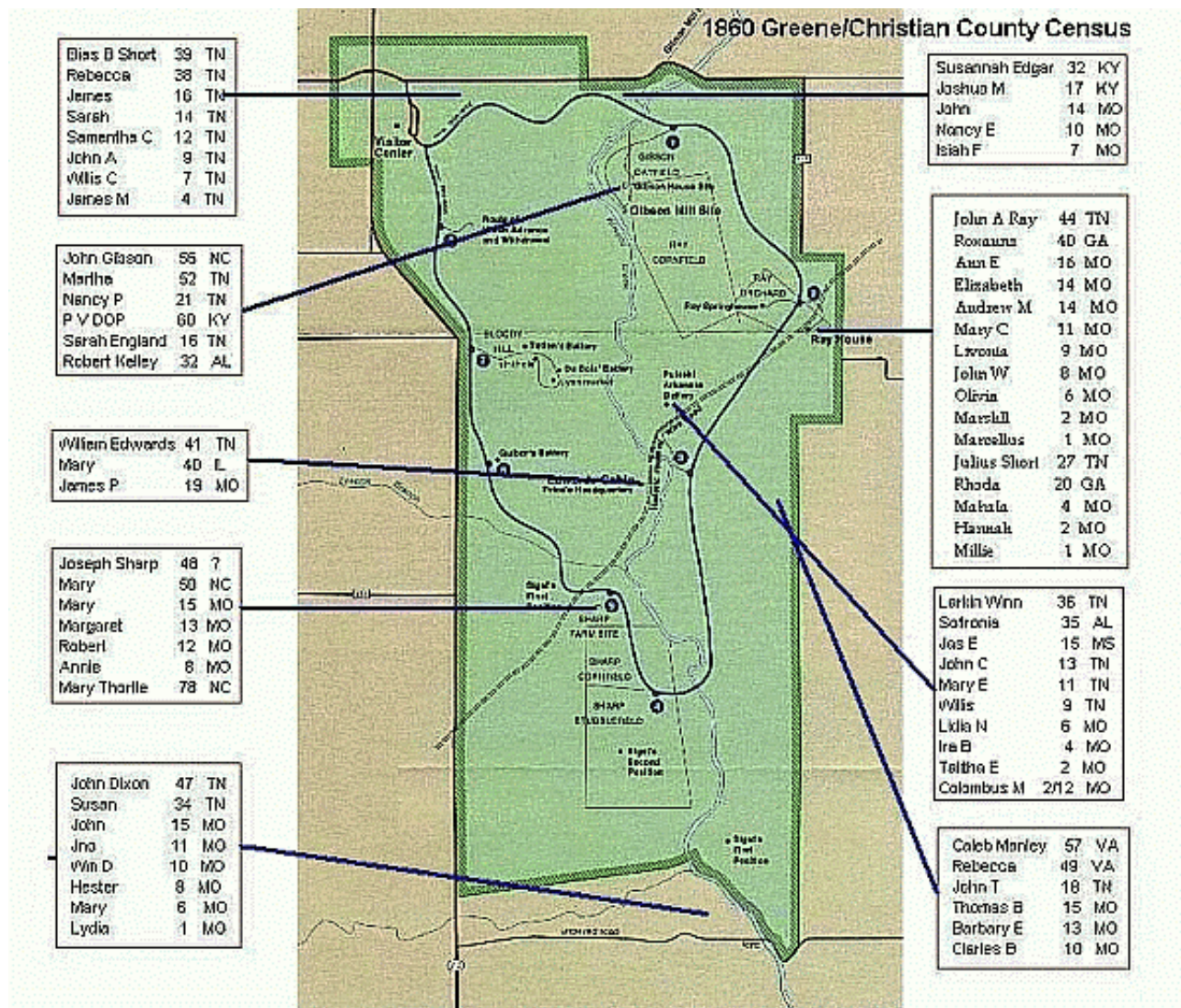


Civilian's on Wilson's Creek

These are the recognized homeowners in 1861 by the Wilson's Creek Battlefield and their approximate locations per the 1860 Greene County Census. Explanations on what we know of these families are below. I also take issue with some of these assumptions, and explain my reasoning below.



These are the established households that the battlefield officially recognizes as having homesteads on 10 August 1861.

(More information will be supplied as I receive it)

From Battlefield Sources (others are listed)

**Susannah Edgar**, the widow of Josiah Jefferson Edgar lived near the northern park boundaries. Susannah was Josiah's 3rd wife and he died in March of 1857, and is buried on a family plot maintained by the NPS. The information about Josiah was obtained by Roger Edgar (rsedgar@aol.com).

The **Elias Short** family lived near, what is today, the National Park visitor's center. The Short family children were in the book as standing outside in their night clothes as the Union Army advanced early in the morning (see Under Both Flags, Chapter 4). Elias Bates Short was born 9 January 1821 in Roane CO, TN and died in 1914 in Greene County, MO. He married Rebecca McCullough in Roane CO, TN on 21 Dec 1841.



*Donated by Al Short, Great-Grandson of Elias Bates Short. Photo 1 is of Elias Short years after the battle, and #2 is of Mr Short at the age of 91. Al believes the house in the background was the house standing and occupied during the battle.*

**John Gibson** operated a mill just south of his home on Wilson's Creek. It is said that the Gibson's took refuge in their cellar during the battle...although I do not have the source for this.

The **John Ray** house is thoroughly researched elsewhere in this book (see chapter 8). Julius Short was living with the family and a mail handler working for John Ray. Rhoda, and the 3 children listed after her, was the slave and referred to by the Ray family as "Aunt Rhoda". (In "The Maiden Waved A Snowy Scarf" by Bob L'Aloge 1993, the author takes Olivia's written record of 14 children in the basement during the battle and assumes there were 5 black children. This is incorrect.) The names of the three listed above were obtained from the 1870 Greene County census. Much of the history of the Ray family during the battle was obtained from family oral interview's with Olivia Ray Bruton.

A descendant of Roxanna Grizzard Steele Ray from her first marriage to William Steele, has advised the battlefield that teen slaves Rhoda and Wiley were given to Roxanna as a wedding gift by her father, owner of a Georgia plantation. After William Steele died, and Roxanna married the widower John Ray, Wiley was sold in 1856 to Samuel Fulbright. This raises some interesting questions on who fathered Rhoda's children, 2 above who were conceived after the sale of Wiley and another, Hattie, that was born in 1861 or 62

Rhoda was living with John Ray who had married Steele's widow, Roxanna. According to records at Wilson's Creek National Battlefield [John Ray and family lived on the battlefield] Rhoda had four daughters. It was suggested that Rhoda moved to St. Louis after the war. In a Greene County, Missouri, marriage index is listed a Rhoda Ray getting married to a John Jones, on July 10, 1868. In the 1870 Federal Census of Greene County, Missouri, is a John Jones, black, 35, born in Georgia, Rosa [Rhoda?], black, 30, born in Georgia, and four daughters, Mahala, Hannah, Millie, and Hettie. In the Springfield, Greene County, Missouri Inhabitants in 1880, compiled by Wm. Kearney Hall from the 1880 Federal Census, Rhoda is listed with her husband, John Jones. A granddaughter, Frances Price, is also listed. Frances married Rubin Crain in Greene County, Missouri, on March 22, 1903. He died July 29, 1909, and is buried in Lot 66 of South Hazelwood Cemetery in Springfield, Missouri. Rhoda Jones has an obituary in The Springfield Republican newspaper of November 4, 1897, stating "Mrs Rhoda Jones, colored, 60 years old...died yesterday at her home, corner of Robberson avenue and Olive street....will be buried in South Hazelwood cemetery this morning." Millie Steele [daughter of Rhoda Ray who originally belong to the family of William Steele [John Ray's wife, Roxanna's first husband] married Marshall Campbell at Wilson Creek Chapel on February 19, 1880. They had a son named Paul Campbell who was 20 in the 1900 census. Millie Price died January 20, 1882. Hettie [Ettie in marriage certificate] married John Price on July 19, 1880. A Hettie Price, "a colored woman 82 years of age," was struck by a car and killed on March 17, 1946, in Springfield, Missouri; [Greene County, Missouri, Coroner's Index Book 14, page 22]. She left a daughter, Mrs. Frances Wright. She died on December 6, 1959. WILEY/Wm-Steele #5842/1852 20 M 400\* \*sold to Samuel Fulbright for \$827.00, April 7, 1856





"Mrs. Ollie Bruton (Ray), Ozark wife of Dr. Joe Brutan. She lived in Ray house at Wilison Creek Battlefield during battle." Bradley: Mrs Bruton in buggy by where present day Health Dept. is."

([Source](#))

**William Edwards** was a Union man and is reportedly to have accompanied Lyon's men to Springfield after the battle of Dug Spring's and his family was not present during the battle of Wilson's Creek. (Note - this site has a small cabin on it today. This is not the original cabin. During the war, William Edwards moved about 5 miles from the battlefield and built another cabin. It is this cabin that had been relocated onto Park grounds today) The original cabin was reportedly built in 1856 by William Edwards.

**Joseph Sharp** had his house in the middle of the Sigel rout. The house was damaged during the battle, and the family hid in the cellar. It was reported for years that the "old lady" of the house sat on her front porch during the battle and refused to leave. Diaries by soldiers tell us that she was definitely in the basement with the others - but very feisty none the less(see Chapter 12 by Watson). This house reportedly burned later in the war, and the family moved.

Information provided by Randy McConnell - Joseph and Mary Howard Sharp moved to a farm two miles from Boaz, Christian Co., MO after their home burned near the battlefield. Their daughter, Margaret, had married Elisha Edmond Frazier in July 1865, and his family's landholdings were centered on Boaz. Elisha had met Margaret, though, when the Sharps were still living near the battlefield. The information on the move to Boaz comes from the Frazier family history.

He and his flock likely did not move to Howell Co., AR until after the war. That county essentially was depopulated during the war, and every building -- house and business -- was burned in the county seat of West Plains in 1863. No one was moving there. The former residents only slowly trickled back after the end of the war. Joseph's wife Margaret died in Howell Co. on Sept. 14, 1867.

Joseph continued living there for a while, and some researchers report that he died there in 1873. However, Joseph is buried at Forbis Cemetery near Nixa in Christian Co., and the stone says he died on Dec. 6, 1876. Howell Co. is 110 miles -- or at least seven days by wagon -- from Nixa, so Joseph had moved back near his original home before his death or was visiting. His eldest daughter also is buried in that graveyard, although her death did not take place until 1905.

**Larkin Winn** reportedly owned the farm near where the Pulaski Arkansas Artillery took up position during the battle. It is reported that after the battle, the Winn's left Missouri and moved to Arkansas.

**Caleb Manley** owned a farm on the eastern border of Wilson's Creek battlefield. Elements of the Missouri State Guard and Arkansas troops camped in his field. The Manley family left their farm before the battle, and were staying with a son in law, William Jennings, just over a hill to the west. The family cemetery was used to hold a few Confederate bodies after the battle. Further information on the Manley family can be obtained from Jane Wheeler (jwhee3939@earthlink.net) who descends through daughter Ardelia.

**John Dixon** owned a farm south of the present battlefield. Sigel's men passed by his home as they advanced north.

Personal Research

When taking census, poll takers of the 1800's were usually traveling by carriage or horseback. There travel was

usually to the next closest house by whatever established path was available. In an area the size of the battlefield, this could involve the census taker criss-crossing the area, leaving it to go the next house outside the battlefield, only to swing around and re-enter it somewhere else. The census takers boundaries were far more distant than the battlefield's property lines today. Therefore, we can get a general idea of the area a house sat in by following the movements of the census taker against what we do know for sure. For instance... by the location of the Manley cemetery, we know where the Manley family resided. And we have the John Ray house still today, as well as remnants of the Gibson mill, and the Edgar cemetery. So, as we follow the path of the census taker, by the numbers he or she attaches to each household, we can follow their movements. Caleb Manley was number 68, John Ray was #69, John Gibson was #71, and Edgar was #72. So...who was #70? This is a mysterious family to me, except that in 1860, I know they lived just south of the Gibson family on a plot **Hezekiah Blankenship** bought in 1857, apparently from Elias Short. What is known about this family is they moved into SW MO from IL, after Hezekiah's father, Spencer Blankenship, died and the family began to squabble over his Illinois land. Later in the 1800's they appear in Texas. In 1860, the family shows on the census as

Hezekiah	31	M	TN	Houston	10	M	IL
Lavicy	33	F	TN ***	Elisha	6	M	IL
Louis	13	M	IL	Spencer	3	M	AR

Was this family present during the battle? At this time, we have no evidence either way. The home is not mentioned in any diaries, but neither are some of the others. This is a mystery I would like to figure out.

After leaving the Edgar family, the census taker moves north. We know this by matching the names they take against land ownership. The census taker does not appear to re-enter the battlefield until household # 114 where he hits the Elias Short family. He also hits #113 **William Thompson**, whom I show owning 40 acres immediately south of the Short family (land which is on the battlefield grounds). Where was this home and family during the battle?

The other two mysteries are Larkin Winn and William Edwards. In 1860, Winn shows up on the census as #52, and Edwards shows up as #76. Neither of these families fit into what would seem a logical path for the census taker. Had these families moved before the battle? The Edwards cabin was reportedly abandoned right before the battle..is it possible it had been abandoned before this, and the family already moved to another nearby location. The same applies to the Winn family. Had they already moved?

I was contacted by Randy McConnell ([ScandalMcC@aol.com](mailto:ScandalMcC@aol.com)) who grew up on Bloody Hill, before it became a National Battlefield. Randy provided the following information - Larkin David Winn was born on July 8, 1823 in Maury Co., TN to Zadok and Elizabeth Brecheen Winn. The family was cousins to Gen. Richard Winn of the Revolution who died in Maury in 1818. The family had come to Maury from Winnsboro, SC with many early Presbyterian settlers that pioneered in southern Maury.

Larkin David Winn married Sophrona Amanda Looney on March 16, 1843 in Marshall Co., TN (which had been created in 1836 largely from Maury). At the time his parents were living in Giles Co., TN, which is adjacent. In 1852 -- at a time when my Inman, Edwards, Faught and other ancestors all began moving from Maury and Giles Cos. to northern Christian Co. -- the Winn moved west. Larkin's parents moved to Washington Co., AR on Winn's Creek. Larkin ended up at Wilson's Creek, although he may have detoured through Polk Co. (Bolivar), MO.(The most common point of emigration for early residents of southern Greene and northern Christian Cos. was Maury or Giles Co., TN.)

I'm unaware of any evidence that the Winns were living across from the Ray House in August 1861, but they likely were and also were Union sympathizers. During the war, in 1864, Larkin David and Sophrona Winn had a son who was named Ulysses Grant. (Almost all the former residents of Maury and Giles Cos. who came to Christian Co. fought and/or sided with the Union. The county voted 8 to 1 not to secede.)

Immediately after the battle or soon thereafter (all the local accounts say the amount of dead soldiers and animals made the area almost uninhabitable), they appear to have fled not to Arkansas, but to the border area of Porter and Finley Townships, Christian Co. There, their eldest son, James E. died in October 1865 and is buried in Payne Cemetery in Porter Township. All the land records of Christian Co. were destroyed in an August 1866 courthouse fire, and no Winn appears on the state land patents for this period in Christian Co. that would allow tracing more precisely the date when the Winns relocated there.

Larkin David Winn died Dec. 10, 1866, but no stone appears at Payne Cemetery. Larkin's son – the Rev. John Callaway Winn – married Nancy Pope of Finley Township, the sister of the second wife of my great-great-grandfather, on Feb. 25, 1866 in Christian Co. After Larkin and Sophrona had a final posthumous son in 1867, she remarried to the Rev. William David Keltner in Christian Co. in 1869. The Rev. Keltner's nephew Emanuel also married in Christian Co. Sophrona's daughter Mary Elizabeth Winn in 1866. The Rev. Keltner's daughter Martha Susan married in 1867 in Christian Co. as his second wife the Rev. John Callaway Winn, whose first wife died only months after the marriage. In the 1870s, most members of the Winn-Keltner families moved to Pope Co., AR. In the 1880 census, however, Sophrona and the Rev. Keltner are separated, living in distant households. Sophrona patented land in Pope Co. in 1890 and died on March 31, 1893 in Crawford Co., AR. She is buried in Oakdale Cemetery, Russellville, Pope Co., AR.

In the southern part of the battlefield, which sits in Christian County, we have the Sharp house, which is well documented. They are household #328. At #329 is the John Potter farm which sat near Sigel's advance to the Sharp house. Before the Sharp's at #326 we find the Gwinn family, which owned land west of the current battlefield. At #327 we have a John (28) and Rebecca (24) Steel, both from NY. Where were they located exactly?

I was contacted by a David Perry of Webb City, Mo who submitted the following - Next door to the Edgars in 1860 Wilson Creek Census you will find William Jackson 55 from Tennessee, Wife Claressa 63, Daughter Julia Ann, 25 Son James 19, Son William 18. William is my 3th gen back Grandfather. They are listed at home #73 listed next to the Edgar's, on the same page as the Gibson's and Edwards'. The Edgar line are distance relatives of mine. Back in the late 1940's early 50's I visited the Jackson homestead at Wilson Creek. In their back porch there were hundreds of Civil War relics that they had plowed up while farming; I was excited as a kid to see all the stuff. William's son James Franklin Jackson enlisted 9 days after the battle at Rolla and served in Company "d" 24th Regt. Mo. Infantry. Which was involved in various local battles and the battle of Pea Ridge.

Part of the fun of genealogy is uncovering the mysteries of our ancestor's. Thanks to Gail DeGeorge for her extensive research on the battlefield civilian's.



[Back to the Index](#)