



Newtonia Battlefields Special Resource Study

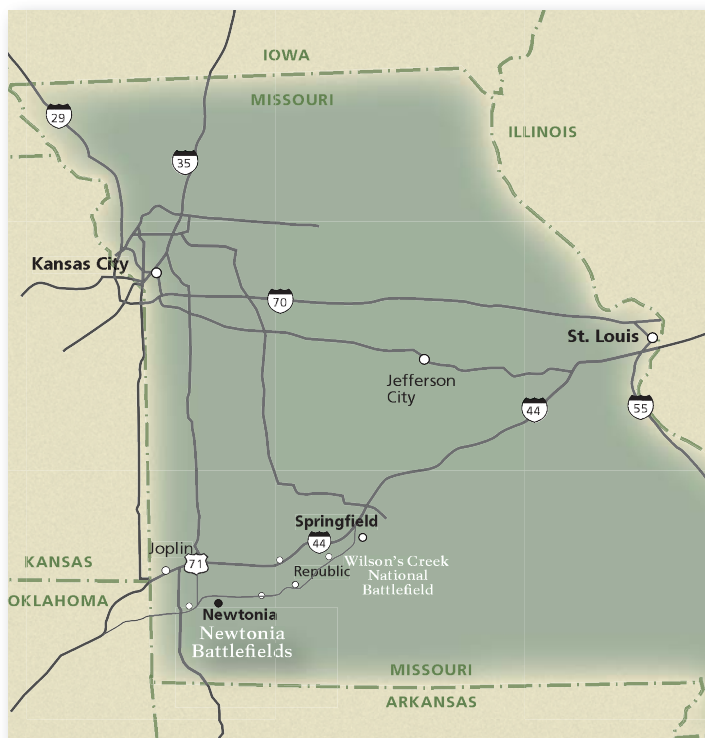
The National Park Service is beginning a Special Resource Study to evaluate the eligibility of the Newtonia Battlefields in Newtonia, Missouri, for possible inclusion in the national park system. As part of the study, the National Park Service will host a public meeting on Thursday, July 8th from 5-8 pm at the Newtonia Community Center. This newsletter describes the battlefields' history and provides more information about the study, as well as ways you can participate.

The Civil War in Missouri: The Trans-Mississippi Theater

Missouri was highly disputed territory during the Civil War, and saw the third most clashes of any state. The populace had divided sympathies and in addition to engagements and skirmishes, guerilla warfare plagued the countryside. Southwestern Missouri was of interest to both Union and Confederate armies due to its resources; it was rich in farmland and the lead mines at Granby were important for the making of bullets. In late summer of 1862, Confederate forces were returning to areas of southwestern Missouri that they had abandoned following the battle at Pea Ridge earlier that year.

Newtonia

Newtonia was platted by Matthew Ritchey, who later became a Union Colonel. He built a large brick farmhouse in 1852 called the Ritchey Mansion. Ten years later, Newtonia had roughly 100 residents. Ritchey owned a mill in the center of the village that was still in operation in 1862, which made it an attractive place to establish an outpost to replenish supplies. Confederate forces did so on September 27, 1862, setting the stage for the First Battle of Newtonia.



The First Battle of Newtonia: September 30, 1862

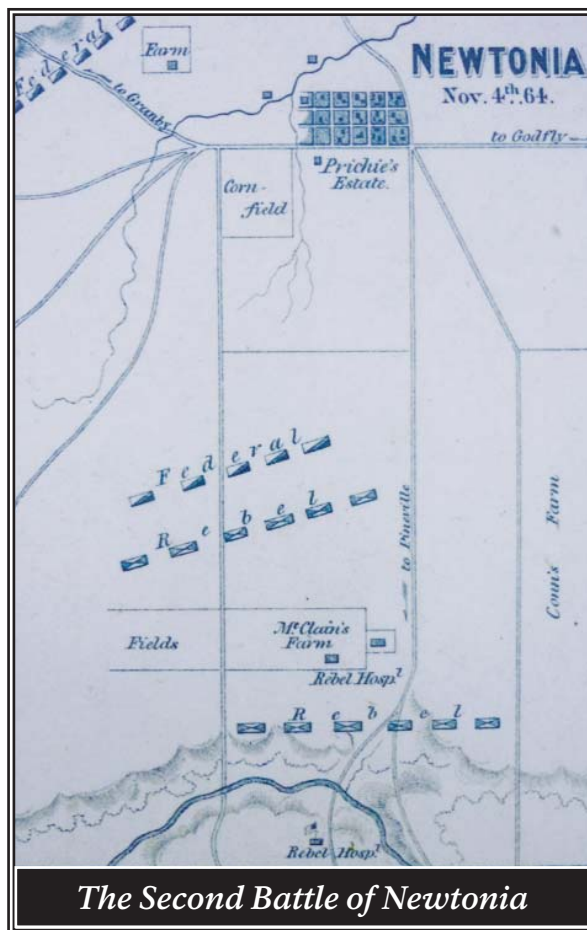
On the morning of September 30th, Union troops arrived at Newtonia and fighting began. The Confederate forces quickly took cover at the Ritchey Mansion, which made a good defensive position since the house and stone barn were surrounded by sturdy stone fences. The Ritchey Mansion also served as a Confederate field hospital in the aftermath of the day-long battle. Many of the soldiers who lost their lives were interred in the nearby Civil War Cemetery.

Union forces were better equipped and had an early upper hand, but Confederate reinforcements arrived and the outnumbered Union troops were driven to retreat. The Confederates won the battle, though their dominance in south-western Missouri was short-lived. Newtonia proved to be their final significant victory in the area, and as the pressure from large numbers of Union troops grew, the Confederates pulled back to northwestern Arkansas.

One of the unique features of the First Battle of Newtonia was the meeting in battle of full regiments of Native American soldiers. On the Confederate side fought Major Bryan's 1st Cherokee Battalion and Col. Tandy Walker's 1st Choctaw and Chickasaw Mounted Rifles, and Col. Sampson Folsom's 1st Choctaw Regiment. On the Union side were the 3rd Indian Home Guards, led by Col. William A. Phillips. American Indian groups represented by soldiers at Newtonia also included Pin Cherokees, Shawnees, Wichitas, Quapaws, Caddos and Kickapoos. The Union's forces led by Phillips came up against Confederate Folsom's regiment and Walker's Mounted Rifles, and several officers on both sides were cut down in the engagement.

The Second Battle of Newtonia: October 28, 1864

Full-scale battle again came to Newtonia in the fall of 1864, when the final engagement of Confederate General Sterling Price's Missouri Expedition occurred just south of the 1862 battle site. With the Confederacy clearly losing the larger war, Gen. Price launched a last ditch campaign to recapture Missouri. Price's original intention was the capture of St. Louis, but finding the city reinforced, his forces turned westward across the state before meeting a decisive defeat at the Battle of Westport. Price's troops fled southward to regroup, with Union forces led by Gen. James G. Blunt close behind. At Newtonia, the "Iron Brigade" of Confederate Gen. Joseph O. Shelby stalled Blunt's attack until Union reinforcements arrived with Gen. John B. Sanborn. The reinforcements and approaching darkness caused Shelby to withdraw and accompany the balance of Price's troops in their retreat. While the battle was a Union victory, Blunt and Sanborn failed to capture or destroy Price's force. Price's goal was to escape to fight another day, so he did not con-



sider the battle a defeat. Whatever hopes he may have had of regrouping his forces and returning to Missouri were not to be; Missouri remained under Union control for the rest of the Civil War.

Newtonia Battlefields Special Resource Study Launched

The rich history of the Civil War at Newtonia prompted legislation directing the National Park Service to study the battlefield sites for possible inclusion in the national park system. With the sponsorship of Missouri Congressional representative Roy Blunt, the study was authorized as part of the Consolidated Natural Resources Act of 2008, enacted May 8, 2008, as Public Law 110-229. The law directs the National Park Service to conduct a Special Resource Study of the location where the First and Second Battles of

Newtonia occurred. The law requires that the National Park Service evaluate both the suitability and feasibility of adding the battlefield to the national park system as an independent unit and the desirability of adding it to Wilson's Creek National Battlefield. In response, the NPS formed Newtonia Battlefields Special Resource Study Team tasked with conducting study of the battlefields and associated resources.

The NPS process for conducting this study includes five steps:

- First, the national significance of the site is assessed. The criteria used to determine whether or not a property is nationally significant enough for inclusion in the national park system are the same as National Historic Landmark (NHL) criteria. Properties associated with the First Battle were designated as a historic district and the Second Battle as a historic site on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 2004. The sites have not yet been evaluated for the higher level of designation as NHLs.
- Second, the suitability of the Newtonia Battlefields for inclusion in the national park system is assessed. The suitability assessment will involve comparing the study area to other units already in the national park system or comparably protected by others such as other federal agencies,

states, localities or private entities. If the study team finds that preserving and interpreting the Newtonia Battlefields would not duplicate comparable efforts elsewhere, then it will be found suitable for inclusion in the national park system.

- Third, the feasibility of the study area for inclusion in the national park system is assessed. According to the management policies that govern the National Park Service, an area must be “(1) of sufficient size and appropriate configuration to ensure sustainable resource protection and visitor enjoyment, taking into account current and potential impacts from sources beyond proposed park boundaries, and (2) capable of efficient administration by the Service at a reasonable cost.”
- Fourth, the study team will determine whether or not there is a need for direct management by the National Park Service.
- Finally, a range of management alternatives to preserve and interpret the resources will be developed. Alternatives will be presented to the public for feedback, and evaluated in terms of costs, benefits, and environmental impacts in order to determine how to most efficiently and effectively manage significant resources. Unless direct NPS management of resources in Newtonia is identified as the clearly superior management alternative, the Service will recommend that another organization (for example, state, local or private entities or another federal agency) assume a lead management role.

Newtonia Battlefields Preservation Association and the Preservation Plan

Since its formation in 1994, the Newtonia Battlefields Preservation Association (NBPA) has been working to restore the Ritchey Mansion, maintain the Civil War and Ritchey Family Cemeteries, and interpret the history of Newtonia and the Civil War. The group is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, and currently owns roughly 20 acres of battlefield and the Ritchey Mansion. The rest of the battlefield sites are in private ownership.

The Newtonia Battlefields Preservation Association received a grant from the American Battlefield Protection Program (a program of the NPS) to develop a preservation plan for the site. The plan was completed by the private firm Gray & Pape in 2000, and included an explicit list of preservation priorities, and a timetable of actions to implement the priorities. This was the basis for the group's 2004 “Vision Plan for Newtonia Battlefields Preservation.” The NPS will consider the findings and recommendations of these documents as it moves forward with this Special Resource Study.

Public involvement is a critical part of this study process. The purpose of this newsletter is to invite you to participate by introducing you to the study process and encouraging your feedback about key issues we should consider as we proceed. See “How to Participate in this Study” discussion on this page.



How to Participate in this Study

There are three ways to provide feedback at this early stage:

1. **Send comments through our study website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/>.** Once at this site, click on the “plans/docs” tab and then select “Special Resource Study” for the plan type and scroll down to “Newtonia Battlefields.”
2. **Send in the enclosed, postage-paid comment form.**
3. **Attend the public meeting to learn more about the study and offer comments.**

Once we develop a range of management alternatives, we will issue a second newsletter asking for your specific feedback on them. In the meantime, please check our website for project updates. Questions about this study can be addressed to:

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**The meeting will be held on
Thursday, July 8, 2010
from 5-8 pm
at the
Newtonia Community Center
461 Mill Street
Newtonia, Missouri**
Presentations will be made at 5 pm and at 6:30 pm.
*Please feel free to come to either presentation
at your convenience.*

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Special Resource Study

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TIME FRAME	PLANNING ACTIVITY	PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT
SPRING/SUMMER 2010	Begin the Study Gather team members to visit the site, become familiar with related work affecting it, and make preliminary significance, suitability, and feasibility determinations.	Attend the public meeting and let us know what you think. You can also send a note through our website or use the postage-paid response form in this newsletter.
WINTER 2010/2011	Develop Alternatives Draft the Special Resource Study using public comment and feedback to develop proposed management alternatives.	Attend the public meeting to provide comments on alternatives. You will receive another newsletter that describes the alternatives and includes a comment form.
FALL 2011	Analyze Alternatives and Produce Draft Study Using feedback from the public on alternatives, analyze their benefits, cost, and impact to identify the most efficient alternative. The result will be a draft of the study, including an environmental impact statement or assessment if necessary.	Provide comments on the draft study.
SUMMER/FALL 2012	Finalize the Study and Submit to Congress	