

SAVE THE FRANKLIN BATTLEFIELD, INC

December 2015

www.franklin-stfb.org

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

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We would like to urge our Thompson Station neighbors and city administration to consider preservation of at least a portion of your battlefield US 31 gateway into Thompson Station. Heritage tourism is a multi-billion dollar industry that could benefit your area if battlefield preservation is a part of your land use planning.

We had a very successful Civil War Show this year with numerous booth visitors who wanted to learn the latest news on battlefield preservation in Franklin. Much good news. Thanks to those who stopped by to see us.

We also want to thank all of our men and women in uniform who are in Harm's Way. Please keep them in your thoughts as you gather with your family this week. Visit our Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/Battle.1864), because of your support we have passed the 1000 "Like" milestone. Please continue to support our webpage and follow us on Facebook.

Dan Mora - President





New & Renewing Members November 2015

American CW Trust Garnet Valley, PA Beavercreek, OH Dave Bond Tommy & Lynn Burnett Franklin, TN Jim Creecy Nashville, TN Northern Illinois CWRT Rolling Meadows, IL Miles Ezell Nashville, TN Jav & Marcia Franks Franklin, TN Sam & Norma Gant Franklin, TN Judy Herbert College Grove, TN Gary Holbrook Franklin, TN Chip Huffman Brentwood, TN Mike & Debbie Jeanette Franklin, TN Ray Kevorkian Swampscott, MA Stanley Killian Beaumont, TX Pam Lewis Franklin, TN Ohio Dept GAR Ladies Pomeroy, OH Betty Lovelace Germantown, TN Sherri Miller Allentown, PA Nancy & Bob Neighbors Conway, AR Ken & Nancy Noller Riverside, CA Mary Pearce Franklin, TN Gloria Ramsaur St Simons, Island GA Greg Wade Franklin, TN

Thompsons Station Plans Development on West Harpeth Battlefield

Recent newspaper reports, and public statements by Thompsons Station officials and their developers, are promoting the annexation of county lands north of Thompsons Station. This area includes the US 31 corridor from I-840 to Coleman road. The annexation and subsequent rezoning is slated to happen in January 2016

This corridor is the West Harpeth River Battlefield

and Save the Franklin Battlefield would encourage the City of Thompsons Station to include the preservation of this battlefield in any development plans.

This December 17, 1864 battle during Hood's retreat from Nashville was the last major action in Williamson County. The December 15-16 Battle of Nashville began after an epic ice storm had rendered both armies immobile. A 2-day thaw enabled the Federals to swarm out of Nashville and push the Confederate army into the Brentwood Hills and onto the Franklin Pike.

The 17th saw the cold freezing rain return with the Confederate forces in full retreat. Rear guard actions all day long placed a series of blocking formations across the pike, that leapfrogged to the rear when they were about to be enveloped. About 4:00 pm the Federals attacked the Confederate blocking force on Winstead Hill. The Federal cavalry, outnumbering the Confederates by 4 to 1 or more, moved east and west to bypass the block and soon forced the Confederates to withdraw south to the Battle of the West Harpeth.

There is some confusion among researchers about where the fighting actually occurred. Years ago, the Tennessee Historical Commission placed an historical marker where US-31 crosses over the West Harpeth River and that became the accepted battlefield location. Since then, additional study of Google maps argues that the THC marker indicates the general area where the battle ended. It began along US-31 just south of Coleman Road about 2.9 miles north of the marker.

The Wilson map area is generally between Coleman Road and just south of Kittrel Road. The Federals named their rural battles for the <u>watershed where</u> they were fought; hence Wilson's map refers to the West Harpeth River.

Traveling south at Coleman Rd, US 31 bends gently left and around the nose of a low ridge about a mile south of Winstead Hill. The Confederate forces were positioned so they could ambush the head of the pursuing Federal column as they came over that rise. Wilson's cavalry attacked along the RR tracks and over the ridge above the road. In the freezing mist and fog, and in failing light, all color had faded to shades of grey and the two forces could not identify each other. They became intermixed as the Confederates held their fire just a tad too long, thinking the Winstead Hill blocking force was still coming in.

A terrible, confused, close-contact fight swirled along US 31 and the RR all the way down to the main flow of the West Harpeth River 2.9 miles to the south - where the THC sign is located. Each time they left the turnpike, both men and horses became bogged in the freezing mud. Both sides had been marching and fighting since dawn and were more than worn out. For the next two weeks, the pursuit and blocking actions continued well into northern Alabama.

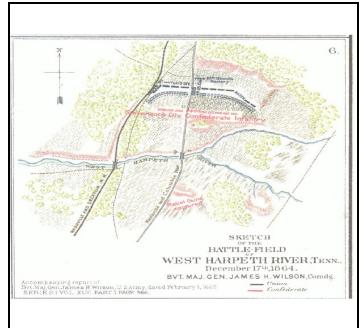


Figure 1 The Official Records of the Rebellion West Harpeth map submitted by Maj Gen James Wilson

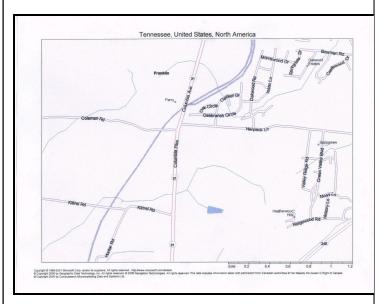


Figure 2 A modern schematic map of the Coleman Road - Kittrel Road area

Recommendations: We ask all local residents to encourage the Thompsons Station leaders to save the West Harpeth Battlefield between Coleman Rd to just south of Kittrel Rd. This Battlefield Park would be the perfect US 31rural gateway into Thompsons Station. It would also tie into the Heritage Tourism story of

Hood's Tennessee Campaign as the last of the four related battles – Spring Hill, Franklin, Nashville, West Harpeth. This is the battlefield Thompsons Station needs to protect and interpret for their town to become part of that story. There are two books on the Battle:

The Death of an Army: The Battle of Nashville and Hood's Retreat by Paul Stockdale
In the Lion's Mouth by Derek Smith

New Perspectives of the Fighting Across Lorings Advance

Here at STFB, we continually work to understand the view of the battlefield and lay of the terrain that the soldiers actually experienced during the Battle of Franklin. Today's battlefield has trees and houses that make this visualization almost impossible. Now that we have cleared all the undergrowth from Lorings Advance, we did a new graphic **Figure 3** that shows the directions and distances to important battlefield features from the Lorings Advance Entrance. e.g. The left arrow shows the Cotton Gin 550 yards distant.

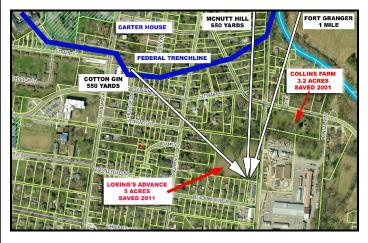


Figure 3 Directions and distances to Federal forces from the Lorings Advance entrance

Figure 4 shows two 1904 houses that stand today – 1327 Adams is on the NE corner of Adams and Meadowlawn – 1303 Adams adjoins the NW corner of Lorings Advance – near the white line. Everyone at the gin could see all Confederates on the south edge of Lorings Advance, the Confederates could see the gin. In fact, from the LA entrance, without today's trees, you could see the cotton gin, the Federal trench from Columbia Pike east to the RR, the ten guns on McKnutt Hill, and the four ordnance rifles at Fort Granger – and all of those people could clearly see you as well

There is talk, but no plans yet, to build an I-beam outline on the cotton gin site rather than an actual building on the relic foundation. It may be possible

today to see that I-beam structure even with today's trees. During work on the Carter Hill Park, we hope to raise a crane to 46 feet to see if it can be seen through the trees from LA (or identify the trees needing some strategic trimming).

With the undergrowth gone, it is also now obvious that if <u>all the Federals</u> east of Columbia Pike were shooting at you, it would make great and obvious sense to go forward to take cover in the ravine along the north boundary of Lorings Advance. We plan to do a Lorings Advance tour in early 2016 so you can come see that for yourself.

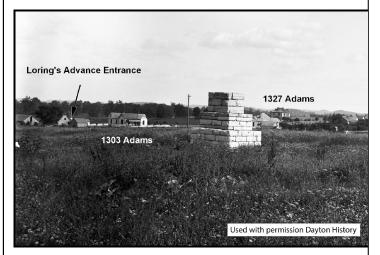


Figure 4 A June 1904 view from the Carter cotton gin looking south-east to the Lorings Advance entrance

News In Review December 2015

'Mystery' diary illuminates Civil War-era life in Tennessee — The Tennessean — 12/9/15 — NASHVILLE — An 1860s diary of Randal William McGavock— the Harvard-educated lawyer served as mayor of Nashville from 1858 to 1859 — is set to be published in Tennessee's historical quarterly as part of what historians say is one of the most illuminating Civil War-era accounts of life in the state. The Civil War-era diary was found in California by retired science teacher Andrea Shearn.

Franklin's Masonic Hall becomes Civil War trail marker— Williamson Herald — 12/17/15 — FRANKLIN — The Masonic Hall of Hiram Masonic Lodge No. 7 on 2nd Avenue in downtown Franklin installed a Civil War trail marker in its front yard on Wednesday to commemorate the lodge's role during the Battle of Franklin. The Hall was used as a federal field hospital for Union soldiers. A dedication ceremony will take place in the winter.

Save The Franklin Battlefield, Inc

PO Box 851 Franklin, TN 37065-0851

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December 2015

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