



SAVE THE FRANKLIN BATTLEFIELD, INC

February 2019

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

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Note from the Editor...

The Franklin community has been discussing how they should expand the historical story about the Civil War years presented at the Public Square. The general idea is to add markers that document that the Square and Courthouse were that site of slave auctions and of post-war violent demonstrations. The Square was also a primary location for enlisting the estimated 300 US Colored Troops from Williamson County.

This newsletter reprints a Williamson Herald article that encapsulates the current events and community thinking about the Fuller Story project. You can access the article:

[Franklin aldermen change support of marker placements as 'Fuller Story' fulfills vision](http://www.williamsonherald.com/news/article_7467a636-2f5f-11e9-a293-ebe8ef191059.html) at:

http://www.williamsonherald.com/news/article_7467a636-2f5f-11e9-a293-ebe8ef191059.html

There is overall community agreement on the need to add the markers to the Square, and on the text content of the markers. The only open point of discussion is the exact location of the markers. And that depends upon who actually owns the Square. The Tennessean article below addresses that question – we didn't have room to reprint it in this newsletter issue.

[Franklin Confederate statute, African-American markers controversy: What to know](https://www.tennessean.com/story/news/local/williamson/2019/02/13/franklin-tenn-african-american-markers-confederate-statue/2857385002/) by Emily West and Jeremy Hensley, **Nashville Tennessean** Published 8:33 a.m. CT Feb. 13, 2019

<https://www.tennessean.com/story/news/local/williamson/2019/02/13/franklin-tenn-african-american-markers-confederate-statue/2857385002/>

New & Renewing Members January 2019

Kathleen & Dennis Garoutte	Edina, MN
Michael Hamilton	Westmoreland, TN
Bobby Hargrove	Franklin, TN
Robert Hearin	New Orleans, LA
Matthew Hooks	Leechburg, PA
Nick Kaup	Northbrook, IL
Anthony & Sheila Morreale	Franklin, TN
Glenn Rieuf	Franklin, TN
John Teresa William Rutledge	Franklin, TN
Pam & Herschel Smith III	Americus, GA

April 6 – Park Day Save the Date

The American Battlefield Trust has set April 6 as Park Day when all of us can volunteer at our local Parks. Check the March STFB Newsletter for details – but be sure to save the date.

Franklin aldermen change support of marker placements as 'Fuller Story' fulfills vision

By Kerri Bartlett • Managing Editor
Williamson Herald – February 12, 2019
(Reprinted with permission)

What started more than a year ago over “lots of coffee,” according to Pastor Kevin Riggs, culminated on Tuesday, at the Franklin Board of Mayor and Aldermen meeting, with a spirit of unity that he along with two other pastors and a historian originally intended.

Riggs, Pastor Chris Williamson and historian Eric Jacobson, co-founders of the Fuller Story initiative, presented a revised proposal on

Tuesday. Pastor Hewitt Sawyers, another co-founder, was not present. The proposal includes placing historical markers at various spots in Public Square to tell the story of slavery and reconstruction during the Civil War.

During the meeting, a couple of aldermen surprised the co-founders when they explained they had a change of heart regarding the placement of a proposed historical marker depicting a Franklin slave market.

After giving it more thought, what some aldermen opposed at the BOMA meeting in January, they fully supported on Tuesday.

In January, some aldermen spoke against installing the proposed “Market House” slave auction marker at the base of Franklin’s Civil War Confederate statue in Public Square. The creators of the Fuller Story initiative on Tuesday explained that the marker’s proposed placement is not only historically accurate but also represents much more.

The spot where the 1899 Confederate Civil War soldier statue now stands on Public Square marks the exact spot where the old courthouse once stood and where African-Americans were bought and sold in a slave market on the courthouse steps.

However, based on BOMA’s input from the last meeting, the founders offered a compromise, suggesting moving the proposed marker to the sidewalk circling the statue rather than have it placed on the grassy area surrounding the statue.

“We believe the Public Square is the perfect place to tell the story,” Riggs said. “We never said we would tell the complete story, just the fuller story that African-Americans made in shaping the tapestry that’s Franklin, and all we are asking for is equal representation.”

Riggs said the placement of the marker is not only historically significant but spiritually significant. “This is not just a project for us, but a calling,” he said.

Change of heart

Without the founders having to discuss it much further, 2nd Ward Alderman Dana McLendon said he agreed with the placement of the Market House marker at the center of the square.

At the previous meeting, McLendon outlined points explaining why the African-American slave marker, or markers, should not be placed around the Public Square statue. He previously argued that any markers installed surrounding the statue should stick specifically to a historical military context, “having to do with the Battle of Franklin.” However, McLendon said he changed his mind.

“This is, by far, the most profound opportunity I’ve had serving as alderman,” said McLendon, who was first elected in 1997.

“I adamantly supported this project when you first came in, going so far as to spontaneously call an executive session to clear the way by calling a lawsuit.”

The city is involved in a lawsuit with the United Daughters of the Confederacy to determine which entity owns the center of Public Square, or the land on which the confederate statue stands.

“When we were here last, I articulated a preference or an inclination to limit what we might put in the square to those things having to do directly with the battle and the monument. “And I was wrong to suggest that was the appropriate delineation.

“And I am ashamed to admit that I allowed a preference for clear and bright knowable rules ... to exalt that over something far more profound.

“It is clear to me that the most important thing that happened in the square is the sale of human beings for decades leading up to the war.

“I will support the project as presented tonight and will be profoundly disappointed if this board does not see fit to place the slave market marker in the square because it was there, and it is true.”

Alderman Margaret Martin, 4th Ward, explained that she, too, has changed her mind and now supports the marker placement.

“Brad Perry and I probably have more family members that fought in the Battle of Franklin than anybody in this room. It’s very personal to me,” Martin said.

“I will support this. I will support the placement. The war is over, but we need to make amends. Since I had family who fought in the Civil War, I am sorry for it, but I will not accept responsibility or guilt for it. But if there is any way I can atone for what my family went through or was responsible for, I certainly will support this.”

Not the same town

Brandy Blanton, an alderman at large, said she is saddened that many African-Americans did not experience the “same Franklin” she did. “I have not wavered in my support,” Blanton said.

“I’m fine with all four of them being on the square. ... I look out in this room and I appreciate the community that’s being built within our community, where people are feeling like they have value.

“I am looking at DeeDee Derricks over there who I went to high school with, and it breaks my heart to know that the same town I grew up in is not the same town she grew up in.

“I’m proud to be sitting on this board at this time and trying to fix some things that should have been fixed a long time ago.”

Alderman Clyde Barnhill also said he supports the proposal. "I don't have a problem with this," Barnhill said. "But if this is it, then why do we have the lawsuit? I'm just asking."

Because the lawsuit is ongoing, Franklin Mayor Ken Moore asked the aldermen not to discuss it.

Embracing the Fuller Story

Jacobson said he believes many people who wouldn't go to the battlefield to visit Carnton Plantation, The Carter House, Winstead Hill or Fort Granger, would go downtown.

"If they learn something here [let it be] how this community embraced its entire history — white, black, U.S., Confederate, North, South, the whole thing, the big, ugly mess that it was," he said during the presentation. "Knowledge is always good."

Riggs added sometimes fighting back tears during the presentation, "Our goal has been to build something up instead of tearing something down and develop something that creates unity along racial lines."

"The fuller story is simply the right thing to do."

The right thing to do

After the meeting, supporters of the initiative mingled outside City Hall's boardroom. Mike Hollifield hugged fellow church member JoAnn Miller, a Franklin native.

When asked why he supports the initiative, he pointed to his T-shirt, which read "It's the right thing to do." More than a dozen other people wore similar T-shirts at the meeting.

"It was heartfelt and moving and it gave me peace that our community is coming together," Miller said about the work session. "It's way overdue, and I am glad I got to live to see it."

The Perry family, descendants of slave owners and Civil War Confederate soldiers who fought in the Battle of Franklin, joined Riggs and Franklin native Alma McLemore, a leader in the African-American community, for a chat after the meeting. The group shared an opportunity for a spontaneous fist-bump in celebration of BOMA's support.

"It's good that young people get involved," McLemore said.

During public comments at the meeting, Brad and Stacey Perry's son Paxton Perry, 17, a descendent of a family that at one time was the largest owner of slaves in Williamson County, had just shared that he is glad to take a step forward as a city.

"My family goes back as far as anyone's here," Paxton Perry said. "My family has done as bad as any

family has in the whole United States and especially here in Franklin.

"I would like to apologize on their behalf, even though I know they weren't sorry."

He briefly explained that he attended New Hope Academy, where student backgrounds are diverse.

"This project would make me extremely proud [and the people I went to school with at New Hope] to call Franklin home, and it shows a tremendous step forward that we have needed to take for a long time."

Fuller Story proposal

The Fuller Story proposal includes placing four markers in Public Square at various locations.

A "Market House" slave market marker would be placed on the sidewalk bordering the Civil War Confederate statue in Public Square's center facing East Main Street. Another marker explaining the Battle of Franklin and the statue would be placed at the sidewalk facing Third Avenue.

A U.S. Colored Troops life-sized statue would be erected at the site of the current old courthouse, replacing an existing civil war gateway marker which would be moved to the Carter House by the Civil War Trails organization because it depicts history on the battlefield. A marker explaining the USCT would be installed next to the statue.

Another marker would be placed at the statue depicting African Americans in Franklin during the Reconstruction era.

Finally, a last marker would be installed closer to Mellow Mushroom where a riot took place spilling onto the square from Third Avenue and culminating near where Mellow Mushroom is now located. One person was killed in the riot.

News In Review February 2019

Williamson preservationists lobbying for Tennessee historic tax credit — Williamson—The Tennessean — 1/20/19 — Franklin — The Heritage Foundation of Williamson County is pushing for a new statewide tax credit that would encourage rehabilitation of historic structures across Tennessee. Right now, Tennessee is one of only 15 states in the U.S. that does not offer state historic tax credits to help revitalize main street communities, according to the National Trust for Historic Preservation. It's also the only state in the southeast that doesn't provide one.

Save The Franklin Battlefield, Inc

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February 2019

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