

LOCAL NEWS

Solving a local history question

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Where was Fort Russell located?

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The Illinois War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission wants to solve a local history question that has been up for debate for many, many years: Where was Fort Russell located?

Chairman Bill Wilson said the commission would like to determine this, so the historic site can be marked before the Bicentennial celebration in 2012.

Wilson said the state of Illinois was involved in the War of 1812. He said Fort Russell, located in Edwardsville, was the headquarters for all of the militia, U.S. Rangers and for some of the troops of the regular army stationed in the Illinois Territory during this time.

Wilson said Fort Russell was a major part of the state's history during this time period.

"This was the military center of the state," Wilson said. "It is important we ID the military base and mark this site appropriately."

Wilson said the commission is hosting a meeting at 2 p.m. on Sunday at the Edwardsville Public Library.

He said anyone who has information about the location of Fort Russell or who has any interest in finding the location is invited to attend.

Wilson said the commission wants everyone involved in the process.

"We are trying to determine where it was," Wilson said.

Wilson said the commission wants there to be a consensus on where the fort was located. Once that is determined, he said the idea will be shared with the group or government entity who can mark the location.

"It belongs to all of us," Wilson said.

Wilson said the Illinois War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission was created in November 2010 and is divided into 13 regions across the state to prepare for the upcoming Bicentennial.

Wilson, said the War of 1812 was a conflict between us, the United States, and Great Britain and the Native American Nations. He said the Illinois Territory was involved in the conflict from 1811 to 1815.

"Illinois did have a part, an important part, and it faced the brunt of the Native American impact," Wilson said.

To learn more about the Illinois War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission or to get involved in the search for Fort Russell, visit www.illinoiswarof1812bicentennial.org or contact Wilson at 248-5885 or 667-8660.

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