

• **NEWS TRIBUNE ARTICLE:**

• **Group unites descendants of Union soldiers**

January 8th, 2017 by [Michelle Brooks](#) in Local News Read
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Growing up hearing stories from his grandmother about her grandfather's Civil War service, Pete Oetting has had a lifelong interest in Civil War history.

Now he's working with other descendants of Union soldiers to resurrect a Sons of Union Veterans camp in Mid-Missouri.

"It's too bad this was not done a long time ago," said Oetting, who has been talking about this for years.

They hope to have the Jefferson City area camp officially in place by February. However, potential members may submit their applications now.

The original Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) Post 6 was organized soon after the war by local veterans. As they aged, their sons picked up the organization as Camp Garfield. But as they aged, the group disbanded.

The new Sons of Union Veterans local group will be called Camp Lillie, in acknowledgment of the historic occupation of Jefferson City by Union troops. Gen. John Fremont established Camp Lillie in 1861 with his headquarters at the Dulle home on St. Mary's Boulevard.

The local camp will be the only one in the state named for an historic location in its backyard, Oetting noted.

Initially, the GAR was active in ways similar to today's American Legion or Veterans of Foreign Wars. In particular, they helped soldiers, widows and orphans gain the pension benefits due to them.

Today, the sons' camps serve more as a place to discover and share history.

"We want people to be aware of the Civil War and reminded of the price paid," Oetting said. "To join, we pay dues, but our ancestors already paid the price."

Although membership is based on tracing one's genealogy back to a soldier, the group will focus more on preserving and passing on the nation's history.

"We want future generations to realize what was accomplished so history is not forgotten" or repeated, future member Mark Schreiber said.

With efforts in some circles to revise history, Schreiber said remembering the true details can ensure it is not repeated, too.



Membership may either be through direct ancestry; collateral, through an uncle or in-law; or associate, through someone who served in other conflicts, such as the Spanish-American War.

A few of the organizing members for Camp Lillie will transfer their membership from Tiger Camp in Columbia, which has been active in marking the graves of soldiers who did not have one.

The local Sons of Confederate Veterans camp has been doing the same thing for both Union and Confederate soldiers in Cole County. In the future, Schreiber said he hopes the two groups can work on common projects to recognize military sacrifices and preserve local history.

California native Bryan Wolford has three lineal grandfathers who served in the Union army.

He joined under Pvt. Robert McCall, who served with the 5th Iowa Infantry. For nearly a year, McCall's unit was engaged in Mid-Missouri.

A metal detector enthusiast, Wolford said several times he has unearthed bullets or buckles in the area and wondered if his ancestor might have touched them.

A younger member than many, Wolford will transfer his membership from the Tiger Camp.

He hopes his generation will rediscover the value of fraternal organizations like the sons' camp.

The internet has made the process of tracking one's lineage easier, Wolford noted. Muster rolls and enlistment cards often are online.

Oetting has traced back to 12 direct and secondary ancestors who served on both sides of the war. For this organization, he is claiming Cpl. Henry Wehrs, a German-born hemp merchant from Lafayette County who served with the Boonville Home Guard.

Schreiber's ancestor, James Marion Sullenger, of Taneyville, was promoted to sergeant with the 6th Missouri Cavalry. Sullenger later married the daughter of a Confederate soldier who served with Brig. Gen. Stand Watie.

Missouri in particular benefits from the Secretary of State's Missouri Digital Heritage project, one of the best in the nation, Oetting said.

"All of us want to know where we came from," Wolford said.

For more information, call 573-659-7232 or email 63relic@gmail.com.

[Kathie Crane Berger](#)

Must the Union soldier be from Missouri? What about the female descendants of Union soldiers? I am very proud of my great great grandfather's and great grandfather's service in the Union Army...one with the 5th Indiana Volunteer Cavalry and the other with the 100th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry.

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Joleen Manson

Fr. Richard W. Frank

My great grandfather and his brother were in the 5th MO Cavalry. Nicholas Frank is buried in Woodland Cemetery in JC. His brother Joseph is buried in the National Cemetery. I am looking

forward to belonging Camp Lillie. I am presently a member of the Union Veterans Camp near St. Louis and was a charter member of one in Canton, MO, which folded several years ago.

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