



SAVE THE FRANKLIN BATTLEFIELD

September 2000

www.franklin-stfb.org

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

OCTOBER 14

Carter House Descendants Reunion.
Call the Carter House for more information at 615-791-1861.

OCTOBER 14

Tour of Mt. Olivet Cemetery, Nashville beginning at 4:30. Funds raised to benefit upkeep of graves in the Confederate Circle.

OCTOBER 27

STFB tour of McGavock Cemetery. Funds raised to go to the Franklin UDC for the upkeep of the cemetery.

NOVEMBER 12

Annual Membership meeting 2:00 at the Historic Presbyterian Church. Guest

From the President

Dear STFB Member--

Interest in and knowledge of the Battle of Franklin is growing steadily across the country and the world. With the help of The Carter House staff, Carnton Plantation, various local groups, and our very own STFB web site, folks from far a field are beginning to understand the importance of the Battle.

Along with this knowledge has come the beginnings of a broad geographic support for reclaiming the Franklin Battlefield. This "out-of-town" support adds weight to the call for city and county officials and residents to join the cause.

Our STFB membership is stepping up to the plate--good things are coming from that!

Joe Smyth

Rob Hodge to Speak at Annual Meeting

Raised in Ohio, Rob took a keen interest in the Civil War at the age of 4 when he began playing with his older brothers military figurines. It was at this time that he was told he was named after Robert E. Lee when his interest soared. At age 5, he began going to the library and checking out civil war books. He grew up hearing stories about the Civil War read to him by his mother. Cutting lawns as a kid in the 70s and 80s to buy Civil War memorabilia he immersed himself in the subject. In 1981, at age 14, Civil War reenacting took hold of him. In 1984, Rob was a finalist in the National Congressional Arts Competition in Washington DC for his Civil war painting. In 1985 he went on to attend Kent State University's fine Arts program focusing on film, sculpture, painting, and drawing, where he emulated Winslow Homer. In 1991 he moved to Virginia, where his Civil War passion exploded. That year he committed himself to battlefield preservation after seeing the daily destruction of American's historic sites. He served as a intern with the National Park Service's Civil War Sites Advisory Commission.

In February 1998 Rob was featured in The New Yorker, with a full page photo. Most recently Rob has been featured in Pantheon Books' "Confederates in the Attic," This book, was also a New York Times best seller earlier last year. Rob hosts author Tony Horwitz on a Civil War whirlwind tour of battlefields and museums. "Confederates in the Attic" was nominated for the Don Imus Award this past February. In August 1998 Rob was featured on National Public Radio, and was featured on Tom Synder's Late Late Show in May of that year. In June 1998 Rob was featured as a main figure on the prime time PBS program Going Places because of his zeal for the Civil War and commitment to historical interpretation. Rob is the only reenactor ever featured on the front page (with illustration) of the Wall Street Journal, where he appeared in June 1994 for his commitment to Civil War reenacting authenticity.

(Continued on page 4)

Metro Park's Recent Tour of Nashville's Fort Negley

submitted by Sam Huffman

On Sept 19, Kurt Garrigan of Metro Parks Department led a late afternoon tour group to Fort Negley, a civil war era fortification just on the south edge of downtown Nashville. This earth and stone fort was built during the Federal occupation of Nashville from 1862 to 1865. It was one of several major strong-points along a line of river-to-river fortifications that ringed the south of Nashville from today's General Hospital on the east to Tennessee State University on the west.

Tens of thousands of I-65 motorists daily drive by this magnificent civil war treasure totally unaware that its guns once commanded all railroad and highway traffic south of Nashville. It is the largest non-coastal masonry fortification in America and it is hidden unnoticed on the hill between the Childrens Science Museum and Greer Stadium.

Garrigan's purpose was give a progress report on the Parks Dept project to clear and stabilize the fort with the long range goal of opening it as a public park. The fifty hikers were members of the Battle of Nashville Preservation Society and STFB, plus other history and preservation activists. He also recounted the results of some of the recent archeological digs that have been done in the fort.

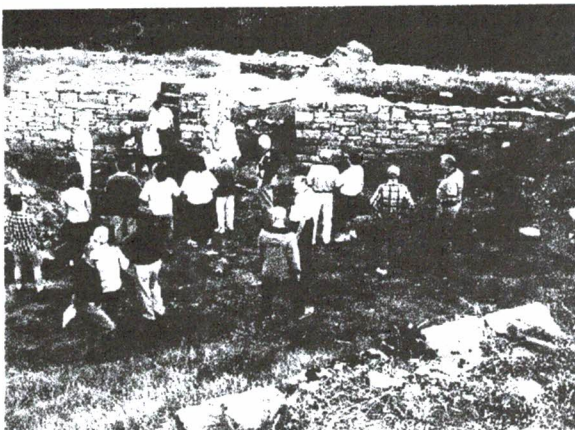
The fort had been restored as a WPA public works project in the late 1930's. Over the years, the rebuilt fort fell into such disrepair that it was no longer safe for public use. For the last 30 years or so the fort slowly became covered with trees and undergrowth.

The recent digs were done in order to identify and differentiate the original construction from the later restoration construction. According to Garrigan, the earlier WPA restoration work used much of the original roughhewn stone in the restored walls. But the original stone was re-cut to uniform thicknesses that permitted the rebuilt walls to have level courses of stonework.

The interior of the fort and the area just beyond the outer walls have been generally cleared of most undergrowth. The primary masonry restoration work to date has been done on the east and north-east portions of the fort's walls. Much of the remaining stonework has not been stabilized and is not safe for the public, or unauthorized visitors, to be around.

The masonry stabilization work has been very expensive and the city is re-evaluating further funding from the already strained Parks budgets. One of the main purposes of this tour was to demonstrate public interest in the fort as a local historic treasure, and as a major point-of-interest to Civil War tourists.

As if to prove that last point, other private tours have been done for historical groups including a recent tour for representatives from the Salt Creek CWRT of Wheaton, IL (near Chicago). At this writing, the UK CWRT (that's right, United Kingdom) is also tentatively planning to visit Nashville and its unequalled Civil War treasure, Fort Negley.



*Tour group at Fort Negley.
Photo by STFB member Rick Hoover.*

Ropers Knob Tour Conducted by STFB *submitted by Sam Huffman*

On Saturday, Sept 9, seven stout adventurers ignored a drizzle to hike to the summit of Ropers Knob, located just northeast of downtown Franklin. The light mist never could penetrate the overhead canopy and finally gave up during the 90 minute walk up to Ropers Knob and back down. The group's purpose was to get a first-hand look at this civil war fortification and signaling station that was constructed by Union forces in early 1863.

The tour group, mostly members of the Heritage Foundation and STFB, followed walking trails that had been laid out and cleared under the direction of Jim Mahurin. Instead of a single footpath to the summit, Mahurin designed a network of trails that crisscross the lower reaches of the south flank of the hill. Eventually, trail markers, trail-side benches, and a map of the walking paths will be available. Mahurin said he still needs many volunteers to help turn these plans into a useable park.

The Heritage Foundation owns two-thirds of the Ropers Knob acreage and the State of Tennessee owns the 22 acres on the summit; which may still have original civil war earthworks. The state plans to conduct formal archeological digs that will define and locate the summit features.

The general long-term plan for this 67 acres of mostly young forest is to develop a passive park open to the public. For now, the property remains closed. STFB had special permission to lead this tour of RopersKnob, and at least one more STFB tour is planned after the leaves are off.

On this tour, heavy foliage restricted the group's view from the summit in all directions, but those who had made the trip in winter months pointed out some of the barely-visible landmarks in the valleys to the north and south. The final park plan will hopefully include several cleared summit overlooks that will provide a year-round vista of the surrounding Franklin basin.

If you or your group want to help make the Ropers Knob Park a reality, you can contact Jim Mahurin at 790-0083 or at jimmahurin@aol.com to sign up for the next work day.

Civil War Treasure found in the Tennessee River *Submitted by Kim Hoover*

Maritime Archaeologists 35 feet below the surface of the Tennessee River, crawling on hands and knees through what is thought to be a mother lode of Civil War memorabilia. Four vessels—two barges, a steamboat transport, and a smaller boat have been located after 136 years. They are all buried under several feet of sediment. Supplies, boots coffee, bottles of whiskey, cannonballs, pencils, buttons, some firearms and other items are thought to be contained inside the 14 or more Union boats sunk by a surprise artillery bombardment from troops led by General Nathan Bedford Forrest.

The war was winding down when Forrest's troops positioned themselves on the west bank of the Tennessee River and began their November 4, 1864 raid on the Union supply depot at Johnsonville.

Commandeering the Undine—a Union gunboat, the Confederates fired upon the town in order to lure three other Union gunboats downstream into the firing path of Forrest's soldiers hidden on the hillside. The boats were sunk, and the undine was intentionally grounded and set on fire. This Union loss provides historians with what is hoped to be a treasure trove of Civil War artifacts.

This search by the maritime archaeologists has been supported by the Tennessee Historical Commission and Raise the Gunboats Inc, a nonprofit organization in Benton and Humphreys counties. Raise the Gunboats doesn't have plans to refloat the remains of the sunken boats. They would like to have what is inside the boats. The plan is to have a place where the material that is salvaged can be displayed in museums and local schools.

And Now We Have Another Battle to Fight

Submitted by E J Neeley

Articles that have appeared in a local newspaper tells of a "pristine Piece of Civil War history would be lost forever if a proposed industrial park is built on Bradley's Knoll." A developer in Middle Tennessee wants to create "an industrial park on 240 acre hilltop he owns adjacent to Spring Hill Battlefield.

This land was the site of "a bloody battle that left hundreds of men killed, wounded, or captured on November 29, 1864 – the day before the devastating Battle of Franklin . . ."

I will know quote from the newspaper article as it was printed:

"Spring Hill Mayor Ray Williams maintains there never was a "Battle of Spring Hill." "Sure there was fighting all around the area but no big battle took place," Williams said.

The article goes on "Don't you think that if Marvin Wright, who was a principal at Spring Hill High School for so many years and who was a historian had known about this so-called Battle of Spring Hill, he would have taught it in history classes? Never Happened."

Maury County historian Bob Duncan, "What we have preserved (118 acres adjacent to Dams' property purchased by the Civil War Preservation Trust) encompasses the approach to the battle . . . but the fight itself took place in large measure on Mr. Adams' land."

One first hand account I have read, "We had almost reached the edge of the woods when the shock came. Twenty pieces of artillery opened upon us followed by a long line of infantry. Horses tumbled over each other, and fell, men were shot, and horses galloped away rider less, and limbs and bark covered the ground. It was a dreadful few minutes and it all happened very quickly. Frank M. Norflett spoke to General James R. Chalmers "General, everybody buy you and me have been killed or wounded; let us get away," and they rode to the rear.

The Confederates suffered because they did not have ammunition to return the Union's fire. General Forrest in speaking with Hood told Hood "Chalmers and Buford were out of ammunition but Genera W. H. Jackson would do every thing in his power to check the retreat on the turnpike. Hood assured General Forrest that his corps commander would supply Chalmers and Buford at once with ammunition, but this was not done until the following morning, when General Walthall furnished twenty rounds of ammunition to the man. The ordnance wagons had not yet reached us and no more could be obtained."

Yes there was fighting at Spring Hill and maybe the Confederates could have engaged the Union in more fighting and kept them from reaching Franklin if they had gotten the ammunition Hood and promised.

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Rob has worked on numerous Civil War related film and television programs since 1985, including ABC's North and South, TNT's Gettysburg, and Andersonville. For several years he was a coordinator for Greystone Communications series Civil War Journal that aired on the Arts and Entertainment Channel and The History Channel. Rob has assisted on several independent films that are Civil War related, as well as The Discovery Channel.

He has just finished working with Time Life Books on a 600 page work titled "the Illustrated History of the Civil War," and has also recently written with Jim McPhearson, Ed Bearss, and Brian Pohanka in a volume on Federal soldiers letters written to the New York Sunday Mercury called, "Writing and Fighting the Civil War."

Earlier last year he formed Wide Awake Productions (named after the 1860's Wide Awakes) a film production company dedicated to Civil War preservation and interpretation. Wide Awake has created threee products in 1999: "Saving Civil War Battlefields," a television pilot yet to be named, and the award winnind "Chickamauga: High Tide in the West."

He is currently writing a preservation column for "America's Civil War." Most recently Rob has written for The Washington Post on the Civil War in Loudoun County, Virginia. *(Can you see why we are excited to have Rob as our guest speaker?)*

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

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	\$6.00	
	1999 STFB Day by Day Bicentennial Calendar	\$6.00	
	Both Calendars 1999 and 2000—different pictures in each!	\$10.00	
	“Retreat from Pulaski to Nashville” Book Reprint	\$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	
		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	
	Donation—Marker Fund		
	Donation—Land Purchase		
		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

Save The Franklin Battlefield
PO Box 851
Franklin, TN 37065-0851
615-500-6612
www.franklin-stfb.org