



# Save The Franklin Battlefield

*Dedicated to the Preservation, Protection, and Promotion of Civil War Sites in Williamson County, Tennessee*

March 2000

PO Box 851  
Franklin, TN 37065-0851  
(615) 500-6612  
www.franklin-stfb.org

## From the President

Dear Members—

Spring comes early to Middle Tennessee, but our spell of great weather came to an end on the day of our Battle of Brentwood Tour. Cold temperatures and rain forced us to postpone the tour. It will now be held on April 9<sup>th</sup>. See elsewhere in this newsletter for details.

March of 1863 found the Confederate Army of Tennessee in control of Spring Hill, Columbia, Shelbyville, Tullahoma, Manchester, and McMinnville. Food was in short supply, and forage trains and cavalry combed the hills for food and Federals. The Federal armies at Nashville, Brentwood, Franklin, and Murfreesboro probed into the countryside, in a game of “cat-and-mouse” with the Confederates. The armies met at Thompson’s Station on March 10<sup>th</sup> and gain at Brentwood on March 25<sup>th</sup>.

We invite you to attend our Battle of Brentwood tour to learn more about the history that was made here in Middle Tennessee in March of 1863.

*Joe Smyth*

## Brentwood Battlefield Tour-Rescheduled

The Battle of Brentwood Tour being held in conjunction with the Brentwood Historical Society has been rescheduled for April 9.

Many area residents do not realize the extent of the two-pronged cavalry attack on the garrison guarding the Brentwood train depot, and the stockade protecting the railroad bridge over the West Harpeth River. The Confederate forces under Brigadier General Nathan Bedford Forrest and Colonel James W. Starnes, a Williamson County native, rode under cover of night from Spring Hill, attacking Brentwood on the morning of March 25, 1863.

The tour will cover the attack of the garrison in downtown Brentwood, the capture of the stockade with only one shot, and the running firefight along what is now Maryland Way. It will run continuously between the hours of 2:00 P.M. and 5:00 P.M., with the last tour starting at 4:00 P.M. The tour will be free to STFB and Brentwood Historical Society members, and tickets for the general public are \$5.00 and \$2.00 for students and children. Tickets will be available on the afternoon of the tour at the Ramparts building, on the corner of Franklin Road and Maryland Way. A self-guided driving map will be available to allow participants to visit the various sites, where military and civilian re-enactors will interpret the battle events.

## Upcoming Events

APRIL 1

SULTANA MARKER DEDICATION  
THE ARKANSAS DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION (DAR) HAVE ERECTED AN HISTORICAL MARKER COMMEMORATING THE SULTANA TO BE DEDICATED IN MARION, ARKANSAS. PRE-CEREMONY RECEPTION WILL BE AT THE MARION UNITED METHODIST CHURCH AT 2 PM. THE DEDICATION WILL FOLLOW AT 3 PM ACROSS THE STREET FROM THE CHURCH, IN FRONT OF THE CITY HALL AT 15 MILITARY RD. COMPLETE WITH A CIVIL WAR RE-ENACTORS' BAND. FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT JEANNETTE COLEY, 910 SOUTH ROSELAWN DR., WEST MEMPHIS, ARKANSAS 72301-2446 (ONLINE ADDRESS: JMCCOLEY@AOL.COM)

APRIL 8

ANNUAL REUNION OF THE ASSOCIATION OF SULTANA DESCENDANTS AND FRIENDS AT MT. OLIVE BAPTIST CHURCH, KNOXVILLE, TN. FOR MORE INFO CALL NORMAN SHAW 865-558-0331.

APRIL 9

BATTLE OF BRENTWOOD TOUR—RESCHEDULED. PLEASE SEE STORY THIS PAGE FOR DETAILS.

APRIL 10

BOARD MEETING—WILLIAMSON COUNTY LIBRARY AT FIVE POINTS. MEETING STARTS AT 6:30.

APRIL 17–23

NATIONAL PARK WEEK . WITH NATIONAL PARK DAY ON APRIL 22 AT STONES RIVER NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD.

MAY 7

WALKING TOUR OF HOSPITALS/HOMES IN DOWNTOWN FRANKLIN.

MAY 27

SCOUTS DECORATE STONES RIVER NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD CEMETERY WITH FLAGS AT 10. A MEMORIAL SERVICE IS PLANNED AT 1:30 PM.

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## Letter from Franklin



*(This is a continuation from last month's newsletter. This letter from Sergeant Joseph B. O'Brian, Co. B 1st Tennessee Infantry CSA to his sisters, ac. #60 TSLA)*

Tuesday Dec. 20. Camped near Pulaski for the balance of the day.

Wednesday Dec. 21. Remained at Pulaski

Thursday Dec. 22. Marched out 8 miles from Pulaski to-wards Tennessee River. We destroyed all the caissons & limbers of the captured batteries not being able to carry them on. (page 3)

Friday Dec. 23. The ground is hard frozen. We traveled finely making 23 miles to-ward Bain-bridge.

Saturday Dec. 24. Marched to Shoal Creek.

Sunday Dec. 25. Crossed Shoal Creek. The water was deep & swift & the bottom very rocky & the fording dangerous. Several wagons were abandoned in the creek. It was not thought that the pontoon bridge would be finished across (the) Tennessee River before tomorrow evening. The gun boats came to Florence, shelled the country but did no damage. Only heard to-day that the enemy has landed 2 corps at East Port & this with the general situation made us rather uneasy.

Monday Dec. 26. Genl Cheatham with Vaughn's Brigade took hold of the Pontoon Bridge last night and by daylight this morning it was ready for crossing on. Everything moved across rapidly. About the middle of the day the gunboats commenced shelling furiously a few miles below caused considerable hurrying up (page 4) among teams. The shelling lasted only a few moments when the boats had to retire. We moved to Tuscumbia.

Tuesday Dec. 27. Remained near Tuscumbia all day. Have orders to leave at day light in the morning to-wards Corinth which is 50 miles from here. The Cavalry is to cross to-night & then we will be over. I suppose we will go to Corinth. We have lost altogether about 70 pcs. Arty. The army is very scattered & in no condition to fight. It will require re-organization from top to bottom & strict discipline. We are in a deplorable position. If we are in stationary position for or 3 mos. & proper \_\_\_\_\_ is used many straggler will be gathered up. A large number of them will never be in the service again. If the enemy \_\_\_\_\_ closely we will be compelled to fall back unless we are re-enforced & I can see no prospect of that. Sherman has in all probability reached the coast. Our prospects a present look rather gloomy, but we (page 5, MISSING), (Page 6) Our government will have to inaugurate some very stringent & decisive policy in order to meet the enemy in the spring. He is flushed with victory & determined on crushing us out.. We must not be faint but stand up firm & be determined. I would like to see you but must not expect that pleasure this winter or spring as movements will be too active to admit of a leave of absence. Write to Lon & tell her that I will write to her as soon as I can. Also the same to Gus. We have been moving so constantly that I have not been able to write and only had a chance now as I occupy an out house to-night for quarters & have a fire. I recd. Your letter of the 5th inst. When at Columbia \_\_\_\_, also Genny's letter from Meridian. My kindest regards to all, Mr. H & wife Mary—also remember me to Maj. Hardaway & family. Much love to you all.

Your Own Bro.  
"Joe"

P.S. Did I send to you to keep for me a daguerreotype of a young lady? It may be in some of my packages. Please look & see & let me know. If not write to Gus & ask him. I have been called on for it & it is necessary that I should have it. Let me know & keep till I send for it.

Joe

## In Honor of Women's History Month—Mary Ann Harris Gay

While women throughout the Confederacy experienced hunger, death, and desolation during the war, few managed to rise above their circumstances with grace and dignity to equal that of Mary Ann Harris Gay of Dekalb Co., Georgia.

Miss Gay's home was directly in the path of Sherman's infamous "March to the Sea" and the conditions she describes in her book will bring the reader to tears. She recalls picking up kernels of corn dropped by the horses of the Union cavalry and washing and drying it to be ground into meal. Upon returning home with this precious half bushel of meal she discovered a mother and children there to beg food. She discussed the heartbreak of hearing starving children beg for food the mother could not provide. Though the meal was the only food she had she not only shared willingly, but invited the family in and prepared it for them so that the hungry children might eat sooner.

Mary's situation could be described only as desperate throughout the war and death was no stranger to her home. She buried both her mother and a faithful servant boy before losing her half brother, Lt. Thomas Stokes, TX Inf. on the breastworks of Franklin.

Only days after writing home to Mary of the heartbreak of burying two comrades in a land of strangers far from their loved ones Lt. Stokes was killed during the Battle of Franklin and was himself buried in a land of strangers.

Still struggling with poverty and loss Miss Gay rose above her situation when she heard the graves of her brother and hundreds of other brave souls were in danger of being lost. She traveled throughout Georgia and Texas convincing one and then another to contribute money to reinter these soldiers in a safe haven where the graves could be cared for through the generations. In the midst of reconstruc-

tion Miss Gay managed to collect \$7,000, truly a testimony of the love of the Southern people for their fallen heroes.



Today a plaque rests on the cemetery gate at Carnton which states the money collected by Miss Gay was used to install the fence around the cemetery, but in her book, "Life in Dixie During the War" it states the money was used to pay for the reinterment of the bodies at McGavock Cemetery. The following appeared in the Richmond Times February 16, 1896:

"...Miss Gay is the woman who collected the money to have the soldiers who fell at Franklin, Tennessee, reburied, when she heard that the owners of the battlefield said their graves should be ploughed over. She collected \$7,000. and her name is engraved on the silver plate on the entrance gate at the McGavock Cemetery, which she so largely helped to build."

As so often happens with the passing of years Miss Gay's faithful devotion to the Confederate dead at Franklin has been practically obliterated from the pages of history. Ironically her brother's last written words to her were of his fear of being buried in a land of strangers and forgotten.

As we strive to protect and preserve the battlefield let's also cherish and share the memory of this remarkable woman whose selfless act of charity made it possible for generations of descendants of the brave men who fell at Franklin to be able to stand at the grave of their loved one and say to them, "You are not forgotten."

*Submitted by Vickie Rumble  
STFB Member-Florence, AL*

**Save The Franklin Battlefield Membership/Renewal/Order Form**

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Mail To: Save The Franklin Battlefield~P.O. Box 851~Franklin, TN 37065-0851  
Phone Number: 615-500-6612

**Membership is annual, donations are tax deductible.**

Quantity	Description Annual Membership (Choose One)	Price Each	Total
	2000 STFB Day by Day in Middle Tenn. Calendar	\$10.00	
	1999 STFB Day by Day Bicentennial Calendar Special STFB Member Price	\$5.00	
	“Retreat from Pulaski to Nashville” Book Reprint Special STFB Member Price until 12/31/99	\$20.00	
	1989 Commemorative Belt Buckle	\$10.00	
	1989 Commemorative Paperweight	\$10.00	
	1997 Self-Guided Driving Tour Map	\$3.00	
	Save The Franklin Battlefield Bumpersticker	\$1.50	
	Commemorative Postcard	\$5.00	
	Donation for Marker Fund		
		Order Sub-Total	
		Shipping/Handling under \$10    \$0.75 \$10 - \$24.99    \$2.95 \$25 and up    \$4.50	
	-Individual	\$12.00	
	-Family	\$15.00	
	-Corporate	\$25.00	
		Order Total	

*Please note that the commemorative items listed above for sale can be viewed on the STFB website at:*

[www.franklin-stfb.org/saleitem.htm](http://www.franklin-stfb.org/saleitem.htm)