



SAVE THE FRANKLIN BATTLEFIELD

February 2001

www.franklin-stfb.org

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

MARCH 4-5

ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF THOMPSON'S STATION ANNIVERSARY

MARCH 17

OPDYCKE MARKER DEDICATION
4:00 PM (SEE PAGE 4)

MARCH 25

BATTLE OF THOMPSON'S STATION
TOUR 2:00-4:00 (SEE PAGE 6)

ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF BRENTWOOD

APRIL 21-22

STFB BOOTH AT THE BRENTWOOD PEARFEST

MAY 12

STFB BOOTH AT THE THOMPSON'S STATION ARTS & CRAFTS FESTIVAL

From the President

Dear STFB Member,

Spring is on its way into Middle Tennessee, and with it comes the beginnings of another year of STFB events.

On February 11th the STFB board of directors held a long range planning session to discuss such topics as a membership drive, increased organization of information files to reduce response times on local preservation issues, and the future use of historic easements as a preservation tool.

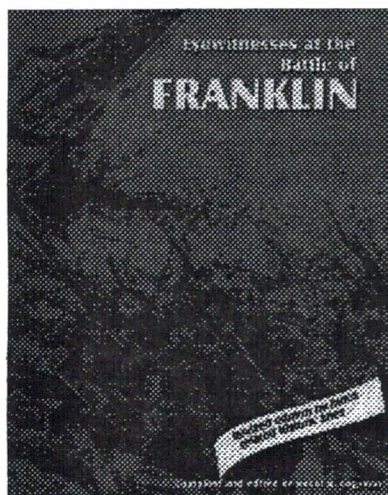
On Saturday March 17th we will be dedicating our latest battlefield historic marker, to Emerson Opdycke's Brigade. On Sunday March 25th, STFB will lead a tour of the Battle of Thompson's Station. Look elsewhere in this newsletter for more information on both events.

I am pleased to let you know financial support is coming in from around the country and within our membership for our Hyssop Hill project to acquire 3.3 acres of the Franklin Battlefield.

We appreciate each and every one of you, our members, and look forward to working together into the future to Save The Franklin Battlefield!

Joe Smyth

"Eyewitnesses at the Battle of Franklin" Now Available From STFB



In 1988, long-time journalist and historian, David Logsdon, compiled and edited several eyewitness accounts of the Battle of Franklin into a softbound book of about 50 pages. Revised in 1991, 1996, and again in 2000, the work now has been expanded to include material from nearly 100 diaries, letters, and other first person accounts along with 27 illustrations - maps, photos, & sketches.

Logsdon divides each account into passages that describe the events at a particular time and place on the battlefield as experienced by soldiers of both sides plus civilians who were also caught up in the flow of battle. By collating and combining these individual observations of multiple eyewitnesses by time and place during the flow of battle events, Logsdon creates for his reader an overall 'God's-eye' view of the Battle of Franklin. It is a wonderful technique for distilling some sense and order from the chaos that the eyewitnesses attempt to describe.

Several quotations from the book are included in the 'Letters From Franklin' portion of the STFB web site. If you don't have a recent revision of this book, here's your chance.

Softbound 8 1/2 X 11, 122 pages, 27 illustrations - \$12. It can be mail ordered w/check directly from STFB with the enclosed order form, or by check or credit card from the STFB web site at www.franklin-stfb.org

STFB Needs Your Help!

"The battle of Franklin was fought November 30, 1864. The Federals, under Gen. Schofield, occupied a strong natural position, which they made stronger by first-class earthworks. The approaches were through open fields from a mile to a mile and a half in width. In front of the position assaulted by Cheatham's old division, groves of Locust trees had been cut down, behind which the first line of Federals received the assault.... In splendid style, their officers gallantly urging them on, the crack divisions of the Western Army moved through shot and shell to the desperate work before them. It was a splendid sight. The entire field was in full view over which the eighteen brigades of Hood's army moved to the assault. From the rifles pits and the locust zerebas in the front of the main works of the Federal infantry poured a terrific fire, while from the main works and from the heights beyond the river... cannon volleyed and thundered upon the advancing host. But there was no halting nor wavering, and over the fire-swept plain the assaulting column advanced, closing up the dreadful gaps of death like the 'Old Guard' at Waterloo. With a yell and a rush, and at the point of the bayonet, the first line of works was carried, but no halt was made. On and on, with guns at right-shoulder shift, dashed the heroic lines... Not a soldier of that gallant army had ever experinced a fire so dreadful.... Officers and men fell like dead leaves when forests are shaken. The glorious Cleburne fell, and the dashing Granbury. Of Cheatham's old division Strahl, Carter and Gist fell, and Brown and Gordon were wounded. And yet on swept the line of grey. At last, the plain behind them strewn with the dead and wounded until the dead and wounded outnumbered the living, the assaulting column reeled against the strong works behind which the Federal army fought in comparative security, and with the nerve and cool destructiveness that became veterans.... Of all that assaulting column Cheatham's old division alone held it's ground. This division, with every general and field officer killed or wounded, except Colonel Hurt, who commanded the Sixth and Ninth Tennessee, with half it's number strewn on the plains, scrambled across the ditch and climbed upon it's works, driving the Federals out and taking possession.... The Federals had gained the opposite side of the earthworks, but could not cross or dislodge the enemy. They glared into each other's eyes, fought with clubbed guns, but like gladiators, toe to toe, fought and died, but never turned back or wavered. It was a sublime moment. The old division was standing on the sacred soil of it's grand old mother, Tennessee. It was making a last heroic effort for home and cause. The eyes of mother, wife, sweetheart, in hearing as it were of the battle's thunder, watched and waiting wept. It's comrades, after prodigies of valor, had reeled back from the impossible. It stood alone of all the assaulting host, using the enemy's works against himself - alone in the fiery-red jaws of a hell of battle. The Spartans at Thermopylae, the 'Light Brigade' at Balaklava, the 'Old Guard' at Waterloo, do not over match it in situation or equal it in results. It stood there in the jaws of death - stood and conquered."

The account copied above about the battle of Franklin, and the role that Cheatham's old division played in it is a stirring one to be sure. Now consider this: the *very plot of ground* where much of the above story took place is currently being targeted as the new location of the Williamson County Library! Now certainly libraries are wonderful sources of learning, but what sort of message is Williamson County sending future generations by further desecrating the hallowed battlefield of Franklin? Please consider writing **Mr. Clint Callicott, (Williamson County Executive, 1320 West Main St., Franklin, Tennessee 37064)** and voicing your opposition to this plan, and further urging him to choose a different location. Other suitable locations exist locally, and the Save The Franklin Battlefield, Inc., supports a different location. Thank you!

Harper' Pictorial History of the Civil War The Battle of Franklin [November 1864]

Schofield ought to have been cut off at least from the direct road to Franklin. His main army did not leave Duck River, where it had been fighting Lee, until after dark, and passed Spring Hill about midnight. It certainly had a narrow escape. General Wagner's division of Stanley's corps held on to its position at Spring Hill until near daylight. Notwithstanding the superior number of the enemy, the only disturbances suffered in the retreat was from a slight attack made north of Thompson's by Forrest's cavalry, causing the loss of a few wagons. General Cooper, who had been left to guard the crossing at Duck River, was cut off from the direct road to Franklin, and proceeded to Nashville.

When Schofield reached Franklin he found no wagon bridge across the Harpeth River, and the fords in a bad condition. The railroad bridge was rapidly repaired and a foot-bridge was constructed, which was also available for the use of wagons. He sent his train across, and intended to cross with his army. But the enemy was in too close proximity. As the Federal troops arrived they were placed in position on the south side of the river, the Twenty-third Corps, under General Cox, on the left and centre, covering the approaches from Columbia and Lewisburg, and Kimball's division of Stanley's corps on the right; both flanks of the army resting on the river. Wood's division of Stanley's corps was sent to the north side of the river to cover the flanks, in the event of Hood's crossing above or below. Two brigades of Wagner's division—the last to reach Franklin—were left in front, to retard the advance of the enemy.

At daylight Hood had commenced the pursuit, which was pushed with great vigor. Stewart was in the advance, Cheatham following, while Lee, with the trains, brought up the rear from Columbia. Hood determined to make a direct attack with Stewart's and Cheatham's corps without waiting for Lee. No flank movement which he could now make would prevent Schofield from reaching Nashville.* Stewart advanced on the right, Cheatham on the left, with the cavalry on either flank, the main body of the latter, under Forrest, moving to the right. Johnson's division of Lee's corps arrived during the engagement, and went in on the left.

Fortunately for Schofield, Hood's attack was delayed until 4 o'clock on the afternoon of the 30th. In the meantime the Federal troops were constructing breastworks and protecting them by a slight abatis on the left. To them, with the river in their rear, and with the roads, by which alone retreat was possible, crowded with the wagon trains, defeat would have been a terrible disaster, affecting the safety of Nashville. On both sides the decisive nature of the contest was fully appreciated. It was a brief battle, for at this season of the year 4 p.m. was the verge of twilight.** Wagner's men, holding the outposts, "imprudently brave," reports Schofield, maintained the conflict outside of the intrenchments longer than was necessary, suffering heavy loss. When they fell back it was at a full run, and this movement swept back a portion of the first line in the works, allowing the enemy to enter in large numbers. In this attempt to fight a battle with outposts, Wagner lost over a thousand men. The enemy had gained an advantage, which, if pressed, might have resulted in success. Victory seemed almost within his grasp. The Federal line had been broken in the centre; two batteries of four guns each had been captured. But at this moment Opdyke, commanding the remaining brigade of Wagner's division, which had been held in reserve inside the works, leading his men on, shouting "Forward to the lines!" rushed forward, recovered the lost batteries, and captured 400 prisoners. The gap had been closed; but the enemy, though disappointed, was not disheartened. He charged the works, making four distinct attacks, and each time hurled back with heavy loss. "So vigorous and fierce were these assaults that the enemy reached the exterior slope of the rude intrenchments, and hand-to-hand encounters occurred between the enraged combatants across the works."*** Between the assaults, the enemy, covered by the undulations of the ground, pressed his sharpshooters close to the works, and kept up a galling fire.

The Confederates persistently assailed Schofield's line until after dark, continuing the attack at intervals until near midnight, but were repulsed in every attempt to carry the works. The Confederate loss was between 4500 and 6000 men. Schofield lost 2326, which number of casualties 1241 occurred in Wagner's division.**** On the Federal side, General Stanley was severely wounded in the neck. The Confederate loss in general officers was very great, including among them Major General Pat. Cleburne, and Brigadier Generals Gist, John Adams, Strahl, and Granbury; Brigadier Generals Carter, Mignault, Quarles, Cockrell, and Scott were wounded, and Brigadier General Gordon was captured. At midnight Schofield withdrew from the trenches which he had held against the repeated assaults of far superior numbers, and fell back to Nashville.

Hood's orders to his corps commanders to drive Schofield into the river, and for Forrest to advance and capture the trains, had failed of execution. General Thomas's position was now secure.

* "I learned from dispatches captured at Spring Hill, from Thomas to Schofield, that the latter was instructed to hold that place till the position at Franklin could be made secure, indicating the intention of Thomas to hold Franklin and his strong works at Murfreesborough. This I knew that it was all-important to attack Schofield before he could make himself strong, and, if he should escape at Franklin, he would gain his works about Nashville. The nature of the position was such as to render it inexpe-

(Continued from page 3)

dient to attempt any farther flank movement, and I therefore determined to attack him in front, and without delay." —Hood's Report

**On the 30th of November, 1864, the sun set at 4:39. Schofield's report makes the battle to have commenced at 3:30 p.m

*** General T.J. Wood's Report.

**** Hood reports his own loss as 4500. Schofield, from information obtained afterward, makes the enemy's loss "1750 buried upon the field, 3800 disabled and 702 prisoners." Hood claims that he captured 1000 prisoners. This tallies well with Schofield's report, in which he admits 1104 missing, 670 of whom were from Wagner's division.

Submitted by Sam Gant

Opdycke's Brigade Historic Marker Dedication

On March 17, 2001 Save The Franklin Battlefield, Inc. will dedicate Williamson County's newest historic marker, to Colonel Emerson Opdycke's Brigade and their actions during the horrific Battle of Franklin. The marker will be placed adjacent and just north of the Carter House on land formerly occupied by the old Franklin High School on Columbia Avenue.

In the late afternoon of November 30, 1864 the center of the Federal line, just a few yards south of the Carter House, was breached by a crushing assault by the Confederate divisions of Generals Cleburne and Brown. From their position 100 yards north, a reserve brigade of Federal troops commanded by Colonel Emerson Opdycke rushed forward towards the Carter farmstead to stem the Confederate breakthrough. After savage hand-to-hand combat around the Carter House, perhaps some of the most intense of the entire war, the line was finally restored and the battle continued in darkness at point blank range across the trenchworks.

The text for the Opdycke marker reads:

"Opdycke's Brigade:

Col. Emerson Opdycke's Federal brigade was positioned in this area 150 yards north of the Carter House, east and west of the pike. Without orders, the Federal brigade attacked a portion of Cleburne's and Brown's Confederate divisions after they had broken the center of the Federal line. The forces met like "two enormous ocean waves crashing together." In vicious fighting, Opdycke's brigade recaptured the line south of the Carter smokehouse and farm office. Repeated attempts failed to recapture a portion of the main line held by the Confederates. Maj. Arthur MacArthur, of the 24th Wisconsin (father of WWII Gen. Douglas MacArthur), went down with severe wounds. Also involved were the 125th Ohio and the 36th, 44th, 73rd, 74th, and 88th Illinois.

*John M. Carlson, Ltd., St. Paul, MN
Save the Franklin Battlefield, Inc."*

The marker will be dedicated at 4:00 p.m. as part of special St. Patrick's Day activities planned by the Carter House, including a living history encampment by the 45th Alabama Infantry Regiment. Reenactors from the 125th Ohio Volunteer Infantry Regiment ("Opdycke's Tigers") will be in attendance, and descendants of Opdycke's Brigade have also been invited. STFB members and the general public are invited to attend this free event. Special thanks go to John M. Carlson of John M. Carlson, Ltd., St. Paul, Minnesota for funding the marker, Thomas Cartwright, executive director of the Carter House for his research and authorship of the inscription, the Carter house Association for allowing the marker to be placed, and Rick Warwick and Ridley Wills II for their guidance on the project.

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	\$5.00	
	1999 STFB Day by Day Bicentennial Calendar	\$5.00	
	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	
	Eyewitnesses to the Battle of Franklin by David Logsdon	\$12.00	
		Order Sub-Total	
		Shipping/Handling under \$10 \$0.75 \$10 - \$24.99 \$2.95 \$25 and up \$4.50	
	-Individual	\$20.00	
	-Family	\$30.00	
	-Corporate	\$50.00	
	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:

STFB's First Battlefield Tour for 2001

On Sunday March 25th, Save The Franklin Battlefield will lead a tour of the Battle of Thompson's Station. The tour will commence at 2:00 p.m. from the Thompson's Station train depot.

On March 5, 1863 at the Battle of Thompson's Station, a strong Federal force of 1,500 troops had left Franklin to reconnoiter and forage for food toward Columbia. They encountered and were surrounded by General Van Dorn's cavalry under W. H. Jackson and Nathan Bedford Forrest. The Federal cavalry escaped, but infantry with a battery of artillery was forced to surrender.

This first STFB tour of 2001 will be led by STFB board member and Carter House staff historian David Fraley. New information on this battle has come to light and will be incorporated into the tour. In addition, period military and civilian reenactors will relate first person accounts of the battle.

As always, this tour is free to STFB members. Tickets for the general public are \$5.00 and \$2.00 for students and children. For more information, please call the STFB office at (615) 500-6612.

Save The Franklin Battlefield
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Franklin, TN 37065-0851
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www.franklin-stfb.org