UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM
FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC
Wilson's Creek Battlefield

AND/OR COMMON
Wilson's Creek National Battlefield (preferred)

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Route 2 Box 75
(1 3/4 miles south of Highway M on Route ZZ)

CITY, TOWN Republic

STATE Missouri

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

X.PUBLIC

STATUS

X.OCCUPIED

PRESENT USE

X.AGRICULTURE

X.BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

X.MUSEUM

X.STRUCTURE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

X.SITE

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

X.OBJECT

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

X.YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

__IN PROCESS

X.YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

__BEING CONSIDERED

TRANSPORTATION

AGENCY

MILITARY

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)
Midwest Regional Office, National Park Service

STREET & NUMBER
1709 Jackson Street

CITY, TOWN Omaha

STATE Nebraska

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Midwest Regional Office, National Park Service

STREET & NUMBER
1709 Jackson Street

CITY, TOWN Omaha

STATE Nebraska

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings

DATE
1959

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service

CITY, TOWN Washington

STATE D.C.
Wilson's Creek National Battlefield includes 1749.91 acres of publicly owned land, all in federal ownership except for 22.38 acres of nonfederal road right-of-way, in the Ozark region of southwestern Missouri. The national battlefield includes virtually the entire scene of action of the Battle of Wilson's Creek.

The battlefield is situated on the east and west sides of the Wilson's Creek valley, which bisects the area from north to south. In general appearance, it is not unlike surrounding farm lands. Perhaps 20 to 25 percent is wooded and the remainder is open. The topography is generally rolling, but with steep slopes associated with water courses. The similarity between the battlefield and surrounding farm lands is due to the fact that the battlefield lands operated as small farm units until acquired in public ownership in the 1960s. The grassland-woodlot configuration of the battlefield is typical of the local small cattle operations.

Because restoration of the vegetative cover at the time of the battle is being considered by the Park Service, a synopsis of vegetative conditions is germane. Two range types occur within the national battlefield, about 610 acres being classified as Limestone Ledge and 758 acres as Chert Hills. The Chert Hills type occurs on all exposures of rolling ridges and slopes from 9 to 60 percent at elevations from 900 to 1600 feet. The highest elevation on the battlefield is 1250 feet, attained at several locations. Based on deep stony and cherty silt loam soils, the Chert Hills is a partially wooded prairie type, with a climax vegetative composition 60 percent grasses, 30 percent woody plants, and 10 percent forbs. Little bluestem dominates the grasses, the major overstory species being the oaks, and lespedeza and tickclover being common forbs. Overgrazing of this type, as has occurred here, tends to promote the advance of woody plants and less palatable grasses and forbs, with a decline in palatable grasses and forbs. In severe retrogression, plants like broomsedge, persimmon, and greenbrier move toward domination. Lower stages are also marked by dense tree stands with an understory of briar and thorny berries. These altered conditions are apparent in the Chert Hills areas of the battlefield today.

The Limestone Ledge type occurs on all exposures of slopes from 2 to 50 percent grade at the same elevation as the Chert Hills. Soils are shallow, underlain with fractured limestone, and with a high limestone content. This is also a partially wooded prairie type, although more sparse than the Chert Hills with a climax vegetative composition of 70 percent grasses, 20 percent woody plants, and 10 percent forbs. Big bluestem and sideoats grama make up 40 percent of the grasses and the oaks and eastern red cedar dominate the overstory. Overgrazing generates a reaction similar to that of the Chert Hills type except that in the lower stages, cedar tends to dominate with a sparse understory of threeawn, forbs, and annuals.

The lower stages of both types have been historically attained at various locations on the battlefield. However, overgrazing is not now in evidence, as recovery of the open areas through native grass seeding has been effective.
The Battle of Wilson's Creek (called Oak Hills by the Confederates) was fought 10 miles southwest of Springfield, Missouri, on August 10, 1861, taking its name from the stream that crosses the area where the fighting took place. Wilson's Creek National Battlefield preserves in a fair degree of integrity, although vegetative conditions have altered, virtually the whole of the scene of battle.

The Battle of Wilson's Creek was a focal point of the bitter struggle between Union and Confederate forces for control of Missouri in the first year of the Civil War. There Brigadier General Nathaniel Lyon climax his campaign to drive the armed Secessionists out of Missouri in order to secure the strategic state for the Union. His two-month campaign deprived Southern sympathizers of an effective armed presence and kept them sufficiently occupied to permit the formation of a Unionist state government that then mobilized the state for the Unionist cause. Had Lyon abandoned Springfield and not attacked the Confederates under Major General Sterling Price and Brigadier General Ben McCulloch at Wilson's Creek, a pathway into Missouri would have been open for the Secessionist army. The subsequent history of the war might thus have gone quite differently.

The battle was for its size also one of the bloodiest of the war, due to the inexperience of the leaders, the zeal of the troops, and the close fighting in the wooded terrain. Of 5,400 Union troops engaged, there were 1,317 casualties, including 258 killed and 873 wounded. The Confederates, with 10,175 troops lost 279 dead and 951 wounded. Unionist casualties included General Price, who was killed, and the death or wounding of most senior officers. Casualties among high ranks in the Confederate forces were also high: two brigade commanders and a regimental commander were killed, and a division commander and the colonels of four regiments were seriously wounded.

Although the Confederates held the field at the end of the battle and were therefore the victors, they were badly mauled, exhausted, and their supplies and ammunition were nearly depleted. They were thus prevented from following with an advance into Missouri. The action thus sealed the fate of Southern intentions in the state, as Union forces were speedily reinforced. Unionists in both Missouri and Kentucky were enabled to prevent secession of the states in part because of the aftermath at Wilson's Creek. The battle set the stage for the Battle of Pea Ridge (Elkhorn Tavern), Arkansas, seven months later, which ended the first major transmississippi campaign and effectively ended the organized Southern threat to Missouri.
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES
-----, Environmental Statement, U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, 1975. (See Continuation Sheet Page 8)

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA
ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1749.91
UTM REFERENCES
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
A 17 416,230,0 41,10,79,8,0
B 17 416,48,5,0 41,10,79,8,0
C 17 416,47,0,0 41,10,36,0,0
D 17 416,42,1,0 41,10,39,5,0

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION
(See Continuation Sheet Page 9)

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES
STATE Missouri CODE 29 COUNTY Greene CODE 077
STATE Missouri CODE 29 COUNTY Christian CODE 043

FORM PREPARED BY
NAME / TITLE Thomas P. Busch, Historical Architect
ORGANIZATION National Park Service
STREET & NUMBER 1709 Jackson
CITY OR TOWN Omaha
STATE Nebraska
DATE March 26, 1976
TELEPHONE 402-221-3423

CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION
YES__ NO__ NONE__

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
DATE 9/1/76

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
DATE 9/2/76
The overstory species in the wooded lands generally conform to the appropriate range site descriptions. The predominant tree in the park is oak, in several species. Eastern red cedar is associated with limestone areas and has intruded into old fields and pastures. Honey locust is common, as is osage orange. There is sparsely scattered black walnut in the ravines and bottomlands and green ash, hackberry, American elm, basswood, Chinese elm, and the Kentucky coffee tree are present. In the understory, there is hawthorn, persimmon, berry bramble, grape, and paw-paw.

Among grasses, little bluestem dominates the Chert Hills sites together with Indian grass and big bluestem, with switchgrass the major subdominant. Big and little bluestem and wide sideoats grama predominate the Limestone Ledge type. Subdominates are switch and Indian grass. Seedings to recover grasslands and open spaces, at the recommendations of the Soil Conservation Service, have been successful.

The battlefield is probably less forested today than it was when the battle was fought in 1861, for some accounts described the area as being a parklike forest. This description is typical of mature oak-hickory forests once common in the area but now rare because of the cutting of timber in the 1930s. Very few old trees remain. At the time of the battle the floor of the forest, actually more of an open savannah, was relatively free of the woody plants and brush that exist today, but the dense cover of the creek bottom remains in much the same condition as it probably had in the 1860s.

As this description indicates, the alteration of the natural cover of the battlefield has been great and at the same time subtle. An attempt to restore raises complicated questions, and a recovery of the appearance of the scene in 1861 will depend first on the results of detailed historical and botanical research, and second on a restoration process that will probably take decades. With the general configuration of the site essentially unaltered, the integrity of the scene is much higher than at most Civil War battlefields.

There were local residents, two farms, and about 13 structures on the battlefield at the time of the battle. Remains of a few of the structures can still be seen, but most exist today only as archeological sites. Sites, structures, and features relating to the battle are as follows:

Ray House (HS 5) - John A. Ray built this house in 1852 and it stands today in fair condition on its original foundation. This is the only structure remaining intact that dates to the Battle of Wilson's Creek. The Ray House is a single-story, five-room, L-shaped structure with a porch spanning the front (north) and a porch on both angles of the ell at the rear (west). The front portion of the house measures 18 feet 2 inches by 36 feet 2 inches, and the rear ell measures 16 feet 1 inch by 31 feet 11 inches. The structure is of frame construction on stone foundations. It had clapboard siding and a wood shingle roof.
Known alterations of the structure are as follows:

a) 1904-13, pantry added enclosing 11 feet of the southwestern portion of the back porch.

b) 1904-34, back door in south room sealed off. Four fireplaces were removed, one next to the west elevation of the northeast room, one against the east elevation of the southwest room, one against the south elevation of the mid-room and one against the north elevation of the south room.

c) 1935, the northeast room and mid-room were refloored over the old boards and a doorway cut through the west elevation of the northeast room, north of the fireplace. Boarding creating squares was added to the ceiling in the northeast room.

d) In the 1930s the structure was rewired for electricity.

This structure will be partially restored by the National Park Service.

SITES AND OTHER FEATURES

Ray Spring House (HS 13) - This structure existed at the time of the battle and was used by the Ray family for the storage of their dairy products. At present only the stone and earth foundation of the old spring house remains.

Gibson's Mill (HS 15) - It was a one- or two-story structure with massive rock foundation and wood frame construction. It measured 45'x38'. The mill burned to the ground before the twentieth century. The foundation and traces of associated water control features remain.

Edwards Cabin (HS 12) - The Edwards Cabin was a one-room log structure which was adjacent to the Wire Road. The cabin site is known and a similar log cabin built about 1850 was acquired by the National Park Service in July 1973. This cabin will eventually occupy the site. The site is open and in grass much as it was at the time of the battle.

Sharp House (HS 14) - At this time a description of the house is not at hand, nor is the exact location of the house site known. The structure stood at the time of the battle. Today the area is open, in grass, and the Wire Road trace can be easily seen.

E. B. Short Farmstead (HS 17) - This was a one-story structure which measured about 20'x20'. The house was presumably built by Mr. Short, who came to the area between 1850 and 1860. The house was no longer standing in 1910. The farmstead also includes sites of a barn and root cellar.

T. B. Manley House (HS 18) - Limestone foundations, possibly from the Manley home, have been discovered, but more research is necessary for conclusive evidence.

C. B. Manley House (HS 19) - Exact location of this site unknown.

Gwinn House (HS 20) - The location of the structure is only generally known. The house may have been vacant by 1865.

Manley Cemetery (HS 21) - Located directly south of where the C. B. Manley house once stood, the site measures 50'x50' with 57 visible grave markers,
most of which are unfinished limestone slabs. Only eight of the markers are inscribed.

Fayetteville Road or Wire Road (HS 11) - Today remnants of the road remain. From the western park boundary to the northeast, 3,000 feet of the road are obvious as a trace until it strikes the tour road and river valley to the north. The tour road and past cultivation of the valley have destroyed obvious evidences of the road for a 2,600-foot stretch. However, the road's original location is known with some exactness. The point where the road crossed Wilson's Creek is known. East of the creek the tour road once again interferes with the known location of the road for 400 feet. The old road then follows the north side of an intermittent stream for 2,000 feet. Approximately 1,100 feet of the road was obliterated by an early twentieth century quarry and townsit activities. However, the last 2,400 feet of the road is well defined with a 1,000-foot section being paved.

Ray's Cornfield - Approximately 50 acres comprised John Ray's Cornfield. The exact fence lines of the cornfield are not known. Today the area is planted in big bluestem, little bluestem, Indian, and switch grasses.

Sharp Cornfield and Pasture - Today this field which comprises 195 acres is in grass and treeless. In 1861, probably only 100 acres was clear, only a portion of the field was planted in corn.

Colonel Sigel's Artillery Position - In the 1860's the ridge was thinly timbered with black and white oaks and blackjack oaks. Today the ridge is timbered and much the same.

Bloody Hill - The 270 acres that comprise Oak Hill, or Bloody Hill as it is called today, were in 1861 covered with a dense undergrowth between two- and three-feet high. Bare spots covered with flintstones cropped out occasionally. Large black oak trees grew all over the field, but on Bloody Hill the average space between them was fifty yards. The hill was crisscrossed with rails leading to Gibson's Mill and the Wire Road. Today trees densely cover the crown and eastern slope of the hill. The open spaces are reseeded with big bluestem, little bluestem, Indian, and switch grasses. An access road runs along the crown of the hill to an interpretive structure and trail.

Sinkhole - an oval-shaped sinkhole measures approximately 37' long, 24' wide, and 8' deep.

Edgar Cemetery (HS 22) - Approximately a 50'x50' plot of land, it has about 25 gravesites with and without headstones.

Lyon Marker (HS 10) - This is a granite marker 3½' high, 2' wide, and 1' deep set on a concrete base, placed in 1928 near the point where General Lyon was killed.

Nonhistoric Features - Nonhistoric intrusions on the battlefield include an overhead powerline, an abandoned railroad right-of-way, and county roads.
Present plans for the battlefield include the removal of such features incompatible with the physical integrity of the area. Plans also call for the construction of a visitor center at the northwest corner of the property, and a tour road with associated interpretive stops and a picnic area. These developments will be so sited as to intrude minimally on the property.
Wilson's Creek National Battlefield Park was established April 22, 1960, to preserve and commemorate the site of this significant action; its name was changed by law to Wilson's Creek National Battlefield on December 16, 1970.

Significance of structures, sites, and features on the battlefield:

Ray House - The Ray House is one of the oldest structures in Greene County and is certainly one of the few 1860 farmsteads being preserved. During the 1860s the Ray family was well known in the area. John Ray served as Postmaster from January 18, 1856 to September 28, 1866. The Post Office was in the house. The house served as a mail stop for the Fayetteville-Springfield stage from June 30, 1858 to June 30, 1862. During the battle of Wilson's Creek the house was used as a field hospital by the Confederates. Union General Lyon's body was taken to the Ray House and later claimed by members of his army.

Ray Spring House - Existed at the time of the battle.

Gibson's Mill - The mill provided necessary commodities for local farmers like the Ray and Sharp families and most likely for the Confederates encamped adjacent to the mill and south of it August 6-11, 1861. It was below the mill that Union Captain Plummer crossed Wilson's Creek leading his regulars into Ray's cornfield during the battle of Wilson's Creek.

Edwards Cabin - General Price made his headquarters next to the cabin in August 1861, and it was used during the battle as a field hospital by the Confederates. In this valley, General Price's Missouri State Guard was encamped. It was here that the first Union artillery shells exploded and where the Confederate wagon train burned.

Sharp House - This location marks Union Colonel Sigel's most advanced position. It is here that Sigel arranged his troops to block the Wire Road and the expected Confederate retreat. However, Sigel was completely routed by a force under Confederate General McCulloch. Sigel's defeat is considered the turning point in the battle of Wilson's Creek, and resulted in a Confederate victory.

E. B. Short Farmstead - Several artifacts have been unearthed around this area which relate to the battle of Wilson's Creek (buttons, spoons, belt buckles, cannon shells, etc.). However, it is doubtful that they were dropped there by soldiers, rather they were collected by members of the Short family.

T. B. Manley House - Existed at the time of the battle.
C. B. Manley House - Existed at the time of the battle.
Gwinn House - Existed at the time of the battle.
Manley Cemetery - This cemetery was in existence at the time of the battle and was referred to on Sigel's map. Some of the graves are probably those of Confederate soldiers.
Fayetteville Road or Wire Road - During the 1860s a state road called locally the Wire Road connected Fort Smith, Arkansas, with Springfield, Missouri. Approximately two miles of the old road lies within the park. The road was originally known as the Bolivar or Booneville Road and followed the Osage Trace. It was first opened in the late 1830s and extended from Palmyra on the Mississippi River through Booneville to Springfield and south into Arkansas connecting Fayetteville and Fort Smith. It was the principal route from St. Louis to the southwest. Because of its importance it was used by the Butterfield Overland Mail coaches from September 1858 to July 1861 to provide mail service between St. Louis and San Francisco. Telegraph wire was strung along the road (consequently the name Wire Road) and telegraphic service began the summer of 1860 between Fort Smith, Arkansas, Springfield, Bolivar, and Jefferson City, Missouri until the war's end. Throughout the Civil War the road was used as a military highway. Confederate General Ben McCulloch and Union General Lyon used the road in the engagements at Dug Springs and Wilson's Creek, and in the latter, the Union troops advanced along the road to precipitate the battle. The road saw heavy use during Union General Curtis's Pea Ridge campaign against General Price.
Ray's Cornfield - In this field General McIntosh charged Captain Plummer's forces on August 10, 1861, and succeeded in driving the Union soldiers from the field before they could capture a Confederate battery.
Sharp Cornfield and Pasture - At the time of the battle, the field was used by the Confederate cavalry as their campground. It was here that the first shells from Sigel's guns burst, scattering the Confederates. Their retreat opened the valley for Sigel's northward advance. Sigel approached the Wire Road and Sharp House from the south and through Sharp's field.
Colonel Sigel's Artillery Position - Somewhere along the southern portion of this ridge, Colonel Sigel posted his guns and awaited General Lyon's signal. It was from here that Sigel successfully surprised and scattered the Confederate artillery that was encamped in Sharp's pasture below.
Bloody Hill - It was along the crest of Bloody Hill and down its southern slope that Union General Nathaniel Lyon and Confederate Major General Sterling Price fought desperately on August 10, 1861. Here the most men were engaged and the highest number of casualties sustained during the Battle of Wilson's Creek. This was the focal point of the conflict and the place where General Lyon lost his life and the Union Army the battle.

Sink Hole - Seventy-two northern soldiers were allegedly buried here and later reinterred.

Edgar Cemetery - The history of this cemetery is not known and it is questionable as to whether it existed at the time of the battle.

Lyon Marker - Placed near the point where General Lyon was killed.
Beginning at the intersection of the Missouri-Pacific Railroad and State Highway ZZ in Christian County, Missouri, the boundary of Wilson's Creek National Battlefield follows Highway ZZ north approximately 3,500 meters to a point about 6,000 meters south of the intersection of Highway ZZ and Elm Street Road. From this point, the boundary runs due west about 220 meters, then due north about 610 meters, then due east about 1,220 meters, then due south about 220 meters to the intersection of McElhaney Brook and Elm Street Road. From this point the boundary follows the south edge of Elm Street Road east about 1,040 meters, then turns due south along a road for about 820 meters, then due east about 200 meters, then due south about 800 meters, then due west about 200 meters, then due south about 2,480 meters, from whence it follows a county road for a distance of about 250 meters to Wilson's Creek, which it follows northwest about 520 meters to the Missouri-Pacific Railroad right-of-way, which it follows about 1,140 meters in a west-southwest direction to the point of beginning.
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES ENCLOSURE WITH PHOTOGRAPH

1 NAME
HISTORIC Wilson's Creek Battlefield

AND/OR COMMON
Wilson's Creek National Battlefield

2 LOCATION
CITY, TOWN Republic
X VICINITY OF
COUNTY Greene
STATE Missouri

3 PHOTO REFERENCE
PHOTO CREDIT Richard I. Ortega
DATE OF PHOTO August 1975

NEGATIVE FILED AT Midwest Regional Office, National Park Service

4 IDENTIFICATION
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET
Ray House, view of northwest side from the west.
1 NAME
HISTORIC Wilson's Creek Battlefield

AND/OR COMMON Wilson's Creek National Battlefield

2 LOCATION
CITY. TOWN Republic
VICINITY OF X
COUNTY Greene
STATE Missouri

3 PHOTO REFERENCE
PHOTO CREDIT Cecil W. Stoughton
DATE OF PHOTO June 1969
NEGATIVE FILED AT Midwest Regional Office, National Park Service

4 IDENTIFICATION
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET
View of Wilson's Creek showing vegetation along shoreline.
NAME
HISTORIC Wilson's Creek Battlefield
AND/OR COMMON Wilson's Creek National Battlefield

LOCATION
CITY. TOWN Republic
VICINITY OF X
COUNTY Greene
STATE Missouri

PHOTO REFERENCE
PHOTO CREDIT Cecil W. Stoughton
DATE OF PHOTO June 1969
NEGATIVE FILED AT Midwest Regional Office, National Park Service

IDENTIFICATION
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET
Overall view of the terrain typical of the Battlefield at Wilson's Creek.

PHOTO NO. 343