

Features



Civil War Battleflags Featured On Website

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By Annabeth Miller, ShowMe Times Editor

JEFFERSON CITY - Missourians can now view an impressive collection of Civil War battleflags through a special website.

The Missouri State Museum is providing online viewing of Civil War battle flags through Missouri Digital Heritage. This important history can also be seen first-hand at the Missouri State Capitol in Jefferson City.

The Missouri State Museum has overseen the conservation of 45 Civil War battle flags since the end of the war. From now through June 2015, as part of the "Civil War Missouri: A House Dividing" exhibit, the museum is displaying a rotating seven flags in its History Hall on the first floor of the Missouri State Capitol. The flags will rotate so visitors can view as many as possible through the life of the exhibit.

The Missouri Digital Heritage Initiative, co-sponsored by the Missouri State Archives and the Missouri State Library, provides the Civil War battle flags for the first time to an online audience.

Missouri played an important role during the Civil War, with units formed in the state on both sides of the conflict. One unit formed was the First Division of the Missouri State Guard, a pro-Confederate unit organized south of Dexter at Frenchman's Spring.

"Preserving history is an important way for Missourians to connect with our past," said Bill Bryan, director of Missouri State Parks, a division of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources. "Making the Civil War battle flags available online significantly increases citizen access to our history."

Following the end of the Civil War, Missouri Adjutant General Samuel P. Simpson collected Union and Confederate battle flags for safekeeping. Damage made some of the flags unrecognizable.

An Adjutant General report around 1917-1920 reported the flags were in very poor condition. The flags were turned over to the new Missouri State Museum by the Adjutant General's office in the 1920s.

A Works Progress Administration project in the 1930s attempted to conserve many of the battle flags. But today with advanced technology it has been learned the flags were sometimes damaged further by this conservation effort.

In 1983 the St. Louis Civil War Roundtable was disappointed by the condition of the battle flags. Due to the group's effort, an organization to finance flag conservation was formed and in 1984 a legislative appropriation was secured to begin conserving flags. The conservation effort continues today with funding from the parks and soils sales tax administered through the Missouri Department of Natural Resources.

The Missouri State Museum is located on the First Floor, Missouri State Capitol in Jefferson City.

Link of Interest

- [Missouri Digital History](#)
- [Missouri Civil War Battle Flags Online](#)

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