

**In Our Opinion (Editorial)**

**Civil War center will be a huge asset**

Published: March 1, 2005

Kentucky doesn't get a lot of recognition for Civil War battles that occurred on its soil during the bloody conflict, but that is about to change. Western Kentucky University will soon be acquiring a state-of-the-art Civil War research collection that will focus on the War in the West, battles primarily in Kentucky and Tennessee. The center will also contain information about battles in Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas and Missouri.

The Center for the Study of the Civil War in the West, to which the university has agreed to fund \$300,000 over four years, will contain the nation's largest collection of letters, diaries, unit and regimental histories and other information on microfilm and microfiche. The collection, which will be housed in the Kentucky Library, will also contain "service jackets," which were cards carried by every soldier who fought in the Civil War detailing where they had been and what happened to them.

This is a remarkable occurrence.

This will provide a large following of Civil War buffs in Kentucky and Tennessee a venue to learn more about the crucial battles and skirmishes that took place during the war. Interest in Civil War re-enactments and attendance at the Orphan Brigade exhibit at the Kentucky Building several years ago is an indication that interest in this conflict remains keen.

One amazing aspect of the collection is that it will contain about 13,000 microfiche cards where people can learn about their relatives who fought in the Civil War.

This collection will be larger than those located at Harvard and Yale.

Bowling Green is the ideal location for the collection, considering its proximity to major battlefields such as Perryville, Richmond, Mill Springs, Fort Henry, Fort Donaldson, Shiloh, Chickamauga, Stones River, Franklin and Corinth.

Its location here is also important because Bowling Green was once the Confederate capital of Kentucky before it was captured by invading Union forces in February 1862. The city also contains remains of several Civil War fortifications, including Western Kentucky University and Reservoir Hill, that were used by Confederate soldiers and later by Union forces.

The collections will be open to the public, but will also be used by several departments at Western, including folk studies and English, as well as visiting scholars.

Western President Gary Ransdell and history professors Andrew McMicheal, Marion Lucas and Robert Dietle all should be praised for bringing this center to Bowling Green.

It will certainly be an asset to the community, Western and for all those who travel from around the country to view it.

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