

SENATE BILL 313

By Hensley

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 4,
Chapter 1, relative to recognition of the Battle of
Sugar Creek.

WHEREAS, the Appleton community was known as Pin Hook until the post office located in the area and it became known as Appleton; and

WHEREAS, the final Civil War battle fought in Tennessee took place in Appleton at Sugar Creek on December 26, 1864; and

WHEREAS, this battle was a delaying tactic to protect the retreat of General Hood's Army of Tennessee following its disastrous defeat at the Battle of Nashville in December of 1864. The Confederate Army was pursued by twice their number of Federal troops under the command of General Wilson. Unless some bold action was taken, the Army of Tennessee would be annihilated; and

WHEREAS, a plan to delay General Wilson long enough for General Hood's army to escape included General Nathan Bedford Forrest, 1,000 cavalry, and 4,000 infantry. The escape route ran from Nashville to Columbia, through Pulaski and down the Old Pulaski-Florence Turnpike through Appleton to the Tennessee River; and

WHEREAS, the two armies fought three fierce encounters between Columbia and Sugar Creek. One encounter was south of Columbia, one at Lynnville, and one at Anthony Hill on December 25, 1864; and

WHEREAS, the Confederates retreated from Anthony Hill on Christmas night on a road as bad as any army had ever encountered. They marched through the mud with sleet beating on their heads until they reached Sugar Creek around one o'clock in the morning. The battered army halted and made camp at clear, pebble-bottomed Sugar Creek. It became evident that

another desperate fight would be necessary in order to ensure the escape of the Confederate troops; and

WHEREAS, the Confederates pushed the Federals back through waist-deep Sugar Creek, and as they retreated, General Forrest's men followed. The Battle of Sugar Creek raged for five hours, and the water of Sugar Creek was said to have run red with blood. The rest of General Wilson's men reinforced the Federal Army, and the Confederates withdrew and continued toward the Tennessee River; and

WHEREAS, the Battle of Sugar Creek resulted in the capture of 150 horses and a large number of overcoats. The Army of Tennessee, numbering more than 20,000 men, crossed safely over the Tennessee River on a pontoon bridge on the afternoon of December 27, 1864; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly supports and commends the Boyd family and local living history educators for their efforts to teach the history of Lawrence and Giles counties in Tennessee; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 4, Chapter 1, Part 4, is amended by adding the following language as a new, appropriately designated section:

The governor shall proclaim the first Saturday during the month of December each year as "The Day to Remember the Battle of Sugar Creek" to encourage commemoration of the Battle of Sugar Creek, the final Civil War battle fought in Tennessee, which took place at Appleton in Lawrence County.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.