



# SAVE THE FRANKLIN BATTLEFIELD

February 2005

[www.franklin-stfb.org](http://www.franklin-stfb.org)

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

## Dear STFB member—

Events are unfolding here in Franklin at an amazing pace. Since our last newsletter to you, the Heritage Foundation unveiled the latest battlefield preservation plan before the City government. The African-American Heritage Society held their "Black Tie Event," which this year carried the theme, "Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory: the African-American Soldier in the Civil War." Additionally, the group held a breakfast presentation of a USCT reenactor/historian that was also well attended.

This past week the Tennessee Civil War Preservation Association held their "behind the scenes" tour and fundraiser at the Tennessee State Museum. A large number of state legislators and STFB and "Franklin's Charge" members were in attendance.

The Civil War Preservation Trust (CWPT) polled Franklin citizens on local battlefield preservation issues, and then traveled to Franklin to release the results to the media. (Our continued thanks to Jim Lighthizer, Jim Campi, and the entire CWPT for keeping the national eye on Franklin!)

Finally, public commentary and the final vote by the City of Franklin Board of Mayor & Aldermen to commit \$2.5 million to the Franklin Battlefield will happen on March 8<sup>th</sup>. Please come out to City Hall that night to watch and be a part of this historic vote.

It's been and continues to be a very eventful month here in Franklin, and as STFB member, we are committed to keeping you informed and furthering your wishes to Save The Franklin Battlefield!

## Collins' Farm Needs You!!

9:00 a.m., March 19

Come to help clean up

Collins' Farm for Spring.

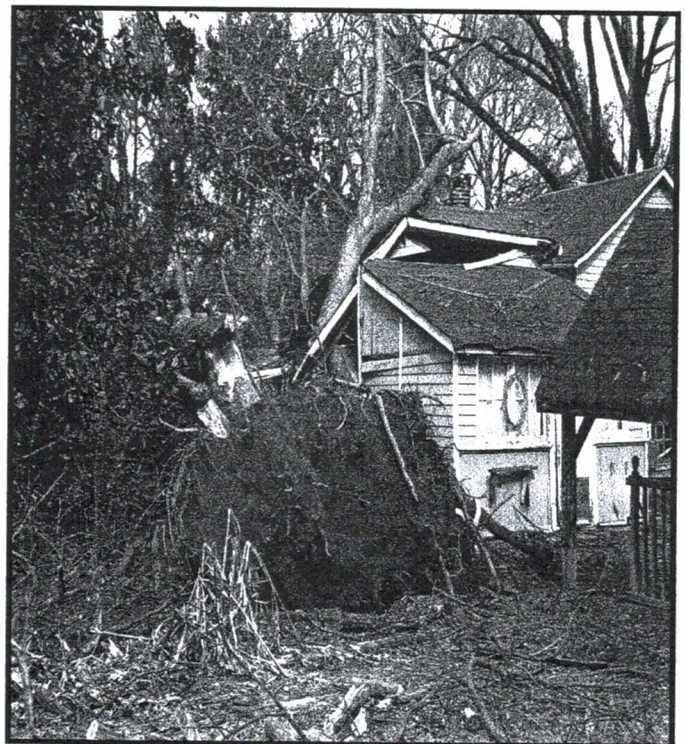
Vegetation around the house and in the backyard needs more than a little loving care. Please bring weed whackers, pruners, loppers, pruning saws, chainsaws and any other tools that can help with cleanup. Don't forget your leather gloves.

## Mark Your Calenders!

On Saturday April 16<sup>th</sup>, Save The Franklin Battlefield will lead a tour of the Battle of Thompson's Station. The tour, our first of 2005, 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.

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.



**Serious damage done to the Collins' Farmhouse during the storms that rolled through Franklin on the morning of 2/20/05**



## Collins' Farm Suffers Serious Storm Damage

Franklin, February 21, 2005—An early morning storm struck Collins' Farm blowing down a huge pecan tree and completely destroying the farmhouse kitchen wing while inflicting some damage on the main part of the house.

About 8:30 a.m., a severe thunderstorm passed through Franklin, causing damage throughout the city. The Collins' farmhouse apparently was the only dwelling that received serious damage. Fortunately, no one was injured in this storm, either at Collins' Farm or in other parts of the city. The electric line to the house as well as interior wiring was damaged so the electricity and the gas had to be shut off.

The pecan tree that fell was around ninety feet tall with a trunk about thirty-six inches in diameter. The full weight of the tree crushed the kitchen forcing the ceiling of the room to the floor and destroying almost everything in the room. One corner of the kitchen remained standing thus saving the cook stove and heater, but all of the cabinets were destroyed and the refrigerator along with the dinette table and chairs were smashed.

Some huge limbs came across the historic part of the house giving it some roof damage and apparently some rafter and wall damage. Bricks were knocked off the chimneys. At this point the damage on this part of the house does not appear to be very severe, but when the tree is removed and the house is examined further, it may require more extensive repair than we anticipate. An immediate need is to be sure the roof is sealed so that there is no further water damage and then to restore electricity and gas to the apartments.

In a few days, Save The Franklin Battlefield Board will make a decision on plans for restoration. The insurance adjuster stated that the insurance policy probably will not cover the total cost of reconstruction; therefore, it may be necessary to alter the former layout of the house. This also will most likely mean that STFB will need to rely on a considerable amount of volunteer labor to help remove the debris and to assist in some aspects of the restoration.

Furthermore, STFB will be in dire need of donations for the restoration of the Collins' farmhouse.

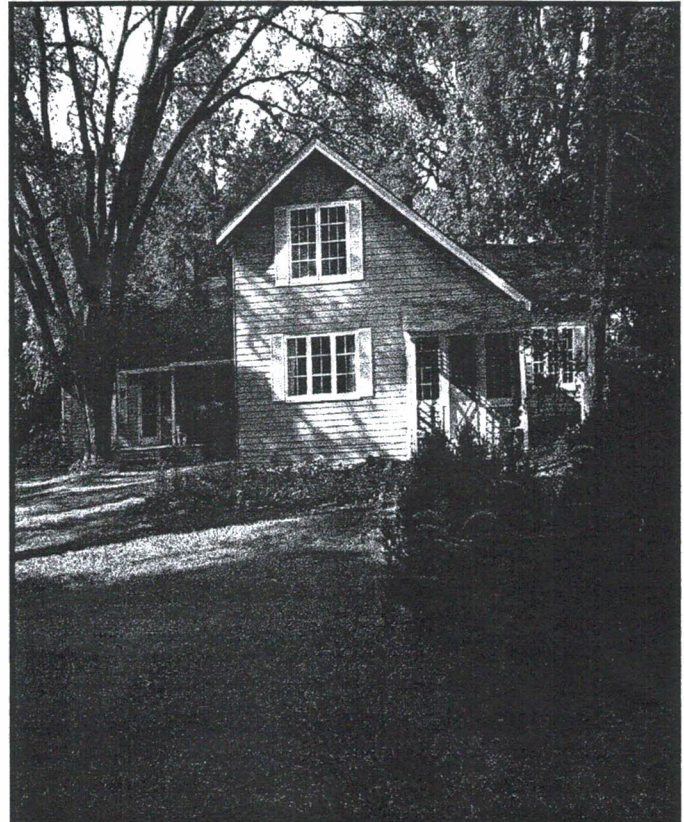
**Please give generously!**

### Authentic Campaigner Makes Gift to STFB

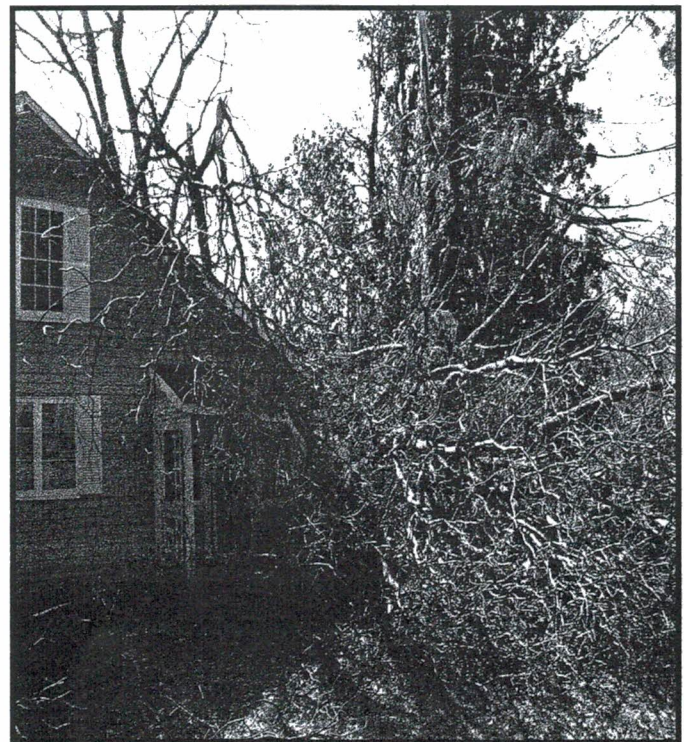
Dusty Chapman of the Authentic Campaigner Preservation Project wrote to STFB last month to present a check for \$1,176.00. This group has had an ongoing fund-raising project for STFB at their web site. [www.authenticcampaigner.com](http://www.authenticcampaigner.com) This dedicated group made a similar donation for land acquisition a year ago.

The STFB wants to recognize not just the gift, but the ingenuity, dedication, and perseverance shown by this group. With this kind of help, we can't be stopped.

We will one day have a Battlefield Park in Franklin.



*The Collins' Farmhouse before the storm damage on 02/20/05*



*The huge pecan tree uprooted across the Collins' Farm kitchen, destroying that part of the dwelling...*





*Emily and Caroline standing beside their kitchen*

## News In Review

**CAPTURING THE BATTLE OF FRANKLIN** – The Tennessean, “Williamson A.M.” – 1/17/05 **FRANKLIN** – The Carter House came alive with Civil War re-enactors Saturday, January 15, as a crew from Wide Awake Films of Kansas City, Mo., shot scenes for a documentary film about the Battle of Franklin. Re-enactors came from around the United States to take part of a series of battles for the made for television documentary. The film company is making the films to make people more aware of the need to save battlefields. The crew also shot footage at the 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Franklin that took place in Spring Hill this past October.

**Preservationists charge toward country club purchase** – Franklin Review Appeal – 1/20/05 – **FRANKLIN** – A local group raising money to help purchase Country Club of Franklin property, which historians say was the eastern flank of the 1864 Battle of Franklin, has gained pledges for about two-thirds of the funding it needs. Franklin’s Charge has been promised between \$1.8 and \$1.9 million of the \$2.5 million it needs to help the city of Franklin buy the country club property, said Robert Hicks, co-chair of the Coalition for the Preservation of Historic Open Space, which organized Franklin’s Charge.

**‘Nashville’ traces Confederacy’s last gasp** – The Tennessean – 1/23/05 **NASHVILLE** – The ill-fated mission that would virtually destroy Hood’s army is the subject of James Lee McDonough’s new book, **NASHVILLE: The Western Confederacy’s Final gamble**. The heart of the book describes how the Confederate army was decimated in a horrendous blood-bath at the Battle of Franklin and was routed at the Bat-

tle of Nashville less than a month later. James Lee McDonough. **NASHVILLE: The Western Confederacy’s Final Gamble**. The University of Tennessee Press

**Plan places battlefield park as top task for Franklin** – Franklin Review Appeal – 1/27/05 – **FRANKLIN** – Creating a battlefield park and improving existing Civil War sites should be key priorities for Franklin, say consultants who recently developed a battlefield preservation plan for the city. The plan lists the top priority of creating a battlefield park by transforming the existing Country Club of Franklin back to its original appearance. The preservation plan also prioritizes improving marketing and interpretation of the nearby Carnton Plantation as a part of the Battlefield. Third, it prioritizes integrating the old Franklin High gym property into the Carter House site. The preservation plan prioritizes 15 recommendations as high priority, including everything from creating a Franklin visitor’s center to creating linkages from Columbia Avenue sites to The Carter House. Other recommendations of lesser priority include interpretation of Collins’ Farm and Roper’s Knob, and adding an observation point to the Winstead Hill area.

**African-American Civil War re-enactor focuses on Kentucky, Tennessee troops** – Franklin Review Appeal – 1/27/05 – **FRANKLIN** – James Hunn, an African-American Civil War re-enactor, will speak Feb. 4 on the role of Kentucky and Tennessee African-American troops during the Civil War. Hunn is a Civil War re-enactor with the 12<sup>th</sup> United States Colored Heavy Artillery (USCHA). He has participated in many re-enactments, including the 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Perrysville and the 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Fort Pillow, and his unit participated in the recent Battle of Franklin re-enactment at Spring Hill. The event is sponsored by the Heritage Foundation of Franklin and Williamson County and the African-American Heritage Society.

**Aldermen ready to push preservation, new issues through next year** – The Tennessean, “Williamson A.M.” – 1/27/05 **FRANKLIN** – Preservation, land-use planning and vitality are on the minds of Franklin leaders. The list of thing Franklin aldermen either want to finish, or get started on, in the next fiscal year varies widely, depending on who you are talking to. Items ranging from preservation and parks to roads and infrastructure are in line to enter the budget session of the upcoming year.

**Smoke clears on Battle of Franklin documentary** – The Tennessean, “Williamson A.M.” – 1/28/05 **FRANKLIN** – Wide Awake Films is putting the finishing touches on its video about the Battle of Franklin, and Franklin: Five Hours in the Valley of Death could be released as early as late February. Wide Awake Films will donate a portion of the Franklin proceeds to the preservation of “America’s historic green space,” as the company’s Web site describes it. “Our mission is based on preservation,” Co-director Rob Hodge said. Hodge, a Virginian, helped raise \$57,000 in 2000, for example through a re-enactment event and donated \$22,000 of that to Save The Franklin Battlefield, Inc., to help buy Collins’ Farm near Historic Carnton Plantation.



## Private Adrian Parsons

### By Gregory L. Wade

In December of 1864, Private Adrian Parsons of the Federal 9th Indiana Calvary must have sensed the Civil War would end soon and he would be going back home to Plainfield, Indiana, a small town about 15 miles southwest of Indianapolis. Parsons, born in 1846 in Guilford County, North Carolina, became an Indianan when his family moved to the Midwest when he was five years old. A unit in the Army of the Cumberland, the 9th Indiana had seen relatively little action prior to the Battle of Nashville.

Now Private Parsons was part of the Union pursuit General John Bell Hood's broken Confederate Army of Tennessee, which had been shattered in the Battle of Nashville on December 15 and 16, 1864. The southerner's retreat had been more of a running battle on December 17 with very heavy action mostly along the Franklin Pike. Holly Tree Gap about five miles north of Franklin to just north of the Harpeth River at Franklin and the West Harpeth action south of the town all took place that hectic December day. "These were very tough fights," says David Fraley of Franklin's Carter House Museum. "The 17th was more than a day of small skirmishes."

Exactly 140 years later, several of Parsons descendants journeyed to Middle Tennessee to go over the same ground as their grand father on a tour of the Retreat route. To be guided on tour by Fraley, these Midwestern descendants made travel plans after Lee Parsons had conducted much research about Adrian's life. Lee's brother Keith as well as cousins Charles and John Parsons with their spouses wanted to walk the ground Adrian had fought across. Great great grandson, Nashvillian Ben Fowler, joined the group.

A common practice, curious descendants as well as students of the Civil War often find themselves at various battlefields fulfilling a dream to visit these grounds. Much of Franklin no longer resembles its wartime appearance but the area of most significance to the Parsons family still retains some of its rural scape. Private Parsons' life would be forever influenced by what happened at the West Harpeth. And it makes this story unique.

It was almost dark that December 17, 1864 when the 9th Indiana led by Colonel George W. Jackson was pressing the Confederate rear guard at the West Harpeth. Soldiers on both sides were surely nearing exhaustion, and confusion must have reigned in the darkness when the regiment rode into a Confederate ambush. Colonel Jackson's horse was shot, badly injuring Jackson in its fall, and several soldiers of the 9th Indiana were killed or severely wounded. "Adrian was shot near the spine in his lower left side. He did receive some initial treatment from the regimental surgeon to stop the bleeding, which gave him a chance," says Lee Parsons. "Family folklore has it that he was taken to a log cabin somewhere near the battlefield and left, with little hope for survival, as the regiment was compelled to press on with their pursuit of Hood's army. It is said that a nearby spring to which he could crawl aided his survival until he was found

alive a few days later and moved to a cotton shed near Franklin," he continued.

But with youth and fate on his side, Adrian survived. He was soon taken to the Nashville First Presbyterian Church, which had been converted to "Hospital Number Eight," Lee Parsons elaborated. "And that is where our group started our tour."

Private Adrian Parson's survival would have a major impact on midwestern agriculture. An Indianan later to become well known who served in the 9th Indiana Calvary with Private Parsons was Eli Lilly. In September of 1864, Major Lilly with a small contingent from the 9th Indiana Cavalry had been captured at Sulpher Branch Trestle, Alabama by Confederates commanded by Major General Nathan Bedford Forrest. Private Parsons, not one of the captured contingent, would go on to see action with the 9th Indiana at Nashville.

Soon after the War, Lilly would fail in a cotton-growing venture. But in 1876 his interest in pharmaceuticals led to the creation of Eli Lilly and Company, now one of the largest drug companies in the world. Although never verified, it is thought by the Parsons family that Adrian's two oldest sons may have discussed work opportunities with Lilly in the 1890's.

But Adrian Parsons didn't do too badly himself. It seems that he had a very curious mind and liked to experiment with plants and crops. "In the post War years, he needed a way to compensate for the physical limitations his war injury imposed," says Lee.

Around 1891, Adrian Parsons contacted a Kansas botanist, C.C. Georgeson who had imported a new type of crop from Japan, "soybeans." Lee Parsons relates, "this plant had been used in Asia for thousands of years but no one really had tried much with it in the United States. My great grandfather got some of these seeds and began experiments on his Indiana land." In 1905 Parsons was credited with the discovery of a new variety of soybean called, Mikado. Without a doubt, his efforts contributed to soybeans becoming one of the great cash crops in much of the United States.

Private Adrian Parsons's life had many twists of fate. Born in the South he would eventually fight, he miraculously survived horrendous wounds. Because his wounds created a need for new income ideas, he helped establish a new type of crop.

As Lee Parsons said of his December 17th 2004 visit to the West Harpeth battlefield, "When I stood at the approximate location of my great grandfathers near brush with death, I realize some of what he went through. Had he not persisted my cousins and I would likely not be here."

Which begs a too common question from the Civil War. How many other such potential contributions to American society were lost by those who didn't survive?

Sources: David Fraley, Carter House Museum, Franklin, Tennessee, Lee Parsons of Indianapolis, Keith Parsons of Indianapolis, Official Records of the Civil War



## New & Renewing Members Jan. 2005

Jerry & Ellen Allen  
James B Atkinson M.D.  
Charles & Nancy Brantley  
Ed Butler  
Thomas Carothers  
Tony Cichantk  
John Crabb  
Jim G Creecy  
Thomas Dodson  
Dennis Field  
David Fraley  
John D Fraser  
Martin & Anne Frost  
Dennis L Garoutte  
Donald E Garrison  
Oliver K Goad  
Wayne & Dee Hammons  
Shelly Smith Harrell  
Marva Hartman  
Madison Co. Historical Soc.  
Lee Krompart  
Michael Lofton  
Ben McDonald  
Kevin & Kelle McLemore  
Tim & Angela Prince  
Neal Pulley  
Andrew & Nancy Ramsey  
Glenn Rieuf  
John A Riopelle  
Thomas & Dorothy Rivett  
Dave & Carolyn Rousculp  
Allen Schoenberger  
Dr John A Simpson  
Joe Smyth III  
Jack & Betty Stephens  
Doug & Marilyn Thompson  
M/M Timothy Traver  
Ernest Wade  
Michael & Barbara Walker

Buffalo Grove, IL  
Brentwood, TN  
Greenville, TX  
Cookeville, TN  
Saint Helen, MI  
Wood Dale, IL  
Irwin, OH  
Nashville, TN  
McDonough, GA  
Manhattan, IL  
Franklin, TN  
Franklin, TN  
Lebanon, YN  
Blomington, MN  
Franklin, TN  
Murfreesboro, TN  
Franklin, TN  
San Antonio, TX  
Michigan Center, MI  
Anderson, IN  
Chicago, IL  
Franklin, TN  
Louisville, KY  
Clarksville, TN  
Nashville, TN  
Columbia, TN  
Ashburn, VA  
Franklin, TN  
Delmar, NY  
Lincoln, NE  
Marietta, GA  
Germantown, TN  
Kelso, WA  
Franklin, TN  
Pryor, OK  
Tallahassee, FL  
Clay Center, OH  
Loganville, GA  
Franklin, TN

## Franklin and Williamson Co. Residents Support Battlefield Preservation

In a recent poll of Franklin residents commissioned by the Civil War Preservation Trust, sixty-one percent of those polled say they support using public money for the historic preservation of the Country Club of Franklin. Furthermore, the survey of 400 registered voters shows that they feel the city has a responsibility to protect Franklin battlefield and other historic resources.

This poll follows a county-wide survey this spring conducted for the county recreational services in which fifty-seven percent of those responding listed a park commemorating Civil War battles as either high or medium priority.

The CWPT survey largely focused on questions about the purchase of the Country Club of Franklin, and included questions about whether residents thought the land was historically important, whether they would support turning the land into a battlefield park and whether they believed public funds should be spent toward preserving the land. Pollsters also asked if residents would be more or less likely to support public officials who advocate preservation. Among those surveyed, 71% said they would be more likely to offer such support.



## New Battle of Franklin Map Now Available

STFB is excited to announce the availability of our new Battle of Franklin map. The full color map is pre-folded and laminated for years of use in all weather. It was designed and printed by Steve Stanley of Colonial Type and Graphics in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Members of the Civil War Preservation Trust will immediately recognize Steve's design from his maps that are often included in CWPT mailings and the "Hallowed Ground" magazine.

The map unfolds to 12"x23" showing the positions and movements of Federal and Confederate troops from about 4:00 P.M. at Wagner's advanced Federal line and the main trench line. It does not include the cavalry actions farther out Lewisburg and Columbia Pikes, or east of the Harpeth River. The map includes the latest research available on unit locations, and the most detailed positioning of Federal and Confederate artillery batteries. Some of the listed batteries have never before appeared on any map. David Fraley and Thomas Cartwright of the Carter House, and our own Joe Smyth and Dr Sam Gant, contributed material for the map. It's a good piece of work.

This is a must-have item for any student of the Battle of Franklin. For visitors to Franklin, the trench lines and unit positions are overlaid onto a modern-day street map making it a useful tool for exploring the battlefield by car or bicycle.

STFB's Battle of Franklin map sells for \$6 plus S&H. It is included on the order form on the last page of the newsletter. Get yours while they last!

# Save the Franklin Battlefield Membership / Renewal / Order Form

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_  
 State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

QTY	ITEM	PRICE EACH	TOTAL
	Annual Membership: Individual \$20 ~ Family \$30 ~ Corporate \$50 (circle one)		
	Donation: Marker Fund ~ Land Purchase (circle one)		
	1999 & 2000 Day By Day Civil War Calendar Set	\$5.00	
	"Retreat from Pulaski to Nashville" ~ limited & numbered reprint edition, hardcover	\$20.00	
	Commemorative Belt Buckle	\$10.00	
	<b>NEW!!</b> ~ Battle of Franklin Map ~ laminated & in full color	\$6.00	
	Save The Franklin Battlefield Bumpersticker	\$1.50	
	"Eyewitness to the Battle of Franklin" ~ David Logsdon, paperback	\$12.00	
	"Eyewitness to the Battle of Shiloh" ~ David Logsdon, paperback	\$12.00	
	"Eyewitness to the Battle of Ft. Donalson" ~ David Logsdon, paperback	\$12.00	
	"Eyewitness to the Battle of Stones River" ~ David Logsdon, paperback	\$12.00	
	<b>NEW!!</b> ~ "Eyewitness to the Battle of Nashville" ~ David Logsdon, paperback	\$12.00	
	<i>Cleburne or Forrest</i> Prints, signed by the artist (circle one ~ or <b>both for \$30</b> )	\$20.00	
	ORDER SUBTOTAL		
	SHIPPING & HANDLING (items only) ~ under 10.00	\$1.00	
	\$10 to 24.99	\$2.95	
	\$25 and up	\$4.50	
	ORDER TOTAL		

Mail To: Save The Franklin Battlefield ~ P.O. Box 851 ~ Franklin, TN 37065-0851  
 STFB Membership is annual, donations are tax deductible.

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