in McCulloch's Official Records report] and Secretary Lamar's Indian inspector are identical is a question involved in some doubt....At any rate his is believed to be the only case where an officer who actually fought on the Union side at the beginning of the rebellion afterward took up arms against his country."

Perhaps some day we will find a statement from each of the two Frank Armstrongs—one describing his role at Wilson's Creek, the other detailing his escape from the Union Army and his journey to join McCulloch's army. In any case, based on the evidence presented here, the anecdote of Frank Crawford Armstrong's service in two armies and two battles twenty days apart is put to rest. ☞



TRIVIAL TRDBIT

In 1863 the U.S. Congress enacted a military draft for male citizens between the ages of 20 and 45, but exempting those who paid \$300 or provided a substitute.

Poor Northerners complained, "The blood of a poor man is as precious as that of the wealthy."

Battle of Wilson's Creek 149th Anniversary Activities

Membership Dinner

Monday, August 9, 2010 7:00 p.m.
Sahara Room, Oasis Ramada Hotel

Foundation Annual Meeting

Tuesday, August 10, 2010 9:00 a.m.
Visitor Center

Anniversary Program

Tuesday, August 10, 2010 10:00 a.m.
Visitor Center

Reception

Tuesday, August 10, 2010 11:00 a.m.
Visitor Center

Please join us to commemorate the 149th anniversary of Battle of Wilson's Creek. This year's events will feature guest speaker, author and MSU Professor, Dr. Bill Piston. Don't miss any of the fun and history! For more information, contact the Foundation office at 417-864-3041.



Wilson's Creek National Battlefield Annual Moonlight Tour

Saturday, September 18, 2010

Don't miss the annual re-creation of evening and night time battlefield scenes at Wilson's Creek National Battlefield. The tour will depict scenes at various locations along the tour road, showing events that occurred before, and after the 1861 battle. The Wilson's Creek Foundation will be offering Chili Suppers at the Visitor Center from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.

The first tour starts at 6:45 p.m. and the final one at 10:00 p.m. Tours leave every 15 minutes and each lasts 75-90 minutes. Tour leaders will provide an overview of the events of August 10, 1861, and background for each of the scenes. Visitors may ask questions and interact with tour leaders, but they will only be observers of the historic dramas presented at each stop.

Tickets for the Moonlight Tour go on sale August 14. Tickets are \$5 each, and may be purchased by mail or in person (no internet sales). Tickets are limited and usually sell out early. Call the Wilson's Creek Visitor Center at (417) 732-2662 for information.

Tickets on sale at the Visitor Center now.

Only \$5.00 per person!

Contact the Battlefield Visitor's Center at (417) 732-2662

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DINNER TO BE HELD FRIDAY, AUGUST 6

The annual Foundation membership dinner will be held in the Sahara Room, Oasis Ramada Hotel, 2546 N. Glenstone, Springfield, Missouri. The evening will begin with a social hour from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. with a cash bar. From 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. we will enjoy a buffet dinner followed by a program with guest speaker. We hope that many of our members and supporters will be able to join us for an evening of entertainment, great food, and friendship. Come out and meet our great Foundation board and loyal supporters!

A reservation form is included below. If you need driving directions to the event, please call the Foundation office at 417-864-3041 or e-mail amcdonough@wilsonscreek.com. ☞

Wilson's Creek National Battlefield Foundation 2010 Membership Dinner Reservation Form

Monday, August 9, 2010

in the Sahara Room, Oasis Ramada Hotel
2546 N. Glenstone,

Social Hour: 6:00 p.m. (cash bar) – Dinner: 7:00 p.m. – Program: 8:00 p.m.

Dinner – Italian buffet, drinks, desserts

Cost: \$26.00/person - Attire: Business Casual

Reservations must be received by August 6, 2010.

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone () _____ Number for Dinner _____



Wilson's Creek
National Battlefield
Foundation

Yes, I plan to attend. Please reserve _____ seats at \$26.00 Per Person.

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Please make checks payable and return to:

**Wilson's Creek National
Battlefield Foundation**
P.O. Box 8163
Springfield, MO 65801

or call the Foundation office at: 417-864-3041
or fax form to: 417-864-7428

FOUNDATION HOSTS 7TH ANNUAL ARTS IN THE PARK EVENTS

For the seventh year in a row, the Wilson's Creek National Battlefield Foundation, along with JP Morgan Chase and Eastern National, hosted five Arts in the Park concerts, including the Ray House Jamboree.

Performers at the Visitor Center concerts this year included *The Missouri State University Band* on May 8, a special double feature including *Crazy Mule* and *The Missouri Boatrike Bluegrass Band* on May 22, *The Back Porch Players* on May 29, and *High Strung* on June 5.

The Jamboree was held on a beautiful June day. Four groups performed traditional old time music from the front porch of the historic home throughout the day. Refreshments of fresh popcorn, cookies and cold lemonade were served, and living historians in period dress led tours of the Ray House. Several local music groups performed, including Jeremy Myers fiddler with Alvie Dooms on guitar, Gail Morrissee and Elizabeth Coleman on hammer dulcimers, Dan O'Day fiddler with Kenny Key on guitar, and *Ripplin' Creek* with Bill and Ann Riggs. We hope to see another great turnout again next year! 



Crazy Mule band members have some fun with a young volunteer from the audience.



Alvie Dooms and Jeremy Myers as seen through a window in the Ray House



A fish-eye view of the crowd on the Visitor Center lawn.



The members of *Crazy Mule* and *The Missouri Boatrike Bluegrass Band* team up for the first two band jam session in Arts in the Park history.



Gail Morrissee and Elizabeth Coleman perform with hammer dulcimers and guitar.



Superintendent's Corner By Ted Hillmer

Dear Foundation Members,

Societies sometimes experience what President Abraham Lincoln in his Lyceum Address called "the silent artillery of time," a kind of inertia that develops as a culture matures. People become comfortable and grow less creative and inventive – and often less adventurous. In later generations they may lose their drive and become complacent. This is not the case with Wilson's Creek NB staff or the Foundation. This past year has been and the next will continue to be exciting, educational, and vibrant for all of us as we look forward to new challenges together.

One of those challenges is how to commemorate one of the bloodiest chapters in our nation's history. There is a buzz across Missouri and in the greater Springfield area because of the upcoming Civil War sesquicentennial that starts next year. Several groups are beginning to plan activities and programs around the theme of the Civil War. The Governor's Sesquicentennial Commission has been meeting and planning events for the State of Missouri; the Springfield Literary Council has scheduled an event in 2011 with a Civil War theme; representatives of area groups will meet this month to discuss Civil War activities during the next four years; coordination of activities

in conjunction with Pea Ridge NMP has begun; and a major reenactment of the Battle of Wilson's Creek is being planned for August 12-14, 2011. Activities are also being scheduled at the battlefield to educate our visitors about the importance of the Civil War and the battle that took place here in 1861.

As I think ahead to the sesquicentennial, I want to also express my appreciation to Ken McClure for his outstanding leadership as president of Wilson's Creek NB Foundation and for his support of the battlefield. It has been my privilege to work with Ken and to see the results of his dedication. While I am sad to see Ken step down, I look forward to working with Steve Ross as our new president.

This next year is a great opportunity for Wilson's Creek NB and America to shine, as we educate our citizens about the importance of the Civil War and promote America's best idea—the national park system. Thank you for your continued support and appreciation of this valuable resource located here in the southwest region of Missouri – Wilson Creek National Battlefield.

Ted Hillmer,
Superintendent

NEW MEMBERS & CONTRIBUTORS

The following people and organizations have recently joined or contributed to the Wilson's Creek National Battlefield Foundation. Our sincere thanks to everyone for your generous support!

Mary Munsell Abroe
Robert and Barbara Weber
Don Akers
Richard Wilbur
Mike Ball
Scott and Traci Williams
Brent Barnett
Larry and Sundhild Barrett
Kenneth & Charlotte Buckingham
David and Stacey Burton
Virginia Bussey
Bill Charles
Civil War Round Table of the Ozarks
Thomas Coay
Lincoln Connell
Gary Conwell
John Coryell
Hal and Kathy Funk
John and Carolyn Gerdes
J.D. Gillenwaters

Denna Emerson
John and Patricia Ferguson
Richard Freihofner
David Glaser
Ray E. Greenlee
William Hahn
Kevin Hageman
Jack and Virginia Halterman
Robert Herb
Ronald Himstedt
John Houlehan, Jr.
Scott Hughes
Jane Ann Johnson
Tracy Kimberlin
Richard and Mary Jo Kirkey
Alan Kloehn
John W. Mayer
Ken and Joey McClure
Jim and Patty Millikin
Michael Mitchell

Bill and Nancy Piston
Martha Railey
David L. Rauch
Jim Ridenour
Jesse F. Roberts
William Robinett
Steve Ross
Arthur C. Schrieber
Cynthia Schowengerdt
Holmes Semken
Richard Simpson
Harold Sites
Shane Sondermann
Lezah and Ron Stenger
Vicki Stephens
Naomi Tate
Ralph Thaemlitz
Florence Thompson

Upcoming Events: at Wilson's Creek National Battlefield

August

- 7-8 "1st Iowa" Living History Weekend–Artillery Firing Demonstrations, 11:00 am - 4:00 pm at stop 5 on the Tour Road
- 10 149th Battle Anniversary Observance, 10-11 a.m. – No Entrance Fee
- 14-15 Fee Free Weekend – No Entrance Fee
- 14 Moonlight Tour tickets go on sale at the Visitor Center for the September 18 event: \$5.00 each.
- 14 Artillery Firing Demonstrations, 11:00 am - 4:00 pm at stop number 5 on the Tour Road.

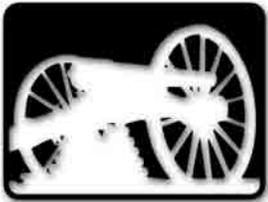
September

- 6 Artillery Firing Demonstrations, 11:00 am - 4:00 pm at stop number 5 on the Tour Road.
- 7 Change to Fall Hours, 8 am - 5 pm Visitor Center, 8 am - 7 pm Tour Road.
- 18 Special Event: "Moonlight Tour": Evening living history program highlighting events before and after the Battle of Wilson's Creek, 6:45 - 10:00 pm – Tickets required: \$5.00 each.
- 25 National Public Lands Day – No Entrance Fee

October

- 24 Change to Winter Hours, 8 am - 5 pm Visitor Center and Tour Road.

Note: All Small Arms and Artillery Firing Demonstrations are located at Tour Road Stop Number 5 (Sigel's Final Position). All programs are weather dependent and subject to availability of volunteer assistance. For more information, call (417) 732-2662 or visit the National Park Service Web Site at www.nps.gov/wicr



Wilson's Creek
National Battlefield
Foundation

P.O. Box 8163
Springfield, MO 65801

Visit our Expanded Website!
www.wilsonscreek.com

Address Correction Requested