



SAVE THE FRANKLIN BATTLEFIELD, INC

Fall 2022

www.franklin-stfb.org

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

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Important Reminder: STFB Membership Dues Date Change

As communicated in our last newsletter, we have changed the STFB membership dues due date to January 31st of each year for all members. Thank you to those who have sent in their payment. If you have not sent in your dues payment for 2022, please do so now.

Annual Membership: Individual \$20 ~
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Events, weddings at Civil War historical sites canceled

By Josh Vardaman and Coleman Bomar • Staff
Writers Williamson Herald Jul 27, 2022

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Public events at the Battle of Franklin Trust's (BOFT) three historic sites are becoming a thing of the past.

The BOFT recently announced it will cease to host weddings, concerts and other events at Franklin's Carter House and Carnton and Spring Hill's Rippavilla, including the popular Carnton Sunset Concert Series and Bootlegger's Bash. The annual Legacy Dinner, commemorations of the Battles of Spring Hill and Franklin, Community Talks series and Descendants Reunion will continue, though changes could be made to the events.

Eric Jacobson, CEO of the BOFT, said canceling events and weddings at the sites happened out of respect for the historical

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moments that happened there. He also said with increased daily tourism attendance at the sites over the last few years, big events have become unnecessary financially.

“Things have changed quite a lot, and things have really changed in the last generation or two,” Jacobson said. “Our mission has to focus on how to respectfully manage these important sites, especially, I think, now more than ever.

“There’s always a place for social functions in whatever city someone might be in, whether that’s Franklin, Spring Hill or wherever, but these are places where slavery existed for decades and where terrible military conflicts occurred. Our visitation is higher than ever, and our success is greater than it has ever been, and that’s because we have been focused like a laser on our mission which is to preserve, protect and interpret people who were forever impacted by the war. ... Frankly, some of these events have become almost distractions.”

According to a statement issued by the BOFT, when it started hosting bigger events at the historical sites more than 20 years ago, its daily tourism attendance was “barely 10% of what it is today.” Now, after scaling back events over the past few years, its focus is moving to the more than 100,000 visitors who visit the sites on a yearly basis.

The planned Carnton Sunset Concert Series finale on July 31 has been canceled, and all purchased tickets have been refunded, according to BOFT.

Weddings already on the schedule for the sites will go on as planned, but BOFT will no longer book any dates from this point forward.

To read the complete statement issued by the BOFT, go to www.boft.org/events.

EDITOR NOTE - The STFB Board applauds this action by the Battle of Franklin Trust. For the past 30 years, STFB and other local groups, with Herculean help from the American Battlefield Trust, the Tennessee Historical Commission, National Parks Service grant programs, our Tennessee legislators, the City of Franklin and many of you, have assembled 120+ acres of the battlefield. That is enough land to begin a Civil War park. We are all proud of that success, and that acquisition effort continues.

Ten years ago, the Battle of Franklin Trust was formed to unify the management of the Carter House

and Carnton Mansion. Recently, Rippavilla in Spring Hill was added to the BOFT mission. In the past, the three sites naturally competed with each other for the visiting public. Now, all the sites benefit from unified promotions by the state and county Tourism Boards. Also, BOFT historians have expanded and unified the interpretive programs as well as docent training for all three locations.

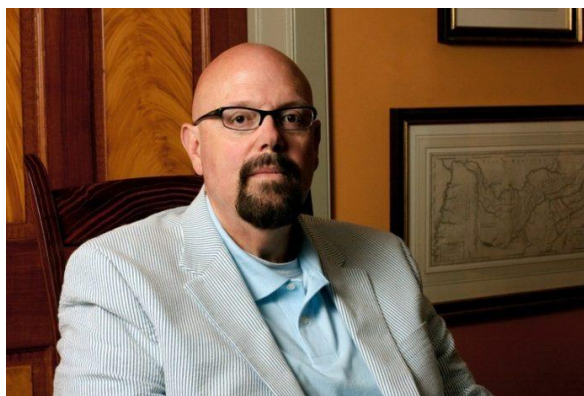
All of these successes are making Franklin a true Civil War destination and visitor traffic confirms that. STFB agrees that the time has come for the historic house sites to focus on the Civil War era and its effect on Middle Tennessee people.

There are other Historic Houses in the Brentwood, Franklin, Columbia area that host weddings. Yes, those sites may not be as impressive as a wedding ceremony and photos on the Carnton stairwell and grounds, but we agree with BOFT management that those and other events are becoming disruptive and time consuming away from the BOFT mission. Let’s all take a deep breath and wish each other ‘good luck’.

Passing of Two Giants

This year has seen the passing of two friends and giants of battlefield preservation in Tennessee – Robert Hicks and Mary Ann Peckham. We and future generations are the beneficiaries of their efforts and their contributions will long outlive them.

Robert Hicks



He was born on January 30, 1951, in what he called "a small South Florida town", West Palm Beach, FL and died on February 25, 2022 near Franklin, TN. At the age of 21, he moved to Tennessee, where he had family connections.

He became a music publisher and eventually he worked with such country music artists as George

Ducas, John Hiatt, Amy Grant, and Vince Gill and Dolly Parton. Later, he partnered with B.B. King on the musician's nationwide chain of blues clubs. Along the way, he became involved with various preservation projects.

Carnton Plantation was one of Hicks' major projects. He served on its Board of Directors and later as its President. He brought attention to Carnton and to battlefield preservation with his best-selling novel, *Widow of the South*. For bringing national attention to Franklin and the heroic story of Carrie McGavock, the Heritage Foundation awarded him its Patron's Award for achievements in historic preservation. Additional awards included the Ragland Award from the Tennessee Civil War Preservation Association, the Tennie Pinkerton Dozier Award from Save the Franklin Battlefield, and the American Battlefield Trust honored Robert with the Edwin C. Bearss Lifetime Achievement Award.

Co-founding Franklin's Charge in 2004, he rallied support, formed an organization, and served as its first President for several years, and more recently, in 2019.

Among other activities, he served on the boards of the Williamson County Historical Society, the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, the Tennessee State Museum, the Ogden Museum of Southern Art in New Orleans, the Southern Garden History Society, and the Tennessee Historical Commission.

More recently, he and others across Middle Tennessee saved large portions of property adjoining Fort Negley in Nashville from commercial and residential development. The preserved site has been widely recognized for the involvement of United States Colored Troops and former enslaved persons who built the fort, many of whom were buried in unmarked graves across the property.

Mary Ann Peckham



She was born August 24, 1951, in Richland Center, Wisconsin, and died on January 16, 2022, in Atlanta, Georgia. She did undergraduate and graduate work in economics at the University of Wisconsin. Her passion for preserving and sharing the United States' history led to a career in the National Park Service with the first assignments at Custer Battlefield in Montana followed by work at Cape Hatteras National Seashore, The Blue Ridge Parkway, and finally as the Superintendent at Stones River National Battlefield from 1989 to 2000. Along the way, she had special assignments in historical research and interpretation at Ft. Sumter and Tuskegee.

While at SRNB, she engaged in work to save hundreds of additional acres including preserving and interpreting the remaining earthworks of Fortress Rosecrans. She was a leader in a nationwide effort to better interpret Civil War battles by placing those stories within the larger political, social and cultural context of the period.

Ms. Peckham continued working in historical preservation and education for two more decades, serving as the Executive Director of the Tennessee Civil War Preservation Association. During that time, she received the State Preservation Leadership Award from the Civil War Trust. In addition to her work with TCWPA, she was active with a number of area conservation organizations, including serving on the advisory board of the Southeast Region of the Land Trust for Tennessee.

Save The Franklin Battlefield, Inc

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