

53rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry Company C

"The Sentinel" July 2025

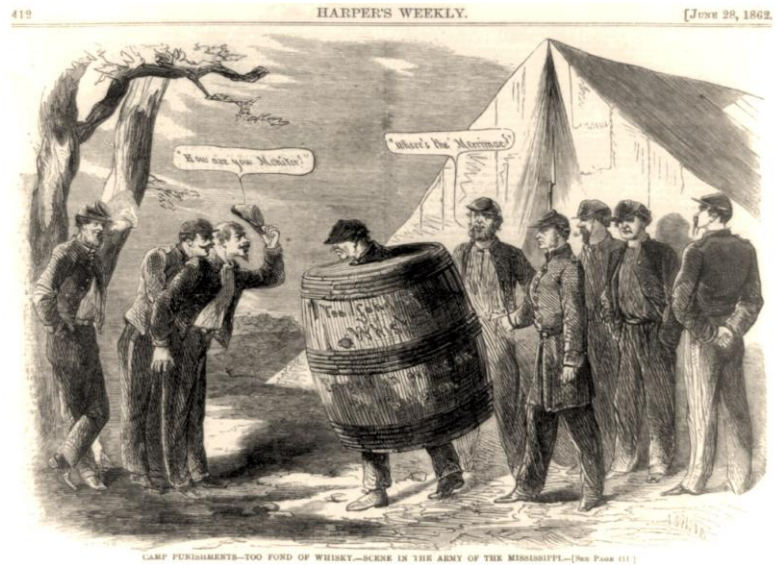
Newsletter of The James Creek Guards



"Clubs Are Trumps!"

This Month:

1. ACHS Presentation
2. Book Review – Year Of Meteors
3. How the Union Cavalry Supported Grant's Overland Campaign in Virginia
4. Landis Valley "Civil War Days" is Again Upon Us
5. Stacking Arms Drill
6. The Battles of Wilson's Creek and Carthage
7. Upcoming Events
8. The Civil War Merchant
9. 2025 Calendar of Events
10. 53rd PVI Contact Info



I am always looking for newsletter content, so please forward your articles, book reviews, event summaries & photos, stories, etc.) to me for inclusion in a future edition of "The Sentinel". – Matthew Steger, editor

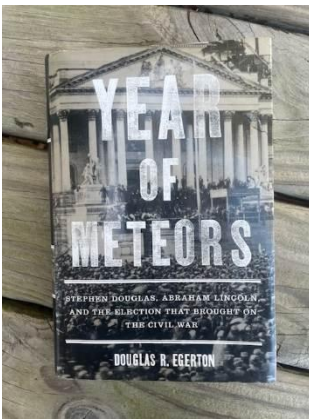
ACHS PRESENTATION

On Saturday May 31st, I gave a presentation at the Adams County Historical Society (ACHS) about the life of the average Federal eastern theatre infantry soldier including what they carried with them and had in camp. I discussed uniforms, accouterments, tentage, weaponry, personal items, etc. I discussed the basic designs of our clothing, the differences in types of headware (caps vs. hats), bootees, etc. It was similar to what we do for living history programs when we have visitors check out items in our tents but I went a bit more in depth than that. I also covered the drafts and incentives and some other related topics. Feedback from the visitors and from ACHS was very positive and I was invited to give the presentation again to another group.





BOOK REVIEW – YEAR OF METEORS



Author – Douglas R. Egerton
Reviewed by – Mike Espenshade

Hardback; 2010, Bloomsberry Press; 341 pp text, including “What if” outcomes” Appendix and Acknowledgements; 21 pictures; 44 pp notes, 15 pp bibliography and index. Free from a friend of Pete Zinkus.

In early 1860, pundits and political observers across America confidently predicted the victory of Stephen A. Douglas in the coming presidential election. Douglas, after all, led the Democrats, the only party that bridged North and South, and was the declared winner over upstart Lincoln in the Illinois 1858 debates. Egerton chronicles the contest with a historian’s deep insight and a veteran reporter’s eye for detail. We witness how the Democrats would splinter over the issue of slavery, opening the way for the new (1854) Republican Party, exclusively Northern, to steal the Oval Office. We see Democratic Conventions collapse in confusion (twice). We see some Democratic-like and other sub-parties spin-off into sub-conventions (twice). You experience the bitter speeches and convention-quitting by groups of Deep-South fire-eating delegates led by William Yancy (Georgia) whose goal was to splinter the Democratic Party, purposely ensuring a Republican presidential victory so the deep-South slave-owning states could justify secession (and war).

Meanwhile, we see Lincoln, inexperienced yet canny – and his team outmaneuvering far more famous Republicans, like New York’s Willam Seward. Dark horse Abraham Lincoln, not the first choice of even his own party, won the presidency with a record-low percentage (38.7%) of the popular vote amongst a field of, depending on state, often five presidential candidates. Year of Meteors recreates the cascade of events that confounded the political bosses and sped North and South down the road to disunion.

We see the gifted, flawed Douglas marking his finest hour in defeat, working to exhaustion to save the Union even as the presidency slips from his grasp. He works doggedly to support Lincoln after his election and dies, exhausted at age 48, on June 3, 1861.

The often 50-70 word-long sentence structure of Edgerton’s story was eyelid closing. My wife, Carol, will attest to my struggle to get thru the first 160 pages or so of this story, “Hey, Mike, do not EVEN tell me you need ANOTHER nap!”. The political intrigue he describes is mind-numbing and tedious – to this reader’s thoughts. Thankfully, the story picks up momentum in the last half of the book to allow me to truthfully tell you I learned much goodness of how the politics of 1860 shaped the things to come.

HOW THE UNION CAVALRY SUPPORTED GRANT'S OVERLAND CAMPAIGN IN VIRGINIA

Scott Patchan, July 19, 2024, blueandgrayeducation.org



Cavalry fight at Yellow Tavern between the forces of Philip Sheridan and JEB Stuart on May 11, 1864 | public domain

The spring of 1864 saw a noticeable transformation of the usage of the Union Cavalry during Grant's Overland Campaign in Virginia.

Against Army of the Potomac commander Gen. George G. Meade's judgement, new commanding general Ulysses S. Grant allowed the Cavalry Corps commander to take his

entire corps on a raid. Subsequently, Union general Philip Sheridan achieved victory at the battle of Yellow Tavern, on May 11, 1864, where his Confederate counterpart, Gen. Jeb Stuart, lost his life in battle. Grant's decision, however, had robbed his army of its ability to quickly scout, as the Army of the Potomac went into battle with Gen. Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia around Spotsylvania Courthouse. Unlike Lee, who had retained a mounted division when he unleashed Stuart to pursue Sheridan, Grant was left with only a handful of mounted units, and it clearly had a negative impact on his operations.

Grant next dispatched Sheridan's Cavalry from Cold Harbor to head west to Gordonsville, a vital rail junction where the Virginia Central and Orange Alexandria railroads met. Also, Grant had given Gen. David Hunter, commanding all Union forces in the Shenandoah Valley, general orders to capture Staunton in the valley and then move across the Blue Ridge to Charlottesville and Gordonsville and perhaps even Lynchburg to disrupt the Confederate communications and supply chain. Based on the hazy instructions given to Hunter, Grant planned for Sheridan to join forces with Hunter at Gordonsville and pose a significant threat to Lee from the west, but the plan blundered.

Hunter determined to move farther south in the valley and cross the Blue Ridge at Peaks of Otter, en route to Lynchburg. Hence, the planned rendezvous was not to be. Sheridan moved out toward Gordonsville, but South Carolinian general Wade Hampton, the acting Confederate Cavalry chief, stopped him cold at Trevillian Station.

After two days of seesaw fighting on June 11 and 12, 1864, Sheridan was forced to return to Grant, having failed to achieve his objective. Hunter, too, failed in his effort to capture Lynchburg and retreated through the mountains of West Virginia, leaving the valley open for Confederate general Jubal Early to launch a summer raid all the way to the gates of Washington, D.C., before turning back.

the middle band, bring the butt to the front, holding up his own piece and the stack with the left hand, and place the butt of this third piece between the feet of the man next on the right, the S plate to the rear.

The stack thus formed, the rear-rank man of every odd file will pass his piece into his left hand, the barrel turned to the front and sloping the bayonet forward, rest it on the stack.”

My Summary – notice a few things that sometimes gets done wrong, mostly due to us not being able to practice often with our parads:

1. The 1st rifle’s butt end (which belongs to the front number 2) should be placed alongside the right foot of the man to the left of the front number 2. Sometimes it doesn’t get put that far back or sufficiently far away enough from the front number 2’s left foot.
2. The 2nd rifle’s butt end (belonging to the front number 1) should be placed on the ground lined up with the right foot of the front number 2. If it goes too far to the left (such as lining up with the center of the number 2’s body, then the center of the stack is too far left and there also isn’t sufficient room for the bayonet of the 3rd rifle (belonging to the rear number 2) to easily fit within the shanks of the prior 2 rifles and we end up having to fumble around helping that 3rd rifle get inserted.
3. Once the bayonet of the 3rd rifle (belonging to the rear number 2) joins the stack by way of its shank contacting the first 2 bayonets (**listen for the click of the bayonets**), the front number 2 grabs the 3rd rifle and, immediately followed by, the rear number 2 lets go of it. The front number 2 then swings this 3rd rifle to his right and places its butt between the feet of the front number 1. Following the above steps helps ensure that the tripod of the 3 stacked rifles is a stable structure AND allows its center of gravity to be sufficiently low enough to prevent the stack from falling.
4. Only the rear number 1 man touches his rifle as he places it on the stack. None of the other 3 men touch it.
5. DO not walk between the stacks of arms.

Again, from Casey’s: **197~199** At the command “**Take Arms**”, the rear-rank man of every odd-numbered file will withdraw his piece from the stack; the front-rank man of every even file will seize his own piece with the left hand and that of the man on his right with his right hand, both above the lower band; the rear-rank man of the even file will seize his piece with the right hand below the lower band (if the rifle musket be used the piece will be seized at the middle band); these two men will raise up the stack to loosen the rammers, or shanks of the bayonets. The front-rank man of every odd file will facilitate the disengagement of the rammers, if necessary, by drawing them out slightly with the left hand, and will receive his piece from the hand of the man next on his left; the four men will retake the position of the soldier at order arms.”

My Summary - As you know, the stack gets disassembled in a similar fashion to how it was assembled, but with some minor different moves:

1. The rear number 1 removes his rifle, again with no other assistance from his parads. Only he touches his rifle.
2. The front number 2 grabs his rifle with his left hand and he grabs the front number 1’s rifle **from underneath** with his right hand. Then, the rear number 2 grabs his rifle with his right hand and, in unison with the front number 2, they each raise the still-assembled stack upwards which will help loose the bayonet shanks’ connections between the 3 rifles. The rear number 2 then withdraws his rifle out of the stack.
3. Since we generally don’t stack with rammers only (with no bayonets), the next step in Casey’s is generally omitted.
4. The front number 1 only participates in the unstacking process as the front number 2 hands the front number 1’s rifle back to him with his left hand.

Additional note - There has also been some discussion regarding where file closers place their rifles. Some have indicated that the file closers should form their own stacks 5 paces in front of the regular stacks (due to a photo from Petersburg showing 2 separate stacks in front of the line of regular stacks) and others say to simply lay their pieces on the existing ‘regular’ stacks. Since we generally don’t have 3 or more file closers at most events, simply placing their arms on the closest regular stack makes the most sense.

THE BATTLES OF FT. BAXTER, WILSON’S CREEK, AND CATHAGE

My wife and I recently headed out west to continue our travel of Route 66 (“The Mother Road”) in late June (we did the initial portion from Chicago to Springfield, IL last Sept.) and we stopped at a few Civil War sites along the way. Ft. Baxter is located in the southeast corner of Kansas. Carthage is located along the western Missouri border with Oklahoma and Kansas whereas Wilson’s Creek is near Missouri’s center. The battle of Carthage was fought on 5 July 1861 and entailed Missouri State Guard forces under Missouri Governor Claiborne F. Jackson fighting Union Captain Nathaniel Lyon and Colonel Franz Sigel. Missouri was very divided politically and the Governor was initially trying to stay neutral but ended up moving the state towards joining the Confederacy, which, of course, never actually happened. Under Lincoln’s initial call for volunteers in April 1861, Missouri was asked to supply 4 regiments to the Union cause, which the governor refused. The Federals were trying to protect the arsenal in St. Louis and put down the efforts of the State Guard from taking over the arsenal and the rest of the state. This fight was one of the earliest in the Civil War as it predated Bull Run.

Lyon organized 4 regiments of men, most of which were members of the Republican Wide Awake marching clubs. Fearing that Confederates would seize Federal weapons, Lincoln ordered that stockpiles of these weapons be moved from Missouri to Illinois. A large number of the Confederate men were actually unarmed, yet the Federals didn't know this. After fighting in town and skirmishing south of town, the Federals fell back towards Carthage. Following the battle, recruitment for the Confederate cause increased. This battle was the one and only time that a sitting US governor led troops in battle against the US. Total engaged was approx. 1,100 (US) and about 6,000 (CS), of which about a 3rd were unarmed. Casualties were 44 (US) and 200 (CS). The 3 panel photos below give a good summary of the battle.

Battle of Carthage State Historic Site

American Civil War (1861 - 1865), THE BATTLE OF CARTHAGE

The Governor and the Colonel: The Politics of War in Missouri

July 5, 1861

Missouri had ties to both the industrial North and the agricultural South, which made for fiery politics in the border state. The commanders at Carthage, Gov. Claiborne Jackson and Col. Franz Sigel, represented Missouri's two political extremes. For them, Civil War was the ultimate outcome of an ideological fight they had been waging for years.

Chaos in St. Louis

In St. Louis, Franz Sigel also took up arms. Even while he worked as superintendent of schools, he had been secretly training German-American soldiers to fight for the Union. When the Army asked for volunteers, Sigel answered the call. He was made a colonel under the command of Gen. Nathaniel Lyon. The Union ranks quickly swelled with German immigrants eager to join the cause.

The Coming War

After the fight at the arsenal, leaders from both sides met in a last-ditch effort to reach a compromise. It quickly became clear that neither side would give up ground. An enraged Gen. Lyon ended the meeting with a solemn declaration: "This means war."

Gov. Claiborne Jackson

Claiborne Jackson, Missouri's governor in 1861, believed that the best hope for Missourians—especially slaveholding Missourians like himself—was to stand with the Southern states. He defied the Federal government and his own legislature to try and bring Missouri into the Confederacy.

Col. Franz Sigel

Franz Sigel unsuccessfully fought to bring democracy to his native Germany. In Sigel's eyes, Missouri's powerful Southern slaveholders were no different than the rich aristocrats that opposed the German people.

Courtesy of the Missouri State Museum, this painting depicts a scene that would have been familiar to Claiborne Jackson—voting day in Missouri's Little Dixie region. Little Dixie was home to the state's wealthiest Southern planters, who wielded political power. Courtesy of St. Louis Art Museum

Lyon's first mission for Sigel was to protect the Federal arsenal at St. Louis. If Jackson's militia obtained the weapons inside, they would become a much deadlier force. Jackson had ordered his militia to camp near the arsenal, promising they were only there as peacekeepers. Lyon suspected otherwise. When he heard reports about the militia receiving guns from the South, Lyon took action. He ordered Sigel's Union soldiers to surround the militia camp and demand surrender.

By the time Gov. Jackson and Gen. Lyon sat down (left-to-face) in June of 1861, it was too late. Neither man was interested in listening to the other's side of the story. The meeting at the Planter's Hotel in St. Louis, Mo., set the stage for the Battle of Carthage.

In 1836, Claiborne Jackson came to Missouri with his brothers and settled in Franklin, Mo., on the banks of the Missouri River. The Jacksons' father had a successful tobacco plantation in Kentucky, but the brothers sought their own fortune. They opened a store supplying travelers headed down the Santa Fe Trail. Most, more Southern transplants settled along the Missouri. The region came to be known as "Little Dixie."

Sigel was one of many German liberals who immigrated to America after the revolution of 1848. These "Forty Eighters" embraced familiar political causes in their new home. They fought against the wealthy corrupting the democratic process, and especially against slavery. In the 1850s, the Forty Eighters helped build the radical liberal Republican party.

Tensions Rise

By the 1860 elections, war between North and South seemed a real possibility. Liberal Republican Abraham Lincoln won the presidential race and ignited anger across the South. Missouri elected mostly moderates who believed in avoiding war and keeping Missouri neutral. Claiborne Jackson, after an absence from politics, returned as a moderate candidate for governor and won. When Southern states began seceding, though, Jackson decided that neutrality was no longer an option.

The surrender went smoothly, but Lyon wanted to send a message to the Southern sympathizers. He directed Sigel to parade the new prisoners past the arsenal. An angry crowd formed along the road, hurling ethnic slurs and rocks at the Union soldiers. Sigel told his men to remain calm, but tensions ran high. A shot rang out, and the street erupted into chaos. The soldiers and armed members of the crowd began firing wildly at each other. It had all been an accident, but lives were lost, and many Missourians blamed the German Americans for causing the trouble.

Jackson returned to Jefferson City to rally his supporters and ready for the Union attack. Lyon marched on the capital and seized it, but Jackson was already gone. He was marching his militiamen to southern Missouri, where he hoped to receive help from Arkansas Confederates, and win Missouri back from the Union.

Chief among those interests was expanding African-American slavery. Compromises had been made in the past to slow the growth of slavery west of Missouri, but politicians like Claiborne Jackson saw creating new slave states as the only way to preserve Southern political power. In the North, there was a growing government to end slavery altogether. Jackson and other conservative Democrats saw no room to budge on the issue.

Franz Sigel moved to St. Louis in 1854 because the city had a thriving German-American community. Sigel taught at a German college, but also became a political activist for the Republican party in St. Louis. His views brought him into conflict with Southern-born farmers that dominated politics in Missouri.

He tried to convince the Missouri legislature to join the South, but they insisted the state remain neutral. When the Federal government requested that Missouri send troops to put down the rebellion in the South, Gov. Jackson reached his breaking point. He fired back a defiant response, and began writing the Confederate government for support. He also raised a militia of pro-Southern volunteers, which became the Missouri State Guard.

No one knows for sure how the fight between Federal troops and angry Missourians started outside the St. Louis Arsenal. Anti-immigrant groups and newspapers, though, were quick to blame the German-American soldiers.

Lyon sent Sigel's men to chase after Gov. Jackson. Gathering the best intelligence he could along the way, Sigel was able to track Jackson and his soldiers to Carthage. On the evening of July 4, 1861, Sigel's men camped here and made preparations for battle. Jackson and Sigel, two men of starkly different backgrounds and beliefs, would now settle their differences in the most violent way possible. The whole country would soon follow suit.

"Your requisition is illegal, unconstitutional and revolutionary in its object, inhuman and diabolical. Not one man will Missouri furnish to carry on any such unholy crusade against her Southern sisters."

"The problem of slavery is not the problem of the Negro. It is the eternal conflict between a small privileged class and the great mass of the non-privileged class, the eternal struggle between aristocracy and democracy."

Gov. Claiborne Jackson, responding to the Federal request for soldiers

Friedrich Kapp, German American activist and friend of Franz Sigel

Battle of Carthage State Historic Site

American Civil War (1861 - 1865), THE BATTLE OF CARTHAGE, July 5, 1861

A Long Day of Battle

CIVIL WAR TRUST
CARTHAGE, MO
JULY 5, 1861

The Battle of Carthage was a mobile engagement spread out over a distance of about 10 miles. As one of the earliest battles in the Civil War, it was among the many contests fought in Missouri in 1861 to decide if the state would remain in the Union or join the Confederacy.

3 a.m. — Two hours before sunrise, Union soldiers under Col. Franz Sigel broke camp here and headed north through the still-quiet town of Carthage, Mo. Tired from their march the day before, the 1,100 men, eight cannons, and 32 supply wagons made a slow crawl toward their destination. North of town, as the sun finally rose, they crossed Dry Fork Creek, which unfortunately was anything but dry.

their own, ordered a retreat back across Dry Fork Creek. He told his men to fix their bayonets to their rifles and form a square around the arsenal for defense. This classic European strategy proved effective in keeping the horsetank back. The State Guard, seeing weakness, pushed forward, but the Union cannons kept them from getting too close. The Union men went back across the creek.

4 a.m. — The Missouri State Guard under Gov. Claiborne Jackson began its trek southward on the Lamar Carthage Road, the same road Col. Sigel's Union men were using to march north. The Southern forces had nearly six times more men than Sigel, but many of them were new recruits, untrained and slow to follow orders. It took nearly two hours to get everyone on the march.

7 a.m. — Word reached Gov. Jackson that Sigel's troops were advancing toward them. Thanks to scouts, both armies knew the general vicinity of their foes, but little else. Until this point, Jackson did not know where they would meet the Union soldiers, or even how many of them they would be facing.

3 p.m. — Firing back at the pursuing Southerners all the way, Sigel's troops finally arrived back in Carthage. They have shaken the pursuit of the State Guard for the time being. Sigel had the courthouse turned into a hospital. He established his headquarters in the home of a local family, the Hoods. He assured the frightened townspeople that the worst was over. "There is no danger," Sigel kept repeating.

BATTLE OF CARTHAGE: Facts and Figures

The Starting Lineup

FEDERAL	STATE GUARD
1,100 men	6,000 men
8 cannons	32 cannons
32 supply wagons	32 supply wagons

The Final Tally

44 Union soldiers killed	200 Confederate soldiers killed
100 Union soldiers wounded	1,000 Confederate soldiers wounded

9 a.m. — Both sides were visible to each other on the open prairie, readied themselves for battle. Just before 10 a.m., the cannons began bellowing. No one can remember who fired first. Union and Southern soldiers alike instinctively dropped to the ground as the earth began trembling. The officers yelled at them to get back up as cannonballs bounced through the grass, obliterating anything—and anyone—in their path. The soldiers were still too far away from each other for their rifles to be of any use.

"At Carthage a sharp conflict occurred, of some 10 or 20 minutes, between the enemy [Union] and a portion of the cavalry, infantry, and artillery of the Federal troops again retreated, and were pursued for several miles beyond Carthage, and until the darkness of the night caused a cessation of the pursuit."

6 p.m. — The first of the Missouri State Guard arrived in Carthage. The Union cannons, strategically placed to drive them back, opened fire. Surprisingly, the Southern artillery returned fire, bombarding the town. Chunks of buildings began flying. The shockwave shattered every window in the courthouses. Under the cover of the cannons, the Guardsmen began filtering into the town, and fighting broke out in the streets. The Union men held their ground in Carthage until nightfall. Under cover of darkness, they slipped away to the safety of Sarsenic, Mo.

10 a.m. — Gov. Jackson tried to turn the battle in his favor by employing one of the Southerners' strategic advantages—cavalry. The Southern attacked Sigel's soldiers from either side, while the cannons blasted at them from the front. Sigel, realizing that his men were not prepared to push an attack of

Missouri's famous cavalry commander, Joseph B. Snodgrass, made his last appearance at the Battle of Carthage.



Battle of Carthage State Historic Site
 moststatepark.com

American Civil War (1861 – 1865), THE BATTLE OF CARTHAGE

July 5, 1861

You are standing

at the site once known as James Spring. The street behind you was once part of the long wagon road from Sarcosie, Mo. to Springfield, Mo. Travelers often used the spring as a much-needed resting place. On the Fourth of July in 1861, the cool waters answered the prayers of U.S. Army soldiers under the command of Col. Franz Sigel. They made their campsite here that night, after a 22 mile march from Neosho, Mo.

The weather that Independence Day was blisteringly hot, but the roadbed was still wet from recent rains. The marching soldiers had to contend with thick mud caking onto their boots and slowing them down. Sigel pushed them forward determined to discover the position of Missouri Gov. Claiborne Jackson and his Southern-allied Missouri State Guard. Jackson, bent on delivering Missouri to the Confederacy, was marching his volunteers southward to rendezvous with forces in Arkansas. Sigel intended to stop him.

Sigel's men were still lighting campfires and setting up tents here when word arrived, from both scouts and sympathetic locals, that the Missouri State Guard was close. The Guard's numbers and exact location varied widely depending on the informant. The Union soldiers could only speculate on what kind of battle they might face in the morning.

Most of Sigel's men were German immigrants from St. Louis. Many of them had come to America after fighting for a failed revolution back in their homeland. These German Americans were fiercely

Beginnings and Endings

patriotic and they embraced the liberal and antislavery politics of the new Republican Party. When rumors began flying that Missouri might secede, these men began secretly training to defend the Union. They had been anticipating this battle for more than a year. It's no wonder they were tense on the night before. Sigel roused them all at three in the morning and marched them toward the State Guard's camp.

The Last Stand

Not long after the Union soldiers broke camp on the morning of July 5, 1861, the Missouri State Guard approached Carthage from the north. Their ranks were sloppier than Sigel's. Few of the militiamen had military training. Most wore civilian clothes and many didn't even carry weapons. The Guard's strength lay in their numbers and their enthusiasm. They stood some 6,000 strong, all volunteers, and all eager to prove their mettle.


Sigel and his men met the Missouri State Guard in the fields north of Carthage. Finding his force of 1,100 men greatly outnumbered, Col. Sigel chose to retreat back into town. After pushing their way through the Southerners, the Union men held their ground in Carthage until nightfall. Under cover of darkness, they slipped away along the wagon road by James Spring.

As Sigel once again approached this spot, he sent his cannons up to the bluff above the spring. He ordered his artillerymen to protect the infantry while they made their retreat. As the cannons blasted away at the State Guardsmen, Sigel's infantry began the long march toward Sarcosie. They made it there at 1 a.m. the next morning, weary from fighting and marching.

An Exhausting Victory

Meanwhile, Gov. Jackson's men believed victory at Carthage belonged to them. They had sent the Union Army running, and done so at a severe disadvantage. What Sigel didn't know was that a third of the Guardsmen were unarmed. As the Union soldiers marched into the woods outside of town, Jackson called off his pursuit and let them escape. Hoots and hollers of victory quickly gave way to exhaustion. Battle had taken a physical and emotional toll on these inexperienced fighters. Many of the rebel soldiers camped by the spring, where their opponents had spent the night before. Others slept in and around town, dropping where they were when they heard the order to cease pursuit. Too tired to celebrate their victory, they nursed the wounded, calmed their shattered nerves and collapsed, exhausted, onto the ground.


The next day Jackson began a march toward Springfield. With the goal of arming the remainder of his army and reuniting with Gen. Sterling Price, the commander of the Missouri State Guard. Price brought with him recruits from the Missouri River region, strengthening their army. At Springfield, too, they would meet Confederate forces from Arkansas, who had come to help push the Union out of Missouri. In these early days of the Civil War, the Southerners felt victory was in their grasp.




Supposedly based on "a sketch made on the spot," this engraving from the popular magazine "Harper's Weekly" takes some liberties with the truth. The two armies were never this close to one another, nor did the Union troops have a bridge to aid their retreat across any of the creeks and rivers that stood between them and Carthage.

Aftermath of Carthage

Both sides were eager to hear accounts of how the Battle of Carthage had played out, using the battle to speculate on how the rest of the war might go. Northern newspapers emphasized the German soldiers' superior training and organization, pointing out how they had scattered the disorganized Guardsmen while making their strategic retreat. Southern reporters focused on the flood of volunteer support for the Missouri State Guard and promoted the underdog story of these green, but passionate, men. The news would bring reports of larger and deadlier battles in the months that followed Carthage, and both Union and Confederate supporters came to realize what many soldiers first learned here—that there would be no quick and decisive outcome to this war.



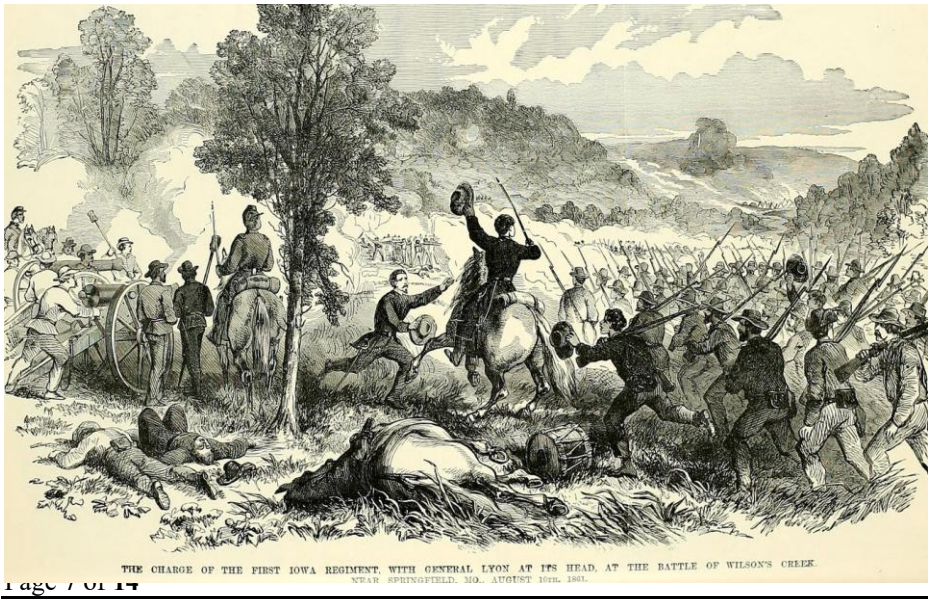
James Spring served as a campsite for Union soldiers before the battle of Carthage and for Southern militiamen afterward.



Most Missouri State Guardsmen wore no uniforms and were armed only with the weapons they brought from home—if they had any to bring. Nearly 2,000 of the Guardsmen arrived in Carthage completely unarmed. P.S. Alexander and S.W. Stone are unusually well equipped in this photo taken in the weeks before the battle. Courtesy: Dick Herr, Battlefield.

The Battle of Wilson's Creek occurred on Aug. 10th, 1861 and was the first large battle in the Trans-Mississippi near Springfield, MO. It pitted Brigadier General Benjamin McCulloch and Missouri State Guard troops under Maj. Gen. Sterling Price against Brig. General Nathaniel Lyon and Col. Franz Sigel, each noted above at Carthage.

Sigel attacked the Confederates from the north and Lyon from the south. Sigel's forces were pushed back to Springfield, MO about 10 miles NE of the battlefield which allowed them to organize somewhat and attack Lyon's forces. Gen. Lyon was killed making him the first general killed in the war. The Confederates had more than a 2-to-1 advantage in this battle. Casualties were 1,317 (US) and 1,222 (CS).



The Wilson's Creek NPS site visitors center is somewhat small but was rather impressive and includes an electric map for interpretation of the battle. The actual battlefield is well-wooded but does have some waysides along the way and, of course, Wilson's Creek winds its way through the site.

I've included just a small sampling of photos that I took. The Battle Of Carthage site is very small and only consists of a small (approx. 2+ acre) field with trees and a stream. There is a 3-



panel interpretive display on the site, though.







A few snapshots from the battlefield. As stated above, much of the field is within wooded areas. No regimental monuments exist on this battlefield, although there are numerous waysides along the auto-route.

The battle of Ft. Baxter (also known as the battle of Fort Blair) occurred in Oct. 1863. William Quantrill's Confederate guerrillas attacked both Fort Blair and a Union detachment escorting Maj. General James G. Blunt. The battle resulted in a Confederate victory. Black soldiers was a large contingent of the Union forces who fought in this battle. Little of the site is left now other than a short log wall that surrounds 3 sites of the fort, a small log building, and a flag pole. Over 100 Union men died in this battle which became known as the Ft. Baxter Massacre. After the battle, the Federal abandoned this fort.

John Baxter's Cabin and Trading Post

In the spring of 1849, John Baxter, his wife and 8 children moved to this site and built an inn and general store and offered food and lodging to travelers who passed along the Military Road. Baxter was a colorful character - a speculator, business man, and "gun toting preacher". A tragedy ended the life of this first citizen when he was killed in a shootout over a land dispute. Baxter Springs was incorporated in 1868, having been named for its first settler and the springs that flowed near his home.



THE CIVIL WAR MERCHANT

(if you have something for sale or are looking for something, email me to include it in a future edition of "The Sentinel")

For Sale –

1. *Hard Tack and Coffee or The Unwritten Story of Army Life*; by John D. Billings; originally published 1887, facsimile reprint of 1993; hard cover; excellent condition; 408 pgs.; 211 illustrations. A must-read for any new member. Will bring to Landis Valley event. Email to claim: oldsolger@juno.com -- \$5.00

2. Kerry Williard is handling the sale of Dave Swigert items for Dave's wife. Marc and I assembled an inventory list with approximate values. Some items remain. The list is current as of April 2025. Contact Kerry directly with all inquiries: shamokin71@aol.com (see the updated list below)

Quantity	Item Description	Detailed Description	Price
Uniform Clothing			
1	Trouser - Steel Blue each with suspendors	34 min waist/27" inseam-avg. condx and a little dirt w/ braces no watch pck	\$25.00
1	Dk Blue Vest Size 42	3 pockets - light wear	\$20.00
1	Colored Pattern Shirt	blue plaid with white china buttons - sun faded - good condx	\$10.00
1	White muslin Shirt	19" at shoulder 14" neck - very short in body length	\$5.00
1	White muslin Shirt	20" at shoulder 16" neck - very short in body length - cuffs are stained	\$5.00
1	Underpants - Night Pants - White	36" waist - knee stains - 25" inseam white muslin - rear repair	\$3.00
1	Lt Brown Scarf -Acrylic - Modern		\$1.00
1	Havelock - White - VG condx		\$2.00
1 pairs	Grey Wool Socks -Modern		\$2.00/pr
2	Hats - Union & Confederate for children		\$1.00
Accoutrements			
1	Scabbord -Late war 7 Rivet		\$15.00
1	Gum Blanket	some cracking with oversized grommets	\$20.00
1	Grey Smooth Face Canteen - Leather Sling Satinette Cover w/ Corded Stopper		\$20.00
1	Haversack - Tarred Black - Brittle Strap w/opwn seam		\$5.00
1	Haversack - Tarred Black w/Liner- Paint peeling Holes @ Strap Connection		\$10.00
1	Grey Smooth Face Canteen - Leather Sling Satinette Cover w/ Corded Stopper		\$20.00
Misc Items			
1 can	sno-seal (half full)		\$1.00
1	Wood Mirror - Haversack filler	sliding cover	\$3.00
1	Wood Comb - Haversack filler		\$1.00
1	Wooden button board		\$1.00
2	Coin Purses - Made from Tic Material		\$1.00/ea
1	Bag with Coffee	brown coffee	\$1.00/ea
2	Soap Bar		\$1.00/ea
1	box rifle cleaning kit	pads, steel wool, rags, etc	\$5.00
1 Pair	shoe tree		\$3.00
1	Green Army Duffle Bag		\$3.00
1	drawers for use as patches		\$1.00

2025 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- 18 Jan. - Holiday Party - Dobbin House, Gettysburg
- 1 Feb. - Winter Drill - Landis Valley **[53rd MAX EFFORT]**
- 15 Feb. - Cartridge Rolling Party **[53rd MAX EFFORT]**
- 22-23 Feb. - NR School of Instruction - Gettysburg
- 14-16 March - 160th Bentonville (NC)
- 4-6 April - 160th Sailor's Creek (VA) *
- 26-27 April - Ft. McHenry Drill
- 3 May - POSA Living History - Robesonia, PA
- 17 May - Lancaster Cemetery Flag in Event
- 26 May - Hummelstown Memorial Day Parade **[53rd MAX EFFORT]**
- 7-8 June - Manassas (ELF Event) **[NEW DATE!]**
- 19-20 July - Landis Valley **[53rd MAX EFFORT]**
- 9-10 August - Cedar Mountain *
- 13 Sept. - Antietam Living History **[53rd MAX EFFORT]**
- 18-19 Oct. - 161st Cedar Creek - Middletown, VA
- 15 Nov. - Remembrance Day - NR Annual Meeting and Parade *



*NR max effort events

For updated event info and other news, please check out the Facebook pages of the 53rd PVI and/or the National Regiment (links below) and check your email on a regular basis.

53rd PVI Contacts

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Corporals: Mike Espenshade & Michael Brumbaugh

53rd PVI Facebook Page: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/53rdPVI>

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National Regiment Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/842904089142263>

