

### **Did the Civil War Contribute to the "Split" at Mt. Zion?**

Although no major battle of the Civil War was fought at Bowling Green, it was occupied by both Confederate and Union Armies and served briefly as the confederate capitol from Mid-August 1861 to mid-January 1862.

Many believe the Civil War was over slavery, however slavery was only one issue. Kentucky actually had few large slave owners when compared to the states of the lower south.

It was originally believed Kentucky could remain neutral and Governor Magoffin demanded all military force to withdraw from the State of Kentucky, however all efforts of neutrality failed and Kentucky became divided on the issues and both Confederate and Union troops invaded the state to control as much territory as possible.

As a member of the Union, Kentucky was expected to supply its quota of soldiers for the nations army. At the beginning of the war there were many volunteers and also criminals with minor violations that were allowed to enlist but after many battles and loss of lives and no end in sight, Kentucky was forced into the fray.

Drafting was regarded as unfair and unconstitutional as there were thousands of volunteers for the Confederates. However, exemptions could be made by supplying a substitute, the fee in some cases was \$300.00 or as much as \$1,000.00. All this led to the public cry that it was a "rich man's war and a poor man's fight." More than 3,000 draftees paid the fee and sent a substitute. Paradoxically the slave could not be drafted.

September 18, 1861 Confederate troops moved into an occupied Bowling Green for five months, mostly securing railroad and river approaches and preparing for their enemy who did not immediately arrive although the Union Army was encamped only a few miles to the north. The real enemy was illness and exposure. There were deaths from measles, typhoid, influenza, scurvy, and pneumonia.

Then word came that the Union Army was moving south toward Bowling Green. After destroying the bridge across Barren River and tearing up the railroad tracks they left on the night of February 14, 1862 during a storm of rain, sleet and snow.

The next day when the Union Army from the north arrived they had to cross the river by fording its icy waters, even the footbridge had been destroyed.

Although some sections of the town had been torched there were a few buildings left and were commandeered to serve as hospitals and military use. Both the starving armies lived off the surrounding land owned by the local farmers. The countryside was devastated by the raids of field, garden, orchard, chicken house, even the persimmon trees and turnip patch.

They purloined feed for their horses from the landowners field, crib, haystack and took his horses when they left. They burned the rail fences for firewood. Nearly every family had a story to tell.

After the war a local farmer filed claims in the Warren County Courthouse against the United States Government for \$17,755.80 for supplies furnished Federal troops, 4,648 bushels of corn, 6,070 bushels of oats, and 80 tons of hay. No record exists that he was paid.

Local historians and genealogists have determined that most people of the Riverside area were pro-union while most residents of Richardsville and Greencastle supported the Confederates.

Yes, there was a split at Mt. Zion! From church records and census records we find several families moved to a different location.

"Love your enemy" must be a very difficult task when one feels that the person sitting across the aisle from you may be responsible for the death of your husband or son.