

MONNETT BATTLE OF WESTPORT FUND, INC.

Under the aegis of
THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE OF KANSAS CITY



Interpretive and Development Plan for Byram's Ford Big Blue Battlefield

Monnett Battle of Westport Fund

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I. INTRODUCTION

This document sets forth the preservation and interpretive development plan for the Big Blue Battlefield. This Civil War battle site, known as Byram's Ford, in Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri, constitutes a segment of the overall three-day engagement which culminated in the Battle of Westport in October 1864.

A portion of the Big Blue Battlefield is entered on the National Register of Historic Places as the Byram's Ford Historic District (Historic District). The Historic District currently contains the historic Byram's Ford crossing of the Big Blue River and the adjacent Byram's Ford Road leading to the ford site. These tracts of the Historic District are key elements of the Big Blue Battlefield.

As further detailed in the plan, portions of the Big Blue Battlefield are held by the Kansas City Missouri Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners (Parks Board); other portions are held by the Public Works Department of the City of Kansas City, Missouri and the Water Department of the City of Kansas City, Missouri; yet other important tracts of the battlefield are privately owned. Including the areas in Swope Park, approximately 240 acres of the battle site are owned by the Parks Board, City of Kansas City (Miller at 4). Since this Plan's original publication in February 2002, additional tracts of the battlefield have come within public ownership.

This ambitious plan elaborates the vision of the Monnett Battle of Westport Fund, Inc. (Monnett Fund) for preserving and developing the Big Blue Battlefield at Byram's Ford as a major historic site interpreting the Civil War heritage of the largest engagement west of the Mississippi River.

The outline for preservation and implementation of complete development of the Big Blue Battlefield is projected in the following stages:

- 1) Immediate interpretive and development steps for implementation in order to create visitor awareness of the site's historic significance and enhance visitor understanding of the events associated with the engagements at Byram's Ford on October 22 and October 23, 1864.
- 2) Intermediate steps designed to attempt to restore the visual integrity of the landscape of a significant portion of the battlefield to its 1864 appearance in order to more nearly foster the appearance, feeling and ambience associated with the site of a major Civil War battle.
- 3) Long-term development steps to reach the objective of establishing a fully functioning and recognizable historic cultural resource to the public for the understanding of this significant Civil War site and the other events associated with the Price Campaign in the greater Kansas City metropolitan area.

The action at the Byram's Ford site on the Big Blue River is a major component of the three-day battle on October 21, 22 and 23, 1864 referred to generically as "Action before Westport" or simply "Westport." Urbanization has resulted in fragmentation of the many far-flung sites associated with this larger Battle of Westport. Because of the loss of visual integrity of many of the sites associated with this battle, this plan anticipates that the Big Blue Battlefield will serve as the interpretive center not solely for the action at Byram's Ford. Of necessity, the Byram's Ford Battlefield will serve as the central point of departure for the appreciation and visitation of the other historic sites associated with the Price Campaign and the region's substantial Civil War heritage.

This plan is premised, in part, on the paradigm represented by the Richmond National Battlefield Park. Westport, like the Richmond Battlefield Park, is comprised of several isolated battle sites scattered over a distance of thirty miles or more. At Richmond, a vital element linking these sites together and interpreting them is the Richmond National Battlefield Visitor Center in the heart of the city. The Monnett Plan envisions a visitor center at Byram's Ford fulfilling a similar function for the Battle of Westport.

The Monnett Fund actively encourages and seeks the participation of governmental agencies, private corporations and foundations and individuals in bringing this plan's vision to full fruition. The Monnett Fund intends to be a catalyst and resource for the creation of significant public and private funding partnerships in order to achieve the objectives of this plan.

II. RESTORATION AND INTERPRETIVE PLAN **FOR BYRAM'S FORD**

The restoration plan and the interpretative plan for this site are intertwined. The overarching objective of this plan is the restoration and preservation of historic vistas of the battlefield in the context of an urban setting. Although the site is far from pristine in its condition, the premise of the plan is that with relatively modest site restoration, significant improvement of the site's preservation and interpretation can be obtained. Concurrently, the interpretive plan contemplates the enhancement of interpretive methods for better public access and understanding.

The ultimate objective is that set forth in national legislation pertaining to historic preservation. The plan seeks thus to restore and create within the Byram's Ford Historic District the "integrity of location, setting, feeling and association" for the historic events of 1864 at Byram's Ford and Battles of the Big Blue (36 CFR 60.4, criteria for evaluation for National Register of Historic Places).

The plan seeks to open and restore the vistas across the battlefield to conditions existing in 1864 to provide a sense of place and feeling to the visitor of the historic context of the site.

The restoration and preservation plan is divided into three categories:

- C Near term implementation
- C Intermediate implementation
- C Long term implementation

The interpretive plan is considered in three phases also. The underlying concept for interpretation of the site is the division of the battlefield into four basic focal points of interpretation.

The focal points of interpretation are:

- C Byram's Ford and Meadow
- C Rocky Escarpment in center of the field
- C Bloody Hill on the west end of the field
- C East approach to Byram's Ford on the east end of the field

III. HISTORIC BACKGROUND- CIVIL WAR HERITAGE

A. PRICE'S MISSOURI EXPEDITION ACTION BEFORE WESTPORT AND BATTLES AT BYRAM'S FORD

The overriding historic significance of the Big Blue Battlefield site is its association with the Civil War military campaign known broadly as Price's Missouri Expedition or more commonly as "Price's Raid" of September - November 1864. This plan does not endeavor to provide a detailed narrative of those historic events. Instead a general overview is provided for those who may be unfamiliar with this military campaign.

Confederate General Sterling Price was a former governor of Missouri. Soon after the outbreak of hostilities in April 1861, Price commanded troops with Southern sympathies. When the state government had come firmly under the control of the Unionist forces, Price led attempts to militarily recover the state of Missouri for the Confederacy. After the Battles of Wilson's Creek, Lexington and Pea Ridge (Elkhorn Tavern) in 1861 and early 1862, Confederate efforts to recapture Missouri waned. Price and his Missouri army were dispatched to the Tennessee and Mississippi theaters of the war east of the Mississippi River.

Having enjoyed popularity as a pre-war political figure, Sterling Price hoped that he might once more be allowed to attempt to rally the citizens of Missouri to the Confederate cause in the summer of 1864. As a result, General Edmund Kirby Smith, commander of the Confederate Trans-Mississippi, authorized Price to launch an offensive from Arkansas into Missouri. The campaign's wildly ambitious military objectives included capturing St. Louis, diverting Federal troops from the Atlanta campaign, rallying new recruits from Missouri for the Confederate army, and obtaining badly needed weapons, clothing and provisions. Politically, Price was to attempt to capture Jefferson City in order to install a pro-Confederate state government. As a sequel to this amazing thrust into Missouri, Price's army was directed to retreat through Kansas and Indian Territory for the purpose of pillaging those areas and recovering livestock and military supplies from the Federals.

The Price Campaign commenced in September 1864 when Price's army of three divisions, numbering approximately 12,000 soldiers left Arkansas, and crossed into southeast Missouri near Pocahontas. Overall, Price's operation was that of a mounted infantry expedition intended as a force of occupation. It rarely attempted to strike rapidly in the manner of a true cavalry raid.

On September 27, Price's army prevailed in the Battle of Pilot Knob but at the cost of considerable loss of momentum. The effort to launch an assault upon St. Louis was abandoned. Instead, Price advanced directly north until reaching the Missouri River. His forces then proceeded westward up the Missouri River valley.

Fearful of Union reinforcements, Price skirted Jefferson City on October 7. His forces conducted intensive recruiting efforts in the counties of the Little Dixie region of Missouri stretching from Booneville to Lexington. As a result, an additional 4,000 new recruits were added to Price's army as it approached Kansas (Monnett at 26-27).

By October 19, the vanguard of Price's army was occupying Lexington and resumed its westward march toward Independence and Westport.

With his headquarters at Kansas City, Union General Samuel R. Curtis, commander of the Department of the Border, had fortified several defensive lines in anticipation of Price's oncoming Confederate army. The forward defensive line ran along the Little Blue River east of Independence. The primary defense was installed along the west bank of the Big Blue River. Curtis' command numbered approximately 17,000 troops, the bulk of which were untrained Kansas militia. Curtis' Army of the Border was composed of a division of seasoned regulars commanded by General James G. Blunt and a second division containing the militia under General George W. Deitzler (Langsdorf at 287, 291).

At the same time, a second Union force comprised of a cavalry division under the command of General Alfred Pleasonton (commander of cavalry at Gettysburg) was advancing rapidly from St. Louis and approaching upon the rear of Price's army. By October 21, Pleasonton's division contained 7,000 to 8,000 cavalrymen. In support, General A. J. Smith's infantry corps with 9,000 Union troopers was proceeding westward and parallel to the course of Pleasonton's division (Langsdorf at 287; Monnett at 75).

When Price launched the rebel assault on Independence on October 21, his Confederate army faced the threat of total destruction between the twin Federal forces: Curtis' entrenched troops to its front and Pleasonton and A. J. Smith's mobile forces to the rear. Price needed to strike quickly and decisively against Curtis' relatively weaker, but well-fortified forces before turning to counter attack Pleasonton's pursuing cavalry.

Consequently, the Big Blue Battlefield at Byram's Ford was the scene of two successive battles on October 22 and 23, 1864 — the first a Confederate victory and the second a Union victory.



Maj. General Sterling Price



Maj. General Samuel R. Curtis



Maj. General James Marmaduke



Maj. General Alfred Pleasonton

B. FIRST BATTLE OF BIG BLUE AT BYRAM'S FORD - OCTOBER 22, 1864

Confederate General James S. Marmaduke's division captured Independence on October 21 and drove General Blunt's Federals west toward Kansas City. Curtis withdrew the 15,000 Union defenders to behind the fortified line of entrenchments on the west bank of the Big Blue. This defensive line ran for 15 miles southward from the Missouri River to Russell's Ford (Monnett at 69-71; Langsdorf at 291).

The main ford was the Big Blue crossing of the Independence and Westport road located five miles south of the Missouri River. Its Union garrison included a unit of United States colored troops and another unit under noted Jayhawker Colonel James Montgomery (Monnett at 71-2).

The Byram's Ford crossing of the Independence to Little Santa Fe road was eleven miles from the Missouri River (Monnett at 72). By 9:00 a.m. of October 22, Col. Charles "Doc" Jennison, the notorious Kansas Jayhawker and Redleg, had placed the 15th Kansas Cavalry, 3rd Wisconsin Cavalry and various Kansas militia units in position to contest the Confederates' passage over Byram's Ford. The Union defenders blocked the Ford with felled trees and abatis. On the west bluff above the ford, Jennison stationed Barker's Battery of five howitzers which bombarded the crossing.

For over three hours, the Confederate cavalry of Shelby's Brigade made repeated furious attacks to force the crossing and drive back the Federal defenders. Despite the intense combat, the Confederate advance remained halted. The Confederates were finally able to cross at Byram's Ford in the middle of the afternoon after the Union position had been flanked by Confederates who had crossed at nearby Hinkle's Ford and at Russell's Ford. Jennison was compelled to withdraw to the west and to Westport in order to avoid destruction (Monnett at 77-80; Langsdorf at 292).

**C. SECOND BATTLE OF BIG BLUE AT BYRAM'S FORD - OCTOBER 22-23, 1864
ACTION BEFORE WESTPORT - OCTOBER 23, 1864**

On the evening of October 22, 1864, the combined Union and Confederate armies facing each other at Westport and Big Blue numbered 30,000 troops (Monnett at 3). The Confederate line was L-shaped. One leg of the line ran from west to east along Brush Creek. The other leg, held by Marmaduke, ran north and south along the Big Blue River. Late on October 22, Winslow's Brigade of Pleasonton's Cavalry Division advanced down the road from Independence to Byram's Ford and contacted Confederate pickets by 10:30 p.m. at a point three miles from Byram's Ford. (Monnett at 89). Colonel John B. Clark's Confederate Brigade of Marmaduke's division launched a fierce counter assault upon Winslow's Brigade. By the early morning of October 23, elements of Marmaduke's division had pushed back the Union advance.

The bulk of Marmaduke's division concentrated along the west bank of the Big Blue River around Byram's Ford in order to protect the lengthy wagon train proceeding down the Independence to Little Santa Fe branch of the Santa Fe Trail to its junction with the Fort Scott road. On the evening of October 22, Marmaduke's forces occupied the same ground that had been held by Jennison's opposing Federal troops earlier that day (Monnett at 93, Langsdorf at 292).

The troop strength of Marmaduke's division was approximately 3,500. Two advancing Union cavalry brigades under Winslow and Philips numbered 1,300 and 1,500 respectively (Buresh at 215-16, 217-18).

The fourth brigade of Pleasonton's Cavalry Division had been led by Colonel James McFerran until he was sacked on the evening of October 22 by Pleasonton for failing to act with dispatch. Colonel John Philips of the 7th Missouri State Militia Cavalry was placed in command of the brigade. Near dawn on the morning of October 23, Philips Brigade took up the advance and pushed to the high bluffs overlooking the east side of Byram's Ford. The Federals placed a battery of three Rodman guns atop the bluffs. This Union battery commenced firing upon the Confederate battery on the west side of the ford (Monnett at 112-113).

In a ravine 300 yards north of the ford, a battalion of 300 men led by Captain Dee of the 4th Iowa Cavalry of Winslow's Brigade advanced toward the Big Blue in an attempt to flank the Confederate left (Monnett at 112-13).

Winslow's Brigade then descended the steep bluff under heavy Confederate fire and attempted to advance along and to the left (south) of the Byram's Ford Road. The brigade was pinned down along the east edge of Byram's Ford by the Confederate defenders (Monnett at 112-113).

While the Confederate's attention was focused on Winslow's Brigade, which was stalled at the ford, the smaller band of Dee's Battalion of Iowans was successful in forcing a crossing of the Big Blue downstream from the ford. The flanking movement by Dee's Battalion on the Confederate's left caused Marmaduke to withdraw his skirmish line from the ford to a position 200 yards to the west. There the Confederates held a formidable defensive line protected by a rocky outcropping. After the Confederate's tactical withdrawal, Winslow's Brigade of Federal cavalry was then able to battle its way across the ford and up the west bank (Monnett at 112-113).

Above this defensive line, General Marmaduke placed his main line, running generally from north to south, at the top of the ridge of the high ground running along the west side of the Big Blue. This became known as "Bloody Hill." A battery of three or four cannons was stationed on the Confederate's right end (south). Near the center of the Confederate's main line was another battery which was placed astride the road. Below the crest of the hill and near the road was a log house which was used as a redoubt by sharp shooters.

Intense, fierce fighting continued for several hours as the Federals came under a withering fire when they attempted to cross the broad, open plain in front of the rock outcropping. Philip's Brigade advanced up a ravine along the left of the Byram's Ford road where it ascended Bloody Hill.

At approximately noon, General Marmaduke's division was in danger of being flanked again on the right by Philip's Brigade, and the Confederates were compelled to withdraw to the west and south down the Harrisonville Road (now Prospect Avenue).

The successful crossing of the Big Blue at Byram's Ford by Pleasonton's Union cavalry and the collapse of the Big Blue line of the Confederate forces caused the remainder of Price's army, which had been heavily engaged during this same time along Brush Creek, to withdraw southward.

The Battle of Westport came to a conclusion with Price's army in general retreat and its huge wagon train still intact. The Federals had won the tactical battle by holding the field, but Price had successfully escaped annihilation between the two Union armies.

The combined casualties for the three days of the Battle of Westport, including the engagements at Byram's Ford, totaled 3,000 with equal losses on both sides.

Colonel Winslow was severely wounded during the assault upon Bloody Hill. He was succeeded as brigade commander by Captain Frederick W. Benteen of the Tenth Missouri Cavalry; Benteen would later gain notoriety in Custer's 7th Cavalry at the Battle of the Little Bighorn.

D. PRICE'S ENORMOUS WAGON TRAIN SANTA FE TRAIL HERITAGE OF BYRAM'S FORD

The Byram's Ford crossing of the Big Blue River was on the Independence to Little Santa Fe road, which was a branch of the Santa Fe Trail leading from Independence.

One of the distinguishing elements of Price's Missouri Campaign is the logistical and tactical role played by the Confederate's wagon train. The protection and preservation of an enormous wagon train became a military imperative for Sterling Price during the series of battles forming the action before Westport (Monnett at 77).

Because Price had failed to achieve the other military and political objectives of the campaign, the wagon train represented the sole tangible evidence of any success. The train also contained Missouri Confederate civilian refugees, women and families who were going south to spend the winter with their husbands and fathers in Price's army. The train's protection was paramount for Price and the men who fought in his army.

This enormous line of wagons and other wheeled vehicles stretched for five miles. It contained 600 wagons and a herd of 3,000 head of cattle. On October 22, 1864, the train and herd were traversing the Little Santa Fe road from Independence (Monnett at 86, 93).

Price established his headquarters at the Boston Adams House. Approximately 3/4 mile west of Byram's Ford, the Adams House was located atop Bloody Hill along the Independence to Little Santa Fe road, also known as the Byram's Ford road. There General Price made his battle plans for October 23. To protect the withdrawal of the wagon train, he ordered that General Shelby's division attack north across Brush Creek while General Marmaduke's division held back the advance by Pleasonton's Union cavalry to the east of the Big Blue (Monnett at 93, 94).

The author of the recent Corps of Engineers archaeological survey of the Byram's Ford (Marmor) commented upon the site's transportation significance:

"Portions of Byram's Ford Road, which was a relatively important regional transportation route and Santa Fe Trail variant in the nineteenth century, remained in use well into the twentieth century, probably until construction of 63rd Street in the mid-1930's. The ford itself however, appears to have fallen into disuse by the early twentieth century, as noted by Jenkins: 'This point was the then widely-known Byram's Ford Crossing. Constantly in use at that day, on the main line of the road leading from Independence to the country south of Kansas City, it has since become unusable owing to shifts in the channel of the stream and is even almost unknown to many residents in that neighborhood, while the old roads that once led to it have many of

them been fenced off and the ground around it cleared of this heavy timber and made into farms’ (Jenkins at 116).

"Nevertheless, the road and river crossing must have been recognizable decades later and are clearly shown on a 1925 atlas of Kansas City (Figure 7.5). Increasing automobile traffic apparently necessitated improvements in the street system throughout Kansas City in the 1920's and 1930's, and in the late-1930's, 63rd Street was extended eastward along the northern limit of Swope Park." (Marmor at 37-39).

IV. CIVIL WAR SIGNIFICANCE OF BYRAM'S FORD AND BATTLE OF WESTPORT WARRANTS RESTORATION AND PRESERVATION

Interest in the preservation of the Byram's Ford site in association with the overall Battle of Westport was sparked nearly one hundred years ago following the publication of the book *Battle of Westport* by Paul B. Jenkins in 1906.

More recently, the National Park Service through the Civil War Battlefield Sites Advisory Commission, in 1993, recognized the substantial historic importance of the Byram's Ford site and the Battle of Westport.

The Civil War Battlefield Sites Advisory Commission, consisting of 15 members appointed by United States Congress and Secretary of the Interior, was charged with identifying the nation's historically significant Civil War sites, determining their relative importance and their condition. Out of 10,500 armed conflicts of the Civil War, the Commission selected 384 sites as the principal battles and classified them as to their historic significance.

The Commission, in its *Report on the Nation's Civil War Battlefields*, ranked sites as Class A through D battlefields. This ranking was based on the criterion that the sites represented the principal strategic operations of the war. Class A battlefields, the most historically significant, were designated as "having a decisive influence on a campaign and a direct impact on the course of the war." Class B battlefields were next in historic importance as "having a direct and decisive influence on their campaign" (Civil War Sites Advisory Commission, NPS, 1993, Vol. II, at V). Forty-five sites (12%) were ranked "A" (having a decisive influence on a campaign and a direct impact on the course of the war); 104 sites (27%) were ranked "B" (having a direct and decisive influence on their campaign). (Civil War Sites Advisory Commission, NPS, Vol. I, section 2).

Byram's Ford and the Battle of Westport are among the select few sites ranked by the National Park Service's Commission as Class A and Class B battlefields. The Commission's report classifies Byram's Ford as a Class B battle site, stating:

"Brig. Gen. John S. Marmaduke's Rebel division held the west bank of the Big Blue at Byram's Ford to prevent Pleasonton from attacking Price's rear. Pleasonton assaulted Marmaduke at Byram's Ford, around 8:00 a.m. on the 23rd. Three hours later, Marmaduke's men had enough and fell back toward Westport. With Pleasonton across the river, he was now an additional threat to Price who was fighting Curtis' Army of the Border at Westport. Price had to retreat south."

The Battle of Westport is in turn classified as a Class A battle site with this comment:

“*Westport was the decisive battle of Price’s Missouri Expedition, and from this point on the Rebels were in retreat.*” In the four-hour Battle of Westport on October 23, 1864, 3000 total casualties were sustained, equally on each side (Civil War Sites Advisory Commission, NPS, 1993, Vol. II, at 72 and 84).

Given the elite ranking of this site, the Commission’s Report supports the restoration, preservation and interpretive efforts at Byram’s Ford with this observation:

“Because of their strategic character and national significance, the Class A and B sites should be an interest or responsibility of the Federal as well as state and local governments, non- profits, and other private entities.”

The state of Missouri contains the third largest number of the 384 battlefields classified by the Commission. Only the states of Virginia and Tennessee possess a larger number of such sites.

Attesting to the singular significance of Westport, however, only two other sites in the state of Missouri are classified as Class A battlefields (New Madrid/Island No. 10 and Wilson’s Creek).

Likewise, Byram’s Ford is only one of three Class B battlefields in Missouri. (The other Class B sites are Fort Davidson [Pilot Knob] and Newtonia [1864]) (Civil War Sites Advisory Commission, NPS, 1993, Vol. II, at 71-84).

The state of Missouri has a rich, extensive and abiding Civil War history. Byram’s Ford and the Battle of Westport are recognized premier sites of that Civil War heritage. A century after the appearance of Jenkins book on the Battle of Westport, the site’s restoration, preservation and appropriate interpretation are long overdue.

V. HISTORY OF PRESERVATION

BATTLE OF WESTPORT SITES AND BYRAM'S FORD

At the beginning of the twentieth century, public interest was sparked to commemorate the events of the Battle of Westport. The publication of Jenkins' book *Battle of Westport* in 1906 stimulated the public preservation effort. In the summer of 1912, a re-enactment of the battle at Byram's Ford was staged in Swope Park (Kansas City *Star*, September 6, 1912).

During the decade following the First World War, Kansas City's civic leaders under the direction of H. H. Crittenden, president of the Missouri Valley Historical Society, presented a concerted effort to preserve the Battle of Westport sites near present-day Loose Park and at Byram's Ford. Crittenden's father was Col. Thomas Crittenden who lead one of the Union cavalry brigades at Byram's Ford on October 23, 1864 and later served as governor of Missouri.

The mayor and city council of Kansas City passed ordinances recognizing the sites associated with the Battle of Westport and Byram's Ford in 1923. These activities were followed by the introduction of a bill in the United States Congress in 1924 to create a national military park to commemorate the Battle of Westport. The first proposal provided for acquisition of a site in the present Loose Park area on Wornall Road at 55th Street (Crittenden, at 70-89).

When this tract became unavailable, efforts for a national memorial focused in 1925 and 1926 on the Byram's Ford Big Blue River site. In the testimony before the Congress, the proponents of the Big Blue site advocated the acquisition of the Hagerman tract located on the slope of Bloody Hill. The witnesses testified in 1926 that one of the log houses that was present during the battles in 1864 still stood on this Hagerman tract in 1926 (U. S. Cong., *Hearings on National Military Park* at 22). This effort was unsuccessful, and the project then ceased for several years.

The Hagerman tract on which the log house stood was bounded on the north by the Byram's Ford Road. It was comprised of the tract now designated as 4800 E. 63rd Street (Marmor at 38). This log house stood beside Byram's Ford Road on a portion of the tract which was recently acquired by the Water Department of the City of Kansas City in August 2000. The photograph of the log house appearing on the next page is taken from the 1906 Jenkins history. The image was reversed in Jenkins and has been printed here as it would have appeared on the south side of the Byram's Ford Road.

During the 1950's, much of the battlefield was disturbed by the construction of commercial and industrial buildings beginning in 1955 with the construction of an office building facing 63rd Street atop the ridge of Bloody Hill on the former Hagerman tract. This structure was used by Allstate Insurance and then by the Burns and McDonnell engineering firm. It is currently the headquarters of the Water Department of the City of Kansas City.



Front Facade of Log House on Slope of Bloody Hill

Plate 5 from Jenkins *Battle of Westport* (1906)

The photograph appears to have been printed in reverse in the Jenkins book. The road depicted is Byram's Ford Road as it ascended Bloody Hill. The log house was recorded as being located on the "Hagerman Tract" which was on the south side of Byram's Ford Road. Jenkins noted that the logs of the house still plainly exhibited many bullet-marks.

Between 1956 and 1962, the Meadow area of the site was heavily damaged by the construction of eight buildings for the Byram's Ford Industrial Park. Two large industrial plants were built on the ridge to the north of the old Byram's Ford Road. The developer of the industrial park erected a memorial to the Civil War at the crossing of Manchester Trafficway near the historic route of the Byram's Ford Road.

On the eve of the Civil War centennial in 1958, the Civil War Round Table of Kansas City was formed with former President Harry S. Truman as one of its charter members. Dr. Howard N. Monnett of the Round Table researched, spoke and wrote extensively about the Battle of Westport. Dr. Monnett's book *Action Before Westport* was published at the time of the battle's centennial in 1964. Dr. Monnett's enthusiasm for the subject within the Kansas City Round Table led to the discussion of creating an automobile tour of the widely dispersed sites associated with the three-day conflict.

As a memorial to his vision, in 1975, the leaders of the Kansas City Round Table formed the Howard N. Monnett Battle of Westport Fund, Inc. as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt charitable corporation for the purpose of commemorating and interpreting for the public the sites and battlefields associated with the Battle of Westport. By 1979, the founders of the Monnett Fund had successfully raised funds from throughout the community to purchase and erect permanent signage and monument markers at 25 sites and had created a self-guided automobile tour. The markers include a monument marker in the Meadow site and several wayside markers on Bloody Hill.

In 1979 and 1980, the leaders of the Monnett Fund began the initial efforts to place portions of the Byram's Ford site on the National Register of Historic Places. This effort was stymied by the confused ownership of many of the tracts in the environs of the Ford and by the unwillingness of owners to agree to the site's nomination to the Register.

The Monnett Fund in 1983 began its role as an actual owner and steward of a portion of the tracts comprising the Big Blue Battlefield. The Monnett Fund's leaders obtained the donation from Commerce Bank of fifty acres of the battlefield and adjacent tracts which had been subject to foreclosure. This donation included the site of the Byram's Ford crossing on the Big Blue River.

In 1989, the Byram's Ford Historic District was designated and was entered upon the National Register of Historic Places. The Historic District is composed of two tracts. The first is the Byram's Ford Road Site and is located on the east side of Hardesty Avenue. It preserves the portion of the road descending from the east bluff above the Blue River. The second tract is at the ford itself and is designated as the "Byram's Ford Site" (Marmor at 19).

The Byram's Ford Road Site of the Historic District was acquired in 1995 through the joint funding campaign of the Monnett Fund and the APCWS. Title to the district was transferred to the Kansas City Parks Department in April 1995.

A major impact on the preservation and interpretive plan involves flood control measures along the Big Blue River by the City of Kansas City and the Army Corps of Engineers. Facilities within the industrial park sustained flood damage in the 1979. As a result, plans were made in 1983 for channel alterations which would have obliterated the historic Byram's Ford site. The leaders of the Monnett Fund successfully negotiated a compromise alternative flood control plan with City representatives within the Public Works Department and the Corps of Engineers. (Big Blue Battlefield Development Plan at 6)

As an alternative to the destruction of Byram's Ford, the plan provided for the construction of an earthen levee. The proposed levee would run from north to south. It would begin on the north at a point near the intersection of 59th Street. Bisecting the Meadow portion of the battlefield, the proposed levee would cross Lot 6 owned by the Kansas City Parks Department and then would hug the bank of the Big Blue River to a point near the ravine through which Philip's Brigade advanced. (Planning Guidelines for Big Blue [Byram's Ford] Battlefield, NPS 1994 at 10)

Although the proposed levee poses a direct threat to restoration of the battlefield, the flood control project has brought a fortuitous benefit. The 1992 Memorandum of Agreement between the Monnett Fund, Corps of Engineers and City Public Works Department provides that the buildings on the tracts acquired for the project in the battlefield will be razed and transferred to the Monnett Fund.

As a result, three of the buildings in the industrial park have been acquired by the City Public Works Department. The City has acquired the former Stratco building at 6101 Manchester, the former CellNet/Schlumberger building on east 60th Street adjacent to Byram's Ford proper. A third building (Bisbee building) adjacent to the Ford has recently been acquired by the City through condemnation. The Stratco building was largely razed following a fire and explosion in 2002. The other two structures remain intact and await demolition pursuant to the agreement.

In the event of the acquisition of the DuPont building, the agreement also provides for an alternate levee design which would reduce the damage to the battlefield. If the DuPont facility is obtained by non-commercial interests, then the levee would not bisect the Meadow but instead would be rerouted to run from east to west along 60th Street. (Planning Guidelines for Big Blue [Byram's Ford] Battlefield, NPS 1994 at 10).

In 1997, the Monnett Fund received title to Lot 6 which is a vacant tract on south side of 60th Street between the DuPont facility and the City-owned CellNet building. The tract was transferred subject to an easement in connection with the flood control project. In 2002 the Monnett Fund transferred its interests in the tract to the City Parks Department for consolidated administration with the previously transferred tracts.

In August 2000, the City of Kansas City, through its Water Department, acquired title to a major portion of Bloody Hill on the tract designated as 4800 E. 63rd Street. As a result of this acquisition, a

corridor of the battlefield, with the exception of the DuPont building, is now in the public domain. The corridor stretches along the historic route of the Byram's Ford Road from the east bluffs above the Big Blue River to the west end of the battlefield at Elmwood Avenue.

Several studies have been conducted with respect to the preservation and anticipated future interpretation of the of battlefield. In 1988, the Monnett Fund issued the ***Big Blue Battlefield Development Plan***. The plan provided for the installation of a self-guided walking trail and markers keyed to a site brochure, installation of replica cannon and land acquisition. Many of the objectives of the initial plan have been achieved (Big Blue Battlefield Development Plan, May 1988, at 4-5).

In 1994, the Monnett Fund obtained a study for the feasibility of acquiring the DuPont building on Lot 3 and another building. The acquisition cost of the DuPont building was projected by the study to be \$613,427. Various means for acquiring the tract were discussed in the study (Economic Feasibility Study, June 1994 at 8).

The National Park Service through its American Battlefield Protection Program in cooperation with the Monnett Fund and Civil War Round Table of Kansas City published in September 1994 ***Planning Guidelines for Big Blue [Byram's Ford] Battlefield***. This document suggested that a visitor center could be created within an existing building through a cooperative space sharing agreement. Suggestions were made for interpretive kiosks and additional signage (Planning Guidelines for Big Blue [Byram's Ford] Battlefield, NPS 1994 at 18).

In 1995, the cost of a comprehensive and detailed preservation plan and archaeological reconnaissance study of the battle field was underwritten jointly by the Monnett Fund and the Historic Preservation Management Division of the City Planning and Development Department of Kansas City, Missouri. This study was completed by Gray and Pape, cultural resource consultants of Cincinnati, Ohio, in October 1995. The study made several notable recommendations:

1. Enlargement of the boundaries of the National Register boundaries of the Byram's Ford Historic District to include the properties acquired by the Monnett Fund and the City Parks Department. (Appendix D of the study contains a proposed amendment form for the National Register nomination form).
2. Measures to remediate viewsheds of the battlefield from Bloody Hill and the Rock Escarpment area.
3. Preservation, acquisition and interpretation of the historic remnants of the Byram's Ford Road on Bloody Hill on the north end of the tract occupied at 4800 E. 63rd Street.
4. Establishment of a visitor center on the site as a rallying point for the interpretive efforts (Miller at 85-96, Appendix D).

An intensive archaeological survey in 1996 on behalf of the United States Army Corps of Engineers has provided artifact documentation of the fighting which took place on the area between Byram's Ford and the rock outcropping west of the Ford. The archaeological study also recommended that the Historic District be amended to include Lot 6 that is currently owned by City Parks (Marmor at 60).

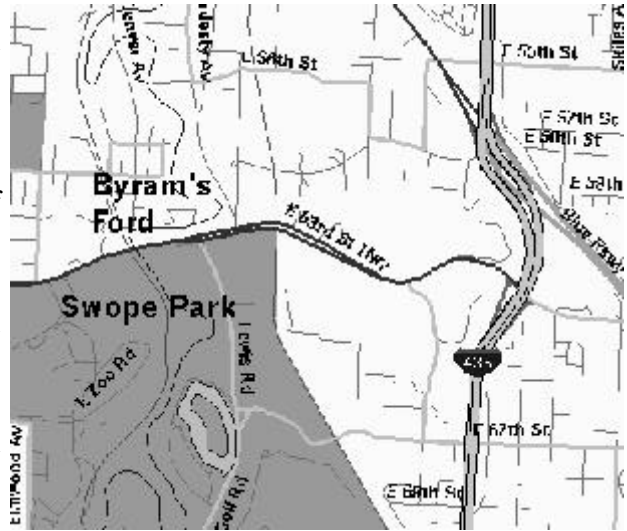
Further work in the form of intensive metal detecting and artifact analysis was recommended as appropriate treatment of the site. The projected levee work by the Corps was noted to have an adverse impact upon the tract and mitigation was recommended (Marmor at 1 "Abstract").

In 1999, the Monnett Fund submitted and obtained funding grants from the City of Kansas City through its neighborhood PIAC program. These funds are being used to obtain a detailed topographic map of the area in order for the Park Department to conduct detailed construction plans for development of the battlefield. The Monnett Fund has prepared forms and documentation for amendment of the National Register nomination in line with the recommendations of the 1995 Miller study.

In 2002, the Monnett Fund made application through the Kansas City Public Improvements (PIAC) program for funding of a cannon for installation by City Parks. This application was granted in 2003 and the cannon is anticipated to be installed in the summer of 2005. In 2004 the Monnett Fund submitted additional applications for PIAC funding of an interpretive trail from the cannon inplacement along Bloody Hill to the intersection with the Byram's Ford Road. Another application was made for the proposed interpretive display on the island between Manchester Trafficway and Manchester Trafficway Terrace. These applications have not yet received approval and funding.

VI. LOCATION AND CURRENT ADMINISTRATION **BYRAM'S FORD BIG BLUE BATTLEFIELD**

The Byram's Ford battlefield site is located in eastern Kansas City, Missouri at the 63rd Street crossing of the Big Blue River. It is approximately one mile west of the I-435 exit to 63rd Street; this exit is approximately three miles south of the interchange of I-435 and I-70, a major east-west interstate. Coming from I-70, one accesses the site from southbound I-435 to westbound 63rd Street. The approach from northbound I-435 is also directly onto 63rd Street. 63rd Street is a major arterial and passes immediately by and through the battle field. Most of the approach to the site along 63rd Street from I-435 is a 4-lane parkway with a dividing median.



Since 1995, following the transfer of the Monnett Fund properties, most of the battle site, which is currently in the public domain, has been administered by the Parks Board. Significantly, the headquarters of the Parks Board staff was moved to an office building located on the main portion of the battlefield at 4600 East 63rd Street. The headquarters building is just beyond the crest of Bloody Hill which is the predominate topographic feature of the action at Byram's Ford.

The crest and slope of Bloody Hill is now owned by the City of Kansas City Water Department. The department headquarters is located in a renovated structure on the tract at 4800 East 63rd Street.

Another portion of the site is held by the City of Kansas City through its Public Works Department as a result of acquisitions of properties associated with the Big Blue River flood control project.

The public domain properties, with the exception of the various buildings discussed above, are essentially green space areas. Consequently, current administration consists mostly of maintaining the grass on them. The signage relating to the battlefield on these public lands is currently maintained by the Monnett Fund. Nearly all of these signs were erected in 1977-1978 by the Monnett Fund as part of its self-guided automobile tour of the Battle of Westport.

VII. BIG BLUE BATTLEFIELD AS A COMMUNITY RESOURCE

ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION FROM HERITAGE TOURISM POTENTIAL VISITATION AS A FULLY FUNCTIONING CIVIL WAR HISTORIC SITE

The primary purpose for the restoration and preservation of the Byram's Ford Big Blue Battlefield is to educate by illustrating our region's history. The development of the battlefield as a fully operational historic site has additional benefits to the community. In particular, this historic site possesses the potential to provide significant economic benefit as a key resource for heritage tourism.

As discussed elsewhere in this report, the Battle of Westport, including the Battle of the Big Blue, has been recognized as one of the significant sites of the Civil War, particularly in the region west of the Mississippi River. The battle is one of a few sites in the nation that have been recognized by the National Park Service's Civil War Advisory Board and is ranked for its great historic significance as a "Class A" battle site.

The high degree of historic significance of the Big Blue Battlefield recommends it as a site to which substantial numbers of Civil War enthusiasts would visit. Likewise, the site is favored to attract numbers of visitors having a more general interest in history.

Because of its location near the intersection of major interstate highways, a fully developed Byram's Ford Battlefield will provide a central location to introduce the public to the area's rich Civil War heritage. The Big Blue site can function as a point of departure to related sites from the Little Blue River and Independence to Little Santa Fe. No other major Civil War site in the metropolitan area presents that degree of accessibility and potential visibility to the public.

Presently, there is no coordinated means to draw potential visitors to the dramatic events of the Battle of Westport and the associated sites in Loose Park just south of the Plaza shopping district in Kansas City. The Byram's Ford site can function as a locus for introducing the public to the Monnett Fund's self-guided auto tour stretching for 30 miles across the metropolitan area. Visitors can learn about and receive directions to other area Civil War sites such as the Wornall House, the Battle of Lone Jack and the Battle of Lexington.

There are no means currently for tracking the number of visitors to Byram's Ford in its present underdeveloped condition. However, comparisons to other similar visitor attractions suggest that the site has the potential of attracting 200,000 visitors annually.

The table below sets out the visitation of the Kansas City Zoo (which is adjacent to the Big Blue Battlefield), other nearby historic sites and developed Civil War historic sites in the state of Missouri.

SITE	1997	1998
Truman Home National Historic Site Visitor Center Independence, MO ¹	59,827	53,655
Kansas City Zoo, Kansas City, MO ²	695,521	705,000
Battle of Lexington State Historic Site, Lexington, MO³	57,829	49,906
Fort Davidson State Historic Site, Pilot Knob, MO³	75,816	87,564
Wilson's Creek National Battlefield, Republic, MO⁴		
Overall Park	181,000	202,000
Visitor Center	43,000	42,000

Given that both Wilson's Creek and Westport/Big Blue are ranked by the Park Service as Class A sites, comparable visitation of more than 200,000 visitors annually to a developed Big Blue Battlefield can be anticipated. This prospect is enhanced by the synergistic effect of its close proximity to the Kansas City Zoo and its proximity to the Truman Sports Complex.

Eastern Jackson County is described as a "heritage tourism destination." According to the Independence Tourism Department, one half of the nearly one million visitors annually to the area come to see the historic sites in the community. The other half attend major league sporting events at Truman Sports Complex. A number of the visitors are reported to attend a sporting event in tandem with visitation at area historic sites.⁵

¹Curator, Truman Home National Historic Site to Daniel L. Smith on February 1, 1999.

² Public relations officer, Kansas City Zoo, to Daniel L. Smith on February 2, 1999

³ Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Office of Parks Management, to Daniel L. Smith on February 2, 1999.

⁴Jeff Patrick, Park Ranger, Wilson's Creek National Battlefield to Daniel L. Smith on February 2, 1999.

⁵ "A Heritage Tourism Destination," *Ingram's*, Feb. 1999, Eastern Jackson County supplement, p. 14.

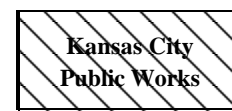
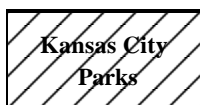
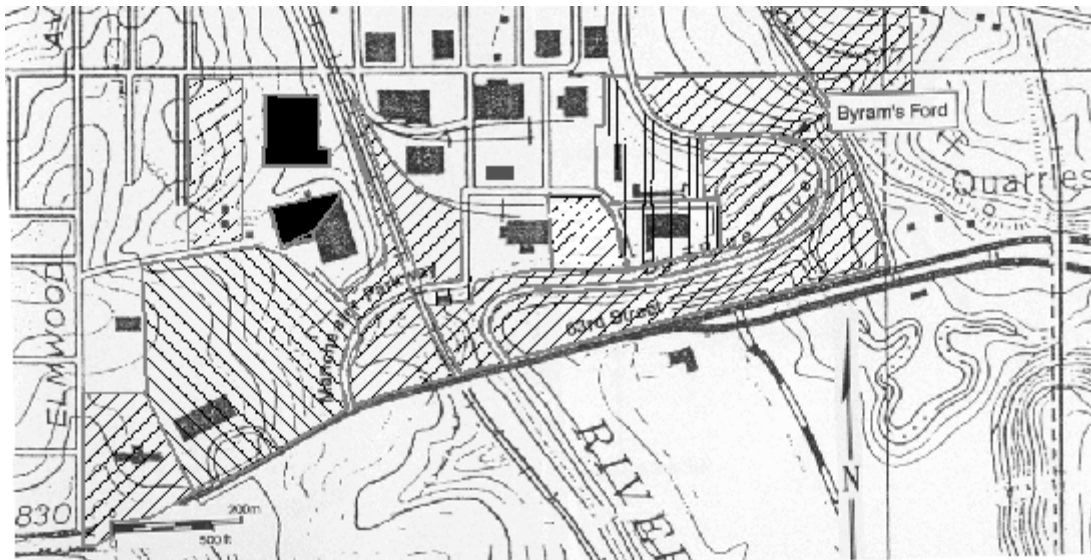
VIII. CURRENT RESOURCES

The Byram's Ford site is presently interpreted principally by a collection of the Monnett Fund's four wayside style signs and a pedestal map marker. Other interpretive devices include the Monnett Fund's self-guided walking tour brochure; however, there is for the most part no formal trail designated for a visitor to follow on the walking tour. Stops on the walking tour keyed to the brochure are marked with unobtrusive numbered wooden stakes. The only trail at this time is one leading from the parking area behind the most easterly building (former CellNet/Schlumberger building) to Byram's Ford.

The sole indication to the casual passerby that the site is historically significant is a sign erected by the Monnett Fund in the median between Manchester Trafficway and Manchester Terrace. No readily observable signage alerts the public traveling on 63rd Street to the existence of a major Civil War battlefield a few yards to the north.

The portion of the Byram's Ford Big Blue Battlefield, which is currently in the public domain, is depicted below. The scope of the battlefield is from east to west along the length of the map.

CURRENT OWNERSHIP MAP OF PUBLIC DOMAIN PROPERTY IN BYRAM'S FORD HISTORIC DISTRICT



IX. NEAR TERM IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Monnett Fund proposes, in coordination with other stakeholders in the Byram's Ford site, to undertake and complete the following items immediately or in the near term:

1. Revision of National Register Listing to Include Public Domain Properties

The original site placed upon the National Register of Historic Places in 1989 was limited to areas immediately surrounding the Byram's Ford crossing. The limited battlefield listing was denominated as "Byram's Ford Historic District." An intensive archaeological survey conducted in 1996 on behalf of the United States Army Corps of Engineers provided artifact evidence of the fighting which took place on the area between Byram's Ford and the rock outcropping west of the ford. The study (Marmor) focused on the tract held by the Monnett Fund between the DuPont and present Schlumberger buildings. Marmor recommended that the Historic District be amended to include generally the tract currently owned by the Monnett Fund.

All of the properties presently held by the City of Kansas City, as shown on the preceding map of public domain property, should be added to a revised National Register listing for Byram's Ford Historic District. The tracts taken as a whole are integral to the events associated with the battle. The Monnett Fund, with the approval of the appropriate departments of the City of Kansas City, will submit the revised listing for Byram's Ford Historic District to the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office of the Department of Natural Resources.

2. Installation of Interpretive Kiosk in Median at Intersection of Manchester Trafficway and Manchester Terrace

The installation of a low-lying interpretive kiosk at this location provides immediate and prominent public access to the battlefield from 63rd Street. The intersection of Manchester Trafficway and 63rd Street has traffic control signals which facilitate entry into the site. The proposed kiosk site lies 600 feet north of the 63rd Street intersection. Entry to the kiosk would be from Manchester Terrace. Parking for the kiosk would be provided as an extra lane of Manchester Terrace.

The location of the kiosk affords a command of the vista from the Rocky Escarpment where the Confederates skirmishers fired across the Meadow area to Byram's Ford.



The current view from the location, which is referenced as the position denominated 4 on the accompanying Development Plan Map.

The design of the kiosk will carefully balance the need to provide evidence of its presence while not unduly intruding upon the view of the landscape. Consequently, the design of the interpretive kiosk will be uncovered with relatively low-lying, inclined panels instead of vertical partitions.

This kiosk will direct the visitor to the other parts of the site, in particular the parking at the trailhead of the trail to Byram's Ford and along Byram's Ford Road in the Meadow.

3. Installation of Walking Trail from Byram's Ford Along Historic Route of Byram's Ford Road to Present Monnett Fund Marker 17

The route of the historic Byram's Ford Road from the Ford through the Meadow area to the Rocky Escarpment has been well documented in earlier studies (Miller [1995] and Marmor [1997]) principally by reference to property atlases and aerial photographs. The route from the Ford generally hugged the left bank of the Big Blue River. It then crossed the escarpment in the general area of the present Manchester Trafficway crossing of the railroad right of way.

Access to Byram's Ford and the walking trail would be from the parking space in the large paved area in the rear (east side) of the former Schlumberger building. This parking area has been used since 1977 as part of the Monnett Fund's interpretation of the ford site.

The existing trail from the parking and trailhead to the ford should be reconstructed and improved for all weather public use. A similar improved trail would run from the trailhead approximating the route of the historic Byram's Ford road to the south and west. Funding for these improvements would be obtained through grants in aid from agencies such as the Water and Conservation Fund.

It is recommended that the trail halt short of the railroad crossing. A logical terminus of the trail is the Monnett Fund's map marker number 17 adjacent to the present DuPont building.

**4. Installation of Walking Trail Along Historic Route of Byram's Ford From Interpretive Kiosk to Crest of Bloody Hill
Installation of Walking Trail Along Crest of Bloody Hill from Byram's Ford Road to Location of Pratt's Battery and Marker Number 17A**

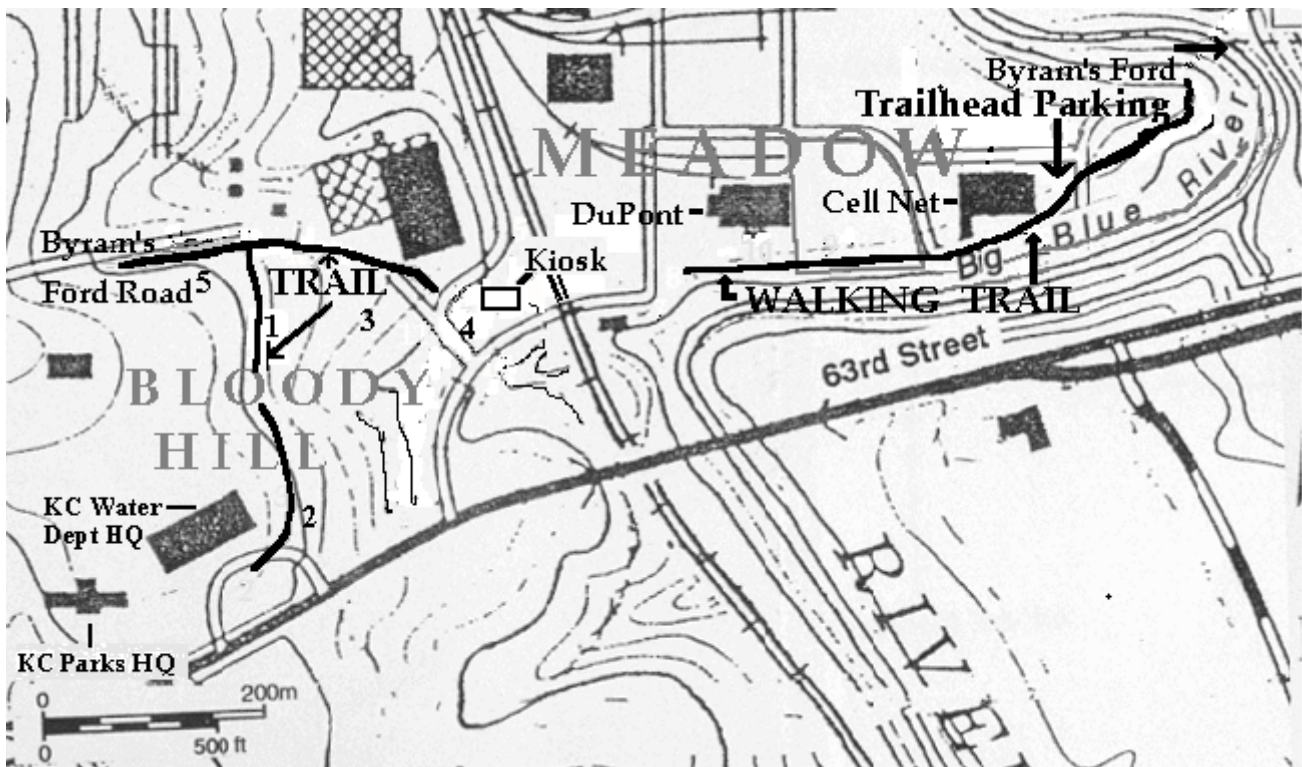
As noted in the Miller archaeology report, portions of the historic route of Byram's Ford is preserved on Bloody Hill west of the location of the proposed interpretive kiosk.

The trace of the Byram's Ford Road in this area passes by the site of the Log House which was a prominent feature in the battle. The approximate location of the Log House on the slope of Bloody Hill is designated as position 3 on the Development Plan Map. The historic vista along this route is

seen in the photograph appearing on page 17 above of the front facade of the Log House from Jenkins. The Log House stood on the south side of the Byram's Ford road opposite the present location of the Pepsi bottling facility.

The trail will be constructed along the route of the historic Byram's Ford Road to the west edge of the tract held by the Kansas City Water Department. An intersecting walking trail will be constructed along the crest of Bloody Hill from the Byram's Ford Road. It will proceed in a southerly direction past the important viewsheds designated as positions 1 and 2 on the Development Plan Map. The southern terminus of this trail is at the site of the current Monnett Fund marker number 17A delineating the position of the Confederate Battery.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN MAP



KEY

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Vista of ravine from Bloody Hill | 3. Location of historic Log House |
| 2. Confederate artillery battery
Marker 17A -10 lb Parrot gun | 4. Vista from Rock Escarpment |
| | 5. Remnants of historic Byram's
Ford road |

The historic view from position 1 is shown in the following photograph from Jenkins' *Battle of Westport*. The view shows the area of the ravine from which Philips' Federal cavalry ascended to pressure Marmaduke's Confederate defenders to withdraw from Bloody Hill.

Historic Vista from Bloody Hill

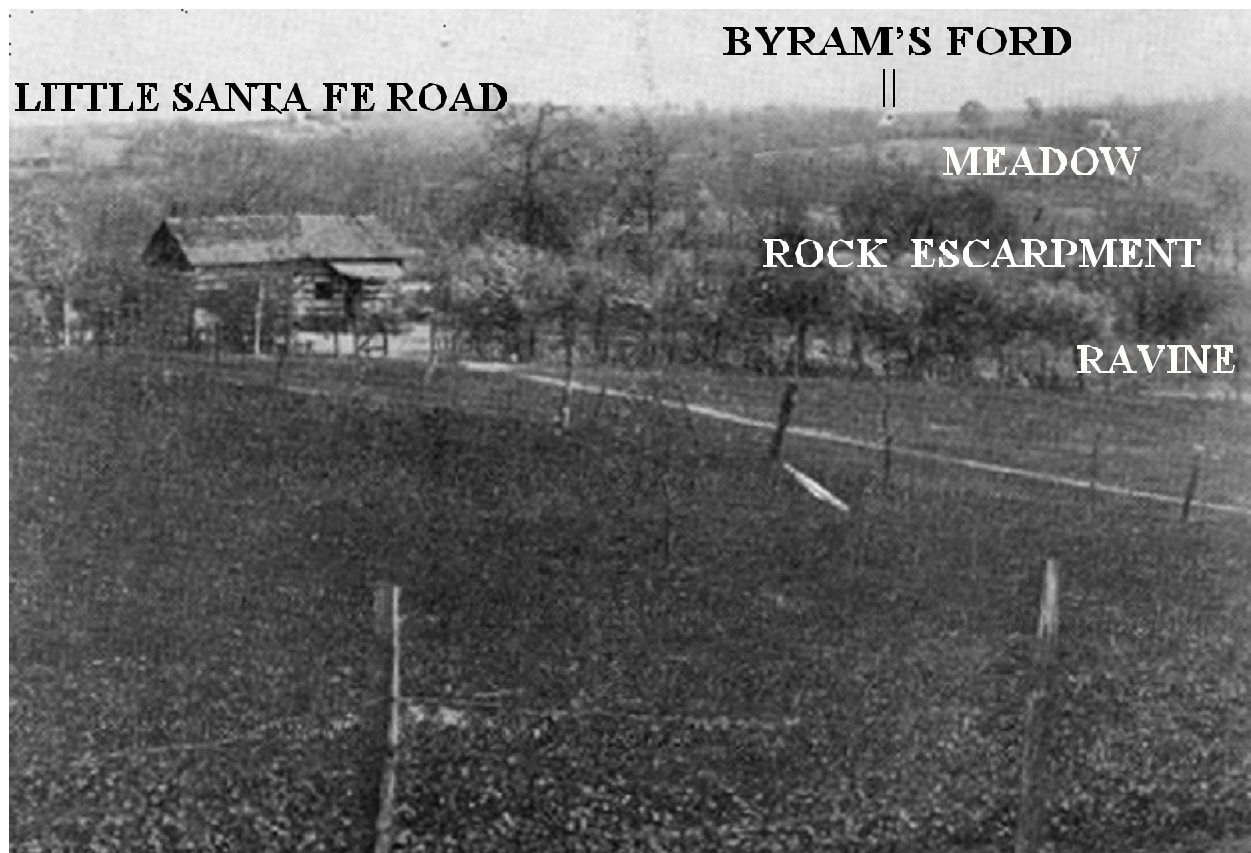


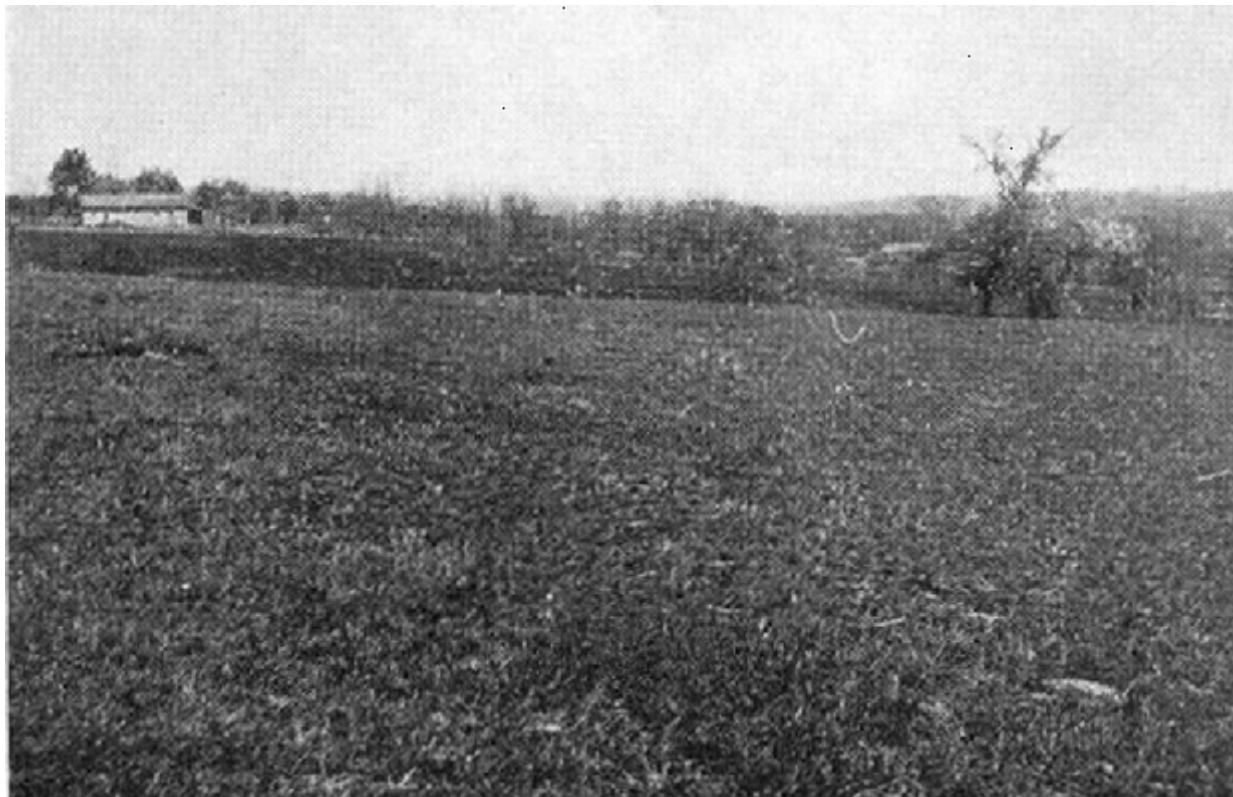
Plate 6 from Jenkins' *Battle of Westport* (1906)

This photographic view is from Position 1 on the Development Plan Map. The identifying labels have been added. Jenkins identified Byram's Ford as being in the hollow below the white mark on the horizon. The Little Santa Fe Road was noted to run near the houses seen on the left horizon. According to Jenkins, this view is the

"point where Philips' (Brown's) brigade halted and lay down in their charge on Marmaduke's position. Looking back toward Byram's Ford, over the ground covered by Philips' advance. Log house standing during the battle shown in left middle ground."

The historic view from the location of the combined Confederate artillery battery (Hynson's Texas Battery and Harris' Missouri Battery) is also depicted in the Jenkins' photograph below. This position is denoted as position 2 on the Development Plan Map.

The trail system can be accessed by parking near Marker No. 17A adjacent to the new Kansas City Water Department headquarters building at 4800 W. 63rd Street. Alternatively, the upper trail system can be accessed by parking near the interpretive kiosk on Manchester Terrace. Funding of the trail system will rely largely upon grants in aid.



Marmaduke's Final Line on Crest of Bloody Hill

Plate 7 from Jenkins' *Battle of Westport* (1906)

This view is from near where present Marker 17A is located. The view looks to the northeast toward the Ravine through which Philips' Brigade attacked Marmaduke's Confederate line running along the brow of Bloody Hill.

5. Installation of replica artillery piece at Marker 17A - Pratt's Artillery

The 1988 Monnett Fund development plan proposed to place a replica artillery gun tube and carriage at the location of the Confederate batteries which were located on the left side of Marmaduke's line. Through the PIAC appropriation to the Parks Department, the artillery piece has been acquired with anticipated installation in summer 2005. This artillery piece will be visible to traffic on 63rd Street and denote the southern terminus of the Bloody Hill walking trail.

6. Installation of Radio Broadcast Site Interpretation System

In lieu of relying solely upon additional monument type interpretive signage along the trail system, an interpretive system using low wattage radio transmitters will be installed to transmit messages interpreting various points on the site. This method has been successfully implemented in Virginia along the route of Lee's retreat to Appomattox. The transmitters can be installed either through existing electrical sources on the battlefield or through alternatives such as solar cells. Funding of this item would be through grants in aid from sources such as the National Park Service and the PIAC program.

X. INTERMEDIATE TERM PLAN

The Monnett Fund proposes in coordination with other stakeholders in the Byram's Ford site to undertake and complete the following items over an intermediate term:

1. Archaeological Surveys

Marmor's study for the Corps of Engineers recommended that intensive study be made of the site by metal detectors (Marmor, "Abstract" at 1). This methodology has been successfully employed at the Mine Creek Battlefield site by Lees of the Kansas State Historical Society with impressive results for the interpretation of Civil War battle operations.

Likewise, the Gray and Pape site reconnaissance survey (Miller, 1995) recommended intensive archaeological field work of possible entrenchments in Swope Park south of 63rd Street opposite Manchester Trafficway.

The photographic record and literature reviewed for this plan suggests that additional archeological field work should be conducted to survey the presumed location of the Log House on the slope of Bloody Hill.

The University of Missouri, Archaeological Survey of Missouri and other archeological resources should be contacted to perform the recommended investigations. The Monnett Fund will coordinate applications for funding of these essential planning studies through grants instituted with the National Park Service and similar funders.

2. Landscape Cultural Survey and Remediation Planning

The photographic evidence from Jenkins demonstrates that many areas of the site may now be much more heavily forested than at the time of the battle. The battle site lies in the transition zone between Woodland and Plains. Rather than the landscape being denuded of vegetation by more intensive human habitation, the result over the past century has been a shift to increasing forestation in previously open spaces. The view of the bank of the Big Blue from a century ago (Jenkins 1906) is much less heavily wooded than in the current view.

The most striking change is the obvious heavy overgrowth which has occurred in the Ravine up which Philips' brigade advanced. Although the Ravine was dammed earlier in the past century for use as a pond, the present condition of the Ravine is wholly inconsistent with its condition at the time of the Battle of the Big Blue. The photograph (Plate VI) appearing in Jenkins depicts the Ravine with relatively little shrubbery. The early photographic evidence is consistent with the contemporaneous battle accounts. The viewshed study of the Gray and Pape survey (Miller 1995) provides a substantial point of beginning for this planning.

The effort to restore the cultural landscape will need to be balanced with the practical necessity of using the existing vegetation to screen and obscure various modern structures located within the industrial park. Additional plantings and vegetation will be needed at least as an interim measure to screen and obscure existing buildings. Consideration should be given to means of landscaping to reduce the visual impact of the Pepsi bottling facility particularly when viewed from Monnett Fund marker 17 in the Meadow.

This planning can be performed most effectively under the guidance of the landscape architect of the Parks Board staff. Applications for funding of these essential planning studies through grants should also be instituted with the National Park Service and similar funders.

3. Highway and Property Entrance Signage

The entrance to the Byram's Ford Battlefield site from 63rd Street at Manchester Trafficway should have substantial monument signs announcing the Byram's Ford Battlefield Site in the northeast quadrant for westbound traffic and on the south side in Swope Park for eastbound traffic. Street signs along 63rd Street marking the approach to the battlefield should be installed by the City of Kansas City. Along I-435, MODOT should erect suitable signage announcing the historic site with directions to appropriate exits. This additional signage could easily be placed in conjunction with the existing signage for Swope Park and Starlight Theatre. Signage directing I-70 traffic to exit to southbound I-435 to the site should also be installed.

4. Construction of Turnout on Hardesty Avenue and Kiosk for Interpretation of East Approach to Byram's Ford --Improved Trail from Ford to Ascent of East Bluff

The east approach to Byram's Ford and the trace ascending the bluff above the Ford is in the original part of the Byram's Ford Historic District.

An interpretive kiosk will be constructed adjacent to Hardesty Avenue at a location approximately 600 feet north of the intersection with 63rd Street. The placement of the kiosk should coincide with the crossing of the historic Byram's Ford Road. Access to the kiosk would be from the west side of Hardesty Avenue.

The kiosk will function both as an interpretive device for the action that took place at the ford on both October 22 and 23 and as a trailhead for an improved walking trail approximating the route of the historic Byram's Ford Road. This kiosk's design will use the usual vertical partitions. Suitable identification of the nearby location of the advance by Dee's Battalion of the 4th Iowa Cavalry should be provided.

Because of the site's condition, considerable landscape remediation will be required for the walking trail. The steepness of the ascent up the bluff requires special consideration for the construction of this portion of the trail. Applications for grants for funding of the plans for these improvements and trails should be submitted to the National Park Service and similar funders.

5. Completion of Demolition of Stratco Building

The Stratco Building was destroyed by an explosion in February 2002. Much of the structure was removed. All vestiges of the structure including the raised foundation should be completely removed.

6. Demolition of Schlumberger and Bisbee Buildings

The two structures acquired by the Kansas City Public Works Department should likewise be demolished with removal of all vestiges of their existence. The property should then be replanted to native grass. Following the City's demolition of these buildings, the major portion of the Meadow would be cleared and restored to its 1864 appearance. This is in keeping with the 1992 Memorandum of Agreement which provided for their removal and transfer of the properties to the Monnett Fund for use as part of the Big Blue Battlefield.

XI. LONG TERM DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Monnett Fund proposes in coordination with other stakeholders in the Byram's Ford site to undertake and complete the following items as long term measures:

1. Acquisition of DuPont Warehouse

As noted by the Gray and Pape survey study, the site's critical long-term need is the acquisition of the properties within the battlefield currently not held by public agencies. Recognizing that acquisition of the entirety of the battlefield is not an immediately achievable goal, this plan proposes to obtain key properties which will dramatically enhance the preservation of the historic appearance.

It also bears noting that the usual panoply of historic preservation tools cited by the studies short of fee simple ownership are not feasible for this site. Those tools might be practical for a more rural setting. They, however, are not pertinent to the Byram's Ford site. The owners of the property in the adjacent industrial park and office buildings have no realistic incentive to grant "conservation easements." Conservation of the status quo for this site is unacceptable. The requirement of restoration of the site necessitates fee simple ownership.

The paramount need is the acquisition of the DuPont building. The Corps of Engineers Big Blue flood control plans make the early acquisition of the DuPont warehouse extremely critical to the site's preservation. Current plans specify the construction of a levee across the battlefield in the Meadow from north to south. The levee would cross the tract currently held by the Monnett Fund (Lot 6). The Marmor archeological study of Lot 6 confirmed the conclusion that the construction of such a levee would adversely impact the battlefield.

The Monnett Fund's agreement with the City and Corps for the site stipulates that the proposed levee would be relocated out of this area if the DuPont building were acquired and no longer in need of flood protection. Thus, to prevent further destruction of the battlefield's visual integrity, the acquisition of the warehouse is absolutely imperative (See discussion in Miller 1995 at 66).

The Monnett Fund has made various overtures to DuPont in the past. The Monnett Fund will continue to contact DuPont representatives to explore feasible avenues for acquisition of the site and its transfer to the public domain.

One avenue of funding of the property is through so-called "T-21" grants. These Federal transportation grants provide matching funds on an 80/20 basis and are administered by the state of Missouri through MODOT. This source of funding has been used to acquire and enhance Civil War sites throughout the nation. Byram Ford's association with the Santa Fe Trail recommends

it favorably for this source of funding. The Monnett Fund will coordinate this effort with the Missouri Division of Natural Resources.

The DuPont warehouse was constructed in 1962. It serves as a wholesale distribution center for automotive paint finishes. A suitable site for relocation of this warehouse to a nearby facility should be feasible.

Following removal of the DuPont building, the area would be replanted to grass in order to approximate the conditions existing in the Meadow at the time of the battle. The view from the south parking and loading area of the property provides an excellent vista of the Ravine and Bloody Hill with minimal visual impacts by the Pepsi facility.

The critical difference that will occur following the elimination of the DuPont building from the viewshed is illustrated on the following page. The photograph of the current vista from position **1** is contrasted with a computer generated view of the same vista after the removal of the DuPont building, CellNet building and Stratco building. The view of the battlefield is opened from the Ford to Bloody Hill. After restoration of the Meadow, the visitor at position **1** on Bloody Hill has nearly the same vista as portrayed in the historic photograph from Jenkins' *Battle of Westport* reproduced on page 29 above.

2. Visitor Facility in Former Burns and McDonnell Building at 4800 E. 63rd Street

The Monnett Fund is seeking to establish a visitor center for the battlefield within a vacant portion of the lower level of the City Water Department building. The Fund will attempt to obtain the use of a space within the facility for permanent museum display panels which can function without additional permanent staffing. The plan proposes for the Monnett Fund and other entities to enter into a consortium to create this visitor facility. The parking facility on the north portion of the tract at the rear of the building and associated outdoor lighting would be revamped and the area restored also to native grass.



Current vista from Position 1 on Bloody Hill before restoration of Meadow.



Proposed vista from Position 1 on Bloody Hill after restoration of Meadow.

XII. REFERENCES

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