



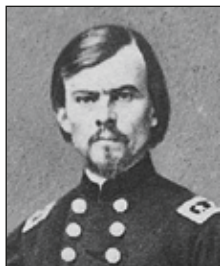
THE BULLETIN

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WILSON'S CREEK NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD FOUNDATION FALL 2010/WINTER 2011

FRANZ SIGEL RETURNS TO WILSON'S CREEK

by William Garrett Piston

Franz Sigel was by far the most controversial figure among the participants of the Battle of Wilson's Creek, August 10, 1861. Sigel was a native of Germany, trained in German military schools, and a combat veteran in the German service before he emigrated to the United States. He was as well-educated, and more experienced, than the Union army commander, Brigadier General Nathaniel Lyon, under whom he served. This may have been the reason Lyon accepted Sigel's suggestion for a two-pronged attack on the Southern army's camp at Wilson's Creek. Sigel led one of the attacking columns. Although he maneuvered brilliantly, Sigel's inexplicable failure to picket the position he assumed at the Joseph Sharp farm was a major factor in the Union defeat. Sigel was loudly denounced by other Union officers after the battle, but retained his position and even received promotion because he was an important leader within the German American community in Missouri.



Franz Sigel

Sigel's brief postwar writings provide a narrative of his actions at Wilson's Creek but no explanation for his failure. He apparently visited Wilson's Creek only once after the war, in June 1887. The account published in the Springfield Herald on June 15, 1887, testifies to the warm reception Sigel received. If during his stay Sigel gave any explanation for his actions in 1861 the paper's article, printed in entirety below, does not record it.


Gen. Sigel Visits Wilson Creek

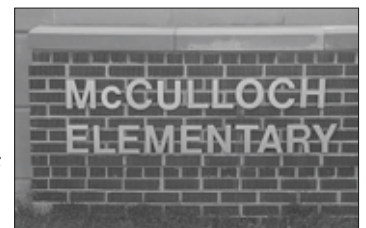
Last Thursday evening Gen. Franz Sigel of New York, on his return home from Pea Ridge and other places, stopped here over night, and on the following day he, Col. S. H. Boyd, and Jas. R. Milner, Esq., visited the Wilson Creek battlefield, where Gen. Sigel made his famous retreat to this city with "two guards" on the memorable 10th of August, 1861. Friday night General Sigel was tendered an enthusiastic reception by the local G.A.R. Posts and other citizens at the home of Col. Boyd. The welcoming speech was made

—See Sigel on page 3—

REPUBLIC EMBRACES HISTORY

The opportunity to rename four Republic elementary schools began with the building of the Republic High School completed last year. School administrators asked teachers and citizens to propose new names for the schools, and themes were suggested for the names. One of several themes was Wilson's Creek National Battlefield. Over the course of many months, various suggestions were made, and Superintendent Ted Hillmer was asked to make a presentation to the Republic School Board. With input from residents of the community, the names of several Civil War generals were suggested and presented to the School Board. In making its final decision, the School Board voted to select two prominent soldiers from the North and two from the South as new names for the four elementary schools, previously called E-1, E-2, E-3, and E-4.

The four names that were chosen are General Nathaniel Lyon, General John M. Schofield, General Benjamin McCulloch, and General Sterling Price. Wilson's Creek Battlefield provided plaques with information about the accomplishments of the generals to be displayed at each school. The naming of these elementary schools represents an important connection between the resources of the battlefield and the educational process. The administration and staff of the battlefield are very honored to have the community, and especially the Republic School District, select Civil War generals who participated in the Battle of Wilson's Creek to help bring history to life for local students. 



WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Steve Ross



Hello to all of our Foundation members and readers! The face that is usually in front of a computer doing the newsletter layout now appears just to the left of these words. I am honored to have been asked to serve as president of this outstanding friends' organization working for the benefit of Wilson's Creek National Battlefield. I was new to the Springfield area in 1995, when my neighbor, the late Superintendent Mac Berg, discovered that I was a big fan of the national parks and had experience as a graphic designer. Shortly thereafter, I was introduced to Foundation President Ron Elkins, and before I knew it, I was a lifetime member of the Board of Directors. I have enjoyed every minute of it!

It has been a pleasure working with the talented and enthusiastic people who have served as members and leaders of the Foundation over the years. My special thanks to out-going President Ken McClure for devoting two years out of a very busy schedule to head

our group. I also want to thank our new Vice-President Craig Dunn, Secretary Carol Grimes, and long time Treasurer Brian Hickman for all of their help. Kudos also go to our Executive Director April McDonough and Director of Finance Roseann Blunt, both of whom are working above and beyond the call of duty as we prepare for the sesquicentennial anniversary of the Battle of Wilson's Creek and the reenactment scheduled for August 12-14, 2011.

And about that reenactment... watch these newsletters for the latest news on the big event and other 150th anniversary events happening in 2011. We also hope you can make it out to Wilson's Creek this December 11 for the annual Memorial Illumination, featuring over 2,500 luminaries lining the tour road. For the very latest news, visit our web-site, www.wilsonscreek.com and follow *Wilson's Creek National Battlefield Foundation* on Facebook. We are always looking for new friends!

I'm looking forward to a very busy and very exciting two years. My thanks for your support, and best wishes for a very happy holiday season to you and your family.

Steve Ross
Steve Ross, President

WILSON'S CREEK 150TH ANNIVERSARY EVENTS

Planning for the Foundation's 150th Anniversary Commemoration and Reenactment of the Battle of Wilson's Creek is now well underway, with committees formed and working diligently on various aspects of the event. Sub-Committees in place so far include Fundraising, Concessions, Civilian Activities, Period Crafts, Preliminary Events, Old-Time Activities, Education, Marketing, Safety, Parking, Membership, Technology, Family Camping, Volunteer Coordination, Site Management, Concert, Legal, and Publications. We still need additional help with several of these activities, so please consider getting involved.

The Foundation has signed an agreement with the Blue-Gray Alliance, a national reenactor organization, to handle all military aspects of the reenactment, including helping with battle scenarios, organizing reenactors for battles, assigning camp sites, and assisting with registration and check-in. Individuals and groups wishing to participate can register at www.wilsonscreek150.com. The fee to register is \$20 per person; 14 and under are free.

In addition to the reenactment, many other community groups are planning Civil War themed events during 2011, including The Springfield-Greene County Library, the History Museum, the Missouri Literary Festival, the Civil War Round Table of the Ozarks, and local universi-

Have any stories of local or historical interest?
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

With your help we can keep *The Bugle Call* sounding loud and clear throughout the year.

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 fundraising, volunteerism, education, advocacy, and research.

ties and schools. Wilson's Creek Foundation will be partnering with several of these organizations to facilitate an emphasis on Civil War history for the sesquicentennial.

If you would like more information or you are interested in helping with the 150th Commemoration and Reenactment, please call the Foundation office at 864-3041 or email amcdonough@wilsonscreek.com.

—Sigel continued from page 1—

by the Hon. Amos Harrington of Ozark, who fought under the general part of the time during the war. Gen. Sigel briefly and feelingly responded, highly complimenting the G.A.R. boys and speaking of the wonderful improvements and changes in the Queen City and surrounding country since he participated in the terrible war scene on Wilson Creek's gory field nearly twenty-six years ago. General Sigel departed for the east Saturday morning.

The "G.A.R." mentioned in the article was the Grand Army of the Republic, the primary Union veterans organization, which had posts across the country. Although the article is decidedly complimentary, the reference to Sigel's "famous retreat to this city with two 'guards'" reminds the reader that after being driven from the battlefield Sigel reached Springfield well ahead of his men. It is interesting that the article refers to "Wilson Creek," the correct name of the stream, rather than "Wilson's Creek," the corruption that had passed into popular usage by 1887.

7th Annual Luminary Tour & Ray House Christmas



Don't miss the most unique holiday display in southwest Missouri. The entire five miles of tour road at Wilson's Creek will be lined with flickering candles in paper bags, over 2,500 in all, on December 11. The luminaries will be assembled and placed by Scouts, battlefield volunteers, and staff members to honor the 2,539 soldiers killed or wounded at the Battle of Wilson's Creek. The historic Ray House will be open and decked out with period furnishings, decorations, toys, refreshments, and living historians will describe the lives of the Ray family in the 1860s.

The Luminary Tour and Ray House Christmas is a free event on Saturday, December 11, from 4:30 to 9:30 p.m. Bring the family for a beautiful ride and you might even glimpse a ghost of Christmas past.

THE FAIR PLAY INCIDENT

by Len Eagleburger

An analogical description of the Civil War historically has been written as "brother against brother", but in a lot of cases it was "father against son". The advent of the Civil War split the St. Louis Benteen family, as Fred announced his decision to serve in the Union Army. His father, who remained loyal to the Confederacy, denounced Fred, and expressed the wish that Fred be killed by the first bullet, preferably fired by a Benteen who remained loyal to the South. Undeterred by his father's sentiments, 27 year old Fred accepted a commission as First Lieutenant in Bowen's Battalion on September 1, 1861.

William Fredrick "Fred" Benteen was at the battle of Wilson's Creek, but as noted by Charles K. Mills in *"Harvest of Barren Regrets, the Army Career of Frederick William Benteen"*, his reason for being there is obscured by history. As early as July 1861, Frederick was observing and supervising the drill of volunteer infantry companies in and around the St. Louis Arsenal. He was formally elected/commissioned as an officer on September 1, 1861, which was back dated to take affect in mid-July, providing evidence that he was there as an enlisted man, although the bare military records do not say so, as he was not officially on any of the rosters of the participating units.

It is debatable that he even fired a gun that day, but William Benteen was there, in what capacity, we do not know. By his own admission, he had been "setting up" or training Union recruits, suggesting that he may have been an un-enrolled drillmaster. It is possible, because of his later connections with William D. Bowen, or the fact that the beginnings of Bowen's Battalion was as a detachment with the 13th Illinois Infantry, sent with Lyon's army as escorts to his wagon train, that he might have been with the 1st Missouri Infantry.

Benteen was born August 1834 in Petersburg, Virginia. His ancestors had been from Baltimore, Maryland since before the Revolution, his father and mother moving to Virginia around 1831. His father, Charley Benteen, prospered in the Petersburg area as a painting contractor, and owned slaves. In early 1849, the Benteen family moved to St. Louis, Missouri, where Charley resumed the painting contracting business. From the age of 16, William worked in his father's business and eventually established his own and was working in this trade when



William Fredrick Benteen in 1865

—See *Fair Play* on page 4—

the Civil War broke out.

As the beaten Union army marched back to St. Louis, some of the men whose enlistments had expired stayed at Rolla, Missouri and formed new units as with the case of Benteen and another veteran of Wilson's Creek, Lt. William D. Bowen. They formed what would be known as "Bowen's Battalion" of cavalry. Bowen's Battalion was attached to Col. Wyman's 13th Illinois Infantry and did a lot of skirmishing around the Rolla area until attached to Gen. Curtis's army where they served as escorts to Curtis through the battle of Pea Ridge, Arkansas. They rode with Curtis down the Mississippi River as far as Helena, Arkansas after the Confederacy abandoned Arkansas.

In August of 1862, Bowen's Battalion was assigned to make an excursion (Wood's River Expedition) from Helena down to Vicksburg assisted by the Navy where they captured (with the help of the gunboat "Benton") the steamboat *Fair Play*. The *Fair Play* was a Confederate luxury steamboat converted to a quartermaster ship and was loaded with armaments. The inventory included "about 1200 new Enfield rifles and 4000 new muskets, with accouterments complete, a large quantity of fixed ammunition for field guns, mountain howitzers and small arms", which the Confederacy had ordered sent to the fragmentary forces in Louisiana and Arkansas under Confederate Maj. Gen. Thomas Hindman.



The steamboat *Fair Play*

Among the prisoners captured was civilian engineer Charley Benteen, the father of Maj. William Benteen. While most of the *Fair Play*'s crew were released shortly after the ship's capture, Major Benteen arranged with friends for the continued imprisonment of the ship's chief engineer, one Theodore C. Benteen. It is generally believed that Fred arranged his father's prolonged imprisonment in order to insure his father's safety for the remainder of the war.

As an epilogue, Benteen and Bowen's battalion were ordered back to St. Louis to be organized into the 9th Missouri Cavalry (which lasted two months) and finally with the 28th Missouri Infantry to become the 10th Missouri Cavalry commanded by *Col. Florence M. Cornyn. After Cornyn's death at the hand of Lt. Col. William D.

Bowen in 1863, Benteen was promoted to Lt. Colonel and led the 10th in battle as acting commander for Col. Alexander through the rest of the war and was an acting battalion commander during Confederate General Sterling Price's 1864 raid in Missouri. After the war, he was with a Captain of Company H of the US 7th Cavalry at Little Big Horn. Frederick Benteen died on June 22, 1898, leaving his widow Kate and a son Frederick. He was buried in Westwood Cemetery in Atlanta, with his remains being later reinterred at Arlington National Cemetery. ☞

* Col. Cornyn was the Surgeon of the 1st Missouri Infantry and pronounced Gen. Lyon dead on the battlefield. He was killed by Lt. Col Bowen at a court martial hearing at Corinth, Mississippi in August of 1863. Bowen was dismissed from service and Col. A.J. Alexander was appointed to lead the 10 Missouri Cavalry. Alexander chose to remain on Maj. Gen. Blair's staff so Benteen became acting commander.

HISTORY BOOK AWARD GOES TO FOUNDATION MEMBERS

On September 21, 2010, William Garrett Piston, Ph.D. and Thomas P. Sweeney, M.D. were notified by Gary E. Kremer, Executive Director of The State Historical Society of Missouri, that their book *Portraits of Conflict: A Photographic History of Missouri in the Civil War* was the winner of this year's State Historical Society of Missouri History Book Award. The award was presented at the Society's annual meeting in Columbia on October 10, 2010. The book is one in "Portraits of Conflict" series published by the University of Arkansas Press. It is available online directly from the press or from other online booksellers. Copies are also available at the Wilson's



William Garrett Piston, Ph.D. and Thomas P. Sweeney, M.D.

Creek National Battlefield bookstore. The authors are very grateful to the Historical Society for the recognition, and thank Connie Langum and Steve Ross for assistance in locating and digitizing some of the images. ☞



With all the familiar stories of the Pilgrims landing near Plymouth, Massachusetts, it is often forgotten that Thanksgiving was proclaimed as a national holiday in 1863 by President Abraham Lincoln as the Civil War was raging in the United States.



Superintendent's Corner

By Ted Hillmer

Dear Foundation Members,

Over the past few years, I can't remember a fall with better weather. The weather in October and early November has been almost perfect, and the autumn foliage has been delightful. If you have not visited Wilson's Creek in a while, you need come out and enjoy your battlefield. Several recent visitors have mentioned how much the battlefield has improved. Our prescribed burn in the early summer allowed us to thin out some of the vegetation, and the Facility Management staff has been clearing the Tour Road shoulders by trimming and removing damaged and non-native trees.

Another cultural landscape improvement this summer is the apple orchard on the front side of the Ray House. One of our volunteers, who is a master gardener, has assisted a group of young men in planting and watering the trees during the summer months. We harvested our first small apple, which is very unusual for the first year. This is another great project that over the years will add to our interpretation opportunities and historic landscape.

The battlefield is also working with the Foundation on a major project for next year – a commemoration of the Sesquicentennial of the Civil War. Please put these dates on your calendar and plan to attend the Battle of Wilson's Creek Reenactment, August 12, 13, and 14, 2011. This special event will provide support for a future museum addition to the Visitor Center, land preservation within the battlefield's extended boundary, and additional educational programs for our visitors. Whether you have attended reenactments before or not, you will not want to miss the 150th Anniversary Commemoration. The Foundation is working with other partners to plan this important event for the State of Missouri and surrounding states.

Thank you for caring about the protection of the battlefield for future generations. This special area is worth protecting for all our visitors.

Ted Hillmer
Superintendent

NEW MEMBERS & CONTRIBUTORS

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

Mike Ball
Susan Beine
Stacy and Jeremy Beller
Shawn Billings
Matt and Melanie Blunt
Annie Busch
RobertCapps
Owen Case
John Cassullo
Thomas Coay
Chris and Isabel Coulter
Jim Cox
Stormy and Mary Beth Cox
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Dick Simpson
Richard Splitter
Tom Strong
Tom Sweeney
Thomas Telle
Roy and Charlene Thompson
Robert Weber
Eric and Christine Wheat
Mark Whisler
Jackie Williams

Upcoming Events: at Wilson's Creek National Battlefield

November

25 Thanksgiving Day (Visitor Center, Tour Road and all other battlefield property closed).

December

11 7th Annual Luminary Tour & Ray House Christmas, 5:00 p.m.-9:30 p.m. – Free Admission

24 Christmas Eve (Visitor Center, Tour Road and all other battlefield property closes at 12:00 p.m.).

25 Christmas Day (Visitor Center, Tour Road and all other battlefield property closed).

January

1 New Year's Day (Visitor Center, Tour Road and all other battlefield property closed).

December 1 - February 28 Civil War Museum closed for exhibit cleaning and maintenance.

Note: 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

We hope you can visit to the battlefield during the quiet winter season to explore the trails, travel the tour road, do a little family research in the Library or just enjoy the quiet of the park and it's wildlife in the winter.

Wishing You and Your Families...



a Bountiful Holiday Season!



Wilson's Creek
National Battlefield
Foundation

**P.O. Box 8163
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**Visit our website!
www.wilsonscreek.com**

Address Correction Requested