

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MONUMENT: MEMORY, PRESERVATION, AND THE
BATTLES OF FRANKLIN AND NASHVILLE

by

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B.S., Austin Peay State University, 2006
M.A., Austin Peay State University, 2008

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Abstract

The thriving areas of development around the cities of Franklin and Nashville in Tennessee bear little evidence of the large battles that took place there during November and December, 1864. Pointing to modern development to explain the failed preservation of those battlefields, however, radically oversimplifies how those battlefields became relatively obscure. Instead, the major factor contributing to the lack of preservation of the Franklin and Nashville battlefields was a fractured collective memory of the two events; there was no unified narrative of the battles.

For an extended period after the war, there was little effort to remember the Tennessee Campaign. Local citizens and veterans of the battles simply wanted to forget the horrific battles that haunted their memories. Furthermore, the United States government was not interested in saving the battlefields at Franklin and Nashville. Federal authorities, including the War Department and Congress, had grown tired of funding battlefields as national parks and could not be convinced that the two battlefields were worthy of preservation. Moreover, Southerners and Northerners remembered Franklin and Nashville in different ways, and historians mainly stressed Eastern Theater battles, failing to assign much significance to Franklin and Nashville.

Throughout the 20th century, infrastructure development encroached on the battlefields and they continued to fade from public memory. By the end of the century, the battlefields were all but gone. However, to support tourism in the 21st century, Franklin's preservationists and local leaders largely succeeded in recapturing the memory of their battle by reclaiming much of the battlefield space. In contrast, at Nashville, memory of that battle remains obscure. The city continues to focus its efforts on the future, providing little opportunity to reclaim either the battlefield or memory of the Battle of Nashville.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my grandfather, Ray J. Norris (1930-2013), who died before its completion. Always supportive of me and my work, I know he would likewise be proud that I finally finished this major project. Although he constantly poked fun and told me I was a career student, he took pleasure from hearing about my progress. He was both a joy and an inspiration and I was fortunate to have had him in my life for so long. Any success this study experiences is, to a large degree, a reflection of who he was and the ethics he passed down to me about hard work and diligence. I am eternally grateful and my life has been better because he was always there.

Introduction

In many ways, I trace my first experience as an historian to the Battle of Franklin. Following my service in the United States Marine Corps, I knew that I wanted to return to school and complete my bachelor's degree in history. A lifelong student of the battle, working at one of the sites significant to the battle proved invaluable not only to my historical education, but also to my professional development. Indeed, one of the most common questions I answered was, "Where is the battlefield?" from tourist who expected to see something resembling a national battlefield. More often than not, I replied by telling them they were standing on it. Most expressed shock, then and I explained that there was no "battlefield" preserved for them to visit and used a map to explain where they were in relation to the fighting that occurred at Franklin in 1864. Some visitors asked why nobody had preserved the battlefield at Franklin. After all, many recognize Franklin as the bloodiest battle in the Western Theater.

Similar circumstances exist on the Nashville battlefield. Amid the once grisly and chaotic scenes of the battle's landscapes, today one finds few reminders that a battle ever took place there. Other than an occasional historical marker, the path of the two army's fight at Nashville is today set among busy streets, interstates, residential areas, and thriving business sections.

How had this happened and why? In retrospect, it was a difficult question with an even more complicated answer. It is easy for one to explain the loss of the two battlefields by simply pointing to modern development and progress. Such an answer, however, radically oversimplifies the reasons why these battlefields remained obscure in comparison to other Civil War battlefields until recent years. The loss of the battlefields at Franklin and Nashville speak to something that is culturally and socially much broader and harder to explain.

The main factor contributing to the lack of preservation of the Franklin and Nashville battlefields was the fractured collective memory of the two events. By fractured memory, I refer to the failure of any single overarching memory of either battle to become the dominant one. Collective memory of the battles remained fragmented and continued splintering in later years as a result of many diverging interests and perspectives. Those interests included but were not limited to the different ways that Northerners and Southerners remembered the two battles, political considerations, economic conditions, and how both sides wanted to commemorate them, if at all. Of the many memories of the battles that did exist, no coalescence of their various threads occurred. This prevented a coherent and cohesive master narrative of Franklin and Nashville from developing and in turn inhibited large-scale preservation activity. Individual groups maintained memories of the battle in keeping with their identities but no merger of memories held by these various constituencies ever became the single, universally understood collective memory of the battles.

Among the many memories of the battles, the Confederacy's crushing defeats at Franklin and Nashville left Southerners with precious little to commemorate except carnage, valor, and sacrifice. This sharply contrasted with their former Northern enemies who could commemorate many Civil War battles under the umbrella of nobler and grander causes. Northerners could point to a vindicated cause that included victory in the war to exterminate slavery and the conflict that ultimately preserved the Union. Southerners, on the other hand, could make no such claims. Their commemoration frequently fell into the mythology of the Lost Cause of the Confederacy, where they justified their defeat by extolling the Southern virtues of manhood, honor, valor, and sacrifice. They focused on idolizing Confederate leaders while deemphasizing slavery's role in causing the war. To avoid the taint of defeat, they frequently argued that the Confederacy was

rarely defeated in battle but instead submitted to overwhelming manpower and resources after a valiant struggle.¹

The preservation and commemoration of many Civil War battlefields hinged on a workable and unified collective memory of those conflicts on which all could find general agreement that there was something about them worth remembering. I argue that the battlefields of Franklin and Nashville, however, experienced no such unity or common interests. This doomed Franklin and Nashville into relative obscurity compared to other Civil War battlefields of similar scale. The battles' anonymity persisted well into the twenty-first century (and arguably still continues).

This work is not merely another attempt to retell the actual events of the battles, something that has been done far too many times. The story I tell is that of the more recent Battles of Franklin and Nashville. These battles, rather than hurling masses of men and firepower at the enemy, were conflicts that involved words, memories, politics, and feelings. Unlike the first Battles of Franklin and Nashville, both North and South lost this fight as did later generations. Moreover, while the second Battle of Franklin lasted a few hours and the Battle of Nashville unfolded over two days, the battle for memory of these battles largely continues.

Throughout the spring and summer of 1864, Federal armies under the command of General William T. Sherman moved south from Chattanooga, Tennessee, and began a bloody campaign to take Atlanta. The Confederate Army of Tennessee, under the command of General Joseph E. Johnston, traded space for time. Withdrawing toward Atlanta, Johnston occasionally fought elements of Sherman's Federal armies, attempting to gain an advantage and force them to

¹Gary Gallagher and Alan Nolan, *The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 1.

attack his prepared positions by frontal assault. This strategy proved unsuccessful. Johnston's constant withdrawals before Atlanta led to his relief by Confederate President Jefferson Davis and his replacement by General John Bell Hood. The new commander engaged in a series of bloody attacks to keep Sherman from capturing Atlanta and the city's valuable industries and railroad links. Unsuccessful, Hood assumed a defensive posture until Sherman's maneuvers forced him to evacuate the city to save the Army of Tennessee.

After Atlanta's fall in September 1864, Hood moved into Tennessee, hoping to draw Federal commander, Gen. William T. Sherman away from his infamous March to the Sea. The Federal commander did not follow Hood but detached two corps to bolster the ranks of Union soldiers at Nashville, Tennessee, and assist them in defending the city from Hood's advance. Through a skillful maneuver at Columbia, Tennessee, however, Hood managed to flank the two Federal corps under the command of General John M. Schofield and interpose his army between Nashville and Schofield. On the night of November 29, 1864, a confused Confederate command structure, conflicting orders, and the cover of darkness allowed Schofield to walk through Hood's trap and continue his rapid march to Nashville.

The following morning, Hood awoke to find the Federals gone and angrily ordered his army north in pursuit. Schofield arrived in the town of Franklin, Tennessee, seventeen miles south of Nashville, and found the bridges crossing the Harpeth River unusable and the river impassable. While he called for engineers and pontoons from Nashville to assist his army's crossing, Schofield's men fortified the ground south of Franklin. By the afternoon of November 30, the remainder of Schofield's force had poured into Franklin with Hood's Confederate army on their heels. The Confederate commander immediately surveyed the Federal positions from the top of Winstead Hill then announced his decision to attack Schofield's entrenched positions.

At 4:30 PM, Hood's men began the two-mile northward march towards Schofield's fortified works. Soon afterward, Hood's army became embroiled in a fight remembered by both sides for its ghastly carnage. Casualties on both sides numbered nearly 10,000 men. Hood's attack at Franklin wrecked his army; approximately 6,300 of these casualties belonged to the Confederate Army of Tennessee.²

Following the bloodbath at Franklin, Hood immediately ordered his decimated army forward toward Nashville. Hoping to capture the city, Hood realized he did not have the strength to attack the Tennessee capital. Schofield's withdrawing Federals had reached the safety of Nashville's impressive defenses and large garrison under the command of General George Thomas, commanding the Army of the Cumberland.

Instead of moving on the city, Hood deployed his men on the hills south of Nashville and invited Thomas to attack him. The Confederate commander foolishly believed that he could defeat Thomas, capture Nashville, and then continue moving north to threaten other Union cities, or help relieve the pressure on General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia.

Thomas finally attacked Hood's position on December 15, 1864 and in a two-day battle forced the already battered Army of Tennessee to abandon the field in chaotic disorder. Fleeing for their lives, Hood's men began their southward retreat out of Tennessee to Tupelo, Mississippi, and were saved from total annihilation by the skillful rear-guard defense of Confederate corps commander, General Stephen D. Lee. The Confederate campaign in

² James Lee McDonough and Thomas L. Connelly, *Five Tragic Hours: The Battle of Franklin* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1983); Wiley Sword, *The Confederacy's Last Hurrah: Spring Hill, Franklin, and Nashville*, (University Press of Kansas, 1992); Eric A. Jacobson and Richard Rupp, *For Cause and Country: A Study of the Affair at Spring Hill and the Battle of Franklin* (Franklin, TN: O'More Publishing, 2013). These works represent the best treatment of the Battle of Franklin. Confederate casualties at Franklin continue to be a subject of much debate. Incomplete Confederate records of the campaign make the exact number difficult to establish. Most historians, however, place the number between six and seven thousand but others argue that these are much too low.

Tennessee was all but over. It had been a dismal and costly failure that wrecked the western Confederacy's army. Hood had entered Tennessee at the beginning of the campaign with over 30,000 men. He left the state with approximately 20,000 men.³

The fractured collective memory of Franklin and Nashville underscores several ways that the bloody battlegrounds became forgotten. First, the horrific battles produced bad memories that many citizens and veterans of the battles, particularly those from Southern states, simply wanted to forget. For an extended period after the war, there simply was no collective memory of the Tennessee Campaign. Furthermore, little effort developed to save the battlefields at Franklin and Nashville within the United States government. Federal authorities, including the War Department and Congress, grew tired of funding battlefields as national parks as they had already devoted large amounts of money, time, and resources to the establishment of national battlefields and military parks at Chickamauga, Shiloh, Antietam, and Gettysburg. Although several people and organizations attempted to preserve Franklin and Nashville in this manner, the scattered threads of collective memory about the battles were not strong enough to convince government officials and elected representatives that the two great Confederate defeats of the Tennessee Campaign of 1864 were worthy of Federal funding and preservation.⁴

Another factor contributing to the lost battlefields resulted from indifference to the area's bloody past. While some of the civilians living in Franklin and Nashville at the time of the battles and afterward wanted to forget the battle, others simply never thought about them. Many

³ Jacobson and Rupp, *For Cause and Country*, 530; For the best historical treatment of the Battle of Nashville see Wiley Sword, *The Confederacy's Last Hurrah: Spring Hill, Franklin, and Nashville*; Stanley F. Horn, *The Decisive Battle of Nashville* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984); James Lee McDonough, *Nashville: The Western Confederacy's Final Gamble* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2004).

⁴ See McDonough and Connelly, *Five Tragic Hours*, 179.

citizens thought the battlefields, lying on farmland would always be there; therefore they saw no need to preserve the bloodied ground. Many simply did not care about the tragic events of the past at Franklin and Nashville. These battles were also a nasty reminder of horrible defeats to some in the area that cast their lots with the Confederacy during the war. Wanting little to remind them of that, citizens of the area simply moved on with their lives and continued using the land as they always had, seemingly hoping that in time they would forget the carnage they had witnessed upon that ground.

The fractured collective memory and lack of preservation at Franklin and Nashville also resulted from early histories of the Civil War. Early Civil War historiography held that the Civil War's significant events occurred in the Eastern Theater. Therefore, battles occurring in the Western Theater, such as Franklin and Nashville, paled in comparison to actions in the East. Shortly after the war, most historians emphasized battles such as Gettysburg, Antietam, Fredericksburg, and Chancellorsville. Although the veterans of the Tennessee Campaign of 1864 would disagree, most early Civil War histories recognized that the fighting at Franklin and Nashville changed little for either side. The Confederate defeats during the Atlanta Campaign and Lincoln's reelection as President of the United States had all but assured a Union victory in the war.⁵ Although the Federal victories in the Battles of Franklin and Nashville practically destroyed the Confederate Army of Tennessee, no action emerged from the battles that reshaped the now almost certain course of the war. The battles did not end the fighting, though they perhaps shortened the war's duration. By this point, however, the war's results were predetermined and the fighting at Franklin and Nashville merely added another bloody chapter in the book of fruitless slaughter that defined many Civil War battles. In short, many post-war

⁵ Richard M. McMurry, *Atlanta 1864: Last Chance For the Confederacy* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 190.

historians saw little worth remembering about Franklin and Nashville and this shortsightedness further contributed to the battles' fragile collective memory.

As time elapsed, populations expanded, further encroaching on battlefield land. By the late twentieth century, the area's population had increased exponentially and most of the battles' sites were already lost. This was especially true at Franklin, where many people within the town made a conscious decision to continue large-scale commercial and residential development. This massive development resulted in an economic boom that continued bringing people to Franklin. By this time, however, most of the battlefield had been lost and efforts to preserve the town's bloody past only had a faint heartbeat. Pizza establishments emerged on or very near the site where Confederate General Patrick Cleburne fell while leading his men against Federal breastworks at the Cotton Gin and, at one time, a carwash and other nearby businesses marked the spot where Union General George Wagner's forward line was overrun by the Confederate attack.

The battlefield at Franklin suffered from one other inescapable factor. Located seventeen miles south of Nashville, Franklin received the urban sprawl from Nashville largely fueled by the growth of several industries in that area, including the country music business. City and county authorities from Franklin and Williamson County found themselves ill-equipped to effectively deal with such a rapid population explosion and the immediate problems it caused, much less worry about preserving a battlefield from 1864. Large-scale development, population growth, and urban sprawl from Nashville combined to fracture an already fragile collective memory of Franklin's bloody battle.⁶

⁶ For the best historical treatment of Franklin, Tennessee, see James A. Crutchfield and Robert Holladay, *Franklin: Tennessee's Handsomest Town, A Bicentennial History 1799-1999* (Franklin: Hillsboro Press, 1999).

Fortunately, memory of the Franklin battlefield was not completely lost. The town's increasing population dramatically changed the area's dynamics and Franklin's city officials sought to capitalize on tourism dollars. The easiest and most effective way to do this entailed marketing the bloody 1864 battle. The resulting interest in the Battle of Franklin led to increased preservation efforts and a large-scale vision for commemorating the historic battlefield by establishing commemorative parks. These renewed preservation efforts also spawned a flood of literature about the battle, inflating its importance to the Civil War and seeking to increase tourism revenue. Mainly occurring after the new millennium, Franklin's changing demographics and the desire to capitalize on tourism revenue eventually reshaped the collective memory of Franklin. Once seen as an embarrassing reminder of defeat, some of Franklin's leaders now hoped to change the collective memory of the battle to make money. In their minds, Franklin became a significant battle of the war.⁷

At Nashville, rapid expansion also encroached on the old battlefield as the city's population exploded. Changing social and economic conditions in the city after the Civil War spelled eventual disaster for what remained of the Nashville battlefield. Like many living in Franklin, Nashville citizens made a conscious choice to forget the battlefield. Those in Nashville

⁷ Save the Franklin Battlefield Newsletter Collection; Tourism Brochures. See also Adam Goodheart, "Civil War: Saving the Landscapes, Battlefields of America's Deadliest War," *National Geographic*, April, 2005. Although arguments that Franklin was one of the bloodiest conflicts of the war are quite correct, recent literature promoting tourism has inaccurately portrayed the Battle of Franklin as the five bloodiest hours of the Civil War. Arguably the Battle of Franklin lasted longer than five hours and the most recent studies argue that the battle produced approximately 10,000 casualties on both sides (see Jacobson, *For Cause and Country*). In *The Confederacy's Last Hurrah*, Sword argues that the battlefield was silent after 10:30 p.m. (247). This means the fighting lasted about six hours. Using these facts and numbers, this means the casualty rate at Franklin was statistically 1,666 per hour. By comparison, Gordon Rhea in *Cold Harbor* (2002) argues that Grant's morning assault on June 3 at Cold Harbor caused an estimated 4,000 Federal casualties and 1,500 Confederate. Most sources note that this attack only lasted twenty minutes. Keeping these factors in mind, an approximate statistical casualty rate of this assault is 16,500 per hour. Franklin was hardly the bloodiest battle or five hours of the war.

who embraced the New South movement turned their back on the past, including the Battle of Nashville, and concentrated their efforts on the future. This largely one-way view continued well into the twentieth century until almost all the Nashville battlefield was gone, a victim of city infrastructure, commercial, and residential development.⁸

Unlike Franklin, the few people who wanted to remember the Battle of Nashville had very little they could work with to perpetuate a memory of the battle. Almost none of the Nashville battlefield remained undeveloped. Moreover, with the exception of a couple of small battle related sites, little or no chance existed to reclaim parts of the battlefield. While circumstances eventually allowed Franklin to reclaim the memory of its battle through preservation, that was simply impossible at Nashville. On the old battlefield, shopping malls, upscale residential areas, schools, and roads eventually obliterated much of the landscape, denying Nashville the opportunity to engage in large-scale reclamation.

Despite their sincere efforts, organizations and people dedicated to preservation of the Nashville battlefield, such as the Battle of Nashville Preservation Society, can only progress so far. Unlike Franklin, little battlefield land remains available for reclamation. Moreover, modern development has so radically altered the landscape that it renders an accurate interpretation of the 1864 battle nearly impossible. Most of the battlefield has been lost forever.

Although substantial Civil War literature now addresses the Battles of Franklin and Nashville, no studies exclusively treat how the battles have been remembered. One historiographic category essential to understanding this topic revolves around literature addressing the military aspects of the two battles. Wiley Sword wrote about the entire Tennessee Campaign, including Franklin and Nashville, in *The Confederacy's Last Hurrah*. Eric Jacobson

⁸ Don H. Doyle, *Nashville In The New South: 1880-1930* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1985); Don H. Doyle, *Nashville Since The 1920s* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1985).

with Richard Rupp, James L. McDonough, and Thomas L. Connelly extensively treated the Battle of Franklin. Stanley F. Horn first gave the Battle of Nashville substantial historical treatment in *The Decisive Battle of Nashville* as did James L. McDonough in *Nashville: The Western Confederacy's Final Gamble*.

Various other narratives regarding the fighting at Franklin and Nashville exist in the many accounts written by Tennessee Campaign veterans and memoirs of the battles' prominent commanders. One such account is Confederate General John Bell Hood's *Advance and Retreat*. Another memoir is Gen. John M. Schofield's *Forty-Six Years in the Army*. Both of these works constituted an attempt to solidify their postwar memory of the war, including Franklin and Nashville. Other accounts emerged from enlisted veterans of the battles such as Confederate Private Sam Watkins, *Company Aytch*, where he detailed his experiences as a private soldier throughout the war. Other narratives of Franklin and Nashville appeared within the pages of the *Confederate Veteran*, the publication of the United Confederate Veterans, and *The National Tribune*, the Grand Army of the Republic's publication.

The critical aspect of this dissertation, Civil War memory, has enjoyed much productive scholarship in recent years. Among these, standards include David Blight's *Race and Reunion*, Carol Reardon's *Pickett's Charge in History and Memory*, and Caroline Janney's *Remembering the Civil War*. Other recent scholarship in Civil War memory has a more direct bearing on how groups and individuals remembered the Battles of Franklin and Nashville. Timothy B. Smith's 2004 monograph, *This Great Battlefield of Shiloh*, discusses the establishment of a national battlefield at Shiloh and how collective memory not only enabled the creation of the park and influenced the interpretation of the battlefield but also provides a useful framework for considering what did not occur at Franklin and Nashville; a national battlefield commemorating

Franklin and Nashville and perpetuating their memory. Smith substantially broadened this study in 2008 with *The Golden Age of Battlefield Preservation* that discusses the formation of the first five Civil War National Military Parks.

Similarly, Drew Gilpin Faust's *This Republic of Suffering* discusses how the conflict's horrible carnage reshaped American society's fundamental notions of how to cope with such tragic episodes, particularly relevant to the Tennessee Campaign when one considers the appalling casualties of Franklin. Through their discussions of how Americans remembered the Civil War through their care of and commemoration of the dead, John Neff's *Honoring the Civil War Dead* and Caroline Janney's *Burying the Dead But Not the Past* prove particularly relevant to Franklin and Nashville. Moreover, Cynthia Mills and Pamela H. Simpson's edited series *Monuments to The Lost Cause* shows how Southerners cemented their version of the war by incorporating the Myth of the Lost Cause into Confederate monuments they erected across the South, including Franklin and Nashville.

Several works have shaped my thinking on memory and its relationship with the Battles of Franklin and Nashville. Any work using such a framework hinges on collective memory, the idea pioneered by Maurice Halbwachs in *The Collective Memory*, holding that a distinct memory exists among members of a group that is contingent upon their affiliation. To be sure, the collective memory of Franklin and Nashville existed in many forms, albeit fractured and fragmented. Moreover, forming a collective memory of the battles relied heavily on both remembering and forgetting as a contributing factor.⁹

A core part of fractured collective memory necessarily involves forgetting. Paul Ricoeur ably addressed this in *Memory, History, and Forgetting*. In order to establish a useable collective

⁹ Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, Ed. Lewis A. Coser, (Chicago: The University Press of Chicago, 1992).

memory of the past for use in the present, he argued, elements of the past must be forgotten. Much of Ricoeur's work centered on trauma, which significantly influenced the fractured nature of collective memory. His work largely relies on two types of forgetting, amnesty and amnesia. Amnesty, according to Ricoeur, allows a group to forgive past actions and move forward in the present remarking, "It [amnesty] brings to conclusion serious political disorders affecting civil peace-civil wars, revolutionary periods, violent changes in political regimes—violence that the amnesty is supposed to interrupt." Amnesia, on the other hand, is selective forgetting that allows a group to bury uncomfortable parts of their past. In the case of the Battles of Franklin and Nashville, trauma existed in two forms. The first type of trauma from these battles involved the violence of the engagements and their immediate aftermath witnessed by participants. The second type of trauma relevant to the Battles of Franklin and Nashville revolved around the uncomfortable and embarrassing aspects of defeat. Ricoeur's model provided an excellent way of seeing the influence of forgetting on the fractured collective memory of Franklin and Nashville. Amnesty allowed soldiers of both sides to forgive past transgressions of their enemy and move forward with the work of reconciliation while amnesia, in many ways, allowed many Southerners to ignore the painful taint of defeat associated with the Tennessee Campaign of 1864.¹⁰

Wolfgang Schivelbusch addressed the trauma of defeat and its relationship to fractured memory in *Cultures of Defeat*. Comparing the vanquished in the American Civil War, the Franco- Prussian War, and the First World War, Schivelbusch showed how these cultures crafted a memory of defeat that not only made it more bearable but also upheld their pre-war moral values. In the post-American Civil War South, this memory became the Myth of the Lost Cause.

¹⁰ Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), 453.

When one examines the history and narratives of Franklin and Nashville, it becomes readily apparent that the Southern memory of the battles sought to reduce the trauma inflicted by their defeat in the Tennessee Campaign. Using the Myth of the Lost Cause, Southerners incorporated its rhetoric and methods to reduce the pain of defeat associated with the campaign and somehow make it a story of bravery and Southern manhood.¹¹

While trauma facilitated the development of a fractured collective memory through forgetting, it also served as a starting point for remembering. Trauma also provided a foundation for competing narratives contributing to Franklin and Nashville's fragmented and fractured memory. Benedict Anderson best exhibited this in *Imagined Communities*, his study of nationalism, where he demonstrated that groups held a distinct memory as part of an affiliation, shared the same goals, and had the same identity although it was impossible for any individual to know all members of the groups. In the aftermath of the Battles of Franklin and Nashville, various and frequently competing narratives emerged from different "imagined communities" including the community of veterans and Southerners, among others.¹²

Jay Winter also exhibited how trauma helped "remembering" in the wake of the First World War. In *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*, Winter argued that the appalling death toll of the conflict led the bereaved to find solace in traditional forms of remembrance and commemorations. These types of remembrances and commemorations also took place in the aftermath of the battles of Franklin and Nashville, mainly in the form of monument dedications, veterans' reunions, parades, and cemetery ceremonies. In these solemn ceremonies that centered

¹¹ Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Culture of Defeat: On National Trauma, Mourning, and Recovery*, (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2003).

¹² Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (New York: Verso, 2006). 6.

on trauma beginning after the battles and continuing for many years afterward, participants used them to convey a particular memory of Franklin and Nashville.¹³

In *How Modernity Forgets*, Paul Connerton showed how the effects of a modern age societies promote forgetting and fractured memory. This proves especially relevant to the battlefields at Franklin and Nashville. By the end of the twentieth century, very little remained of either battlefield and development that had taken place on them ensured little about them was memorable. While people engaged in the hustle and bustle of modern life, such activity frequently took them across the battlefields now covered with businesses, industries, and residences. As more development occurred and populations grew, more forgetting occurred and the fracture in the collective memory of the battle widened.¹⁴

Just as forgetting had contributed to and was a core element of the fractured memory of Franklin and Nashville, so too did remembering. The competing narratives of the battles emerging in their aftermath all served to prevent the formation of a single coherent and unified collective memory of the engagements. In *Mystic Chords of Memory*, Michael Kammen addressed the complexity of this concept. He noted, “Societies in fact reconstruct their pasts rather than faithfully record them, and they do so with the needs of contemporary culture clearly in mind—manipulating the past in order to mold the present.” Various memories of the Battles of Franklin and Nashville that transpired in the late nineteenth and continued in the twentieth century all served to perpetuate differing agendas, narratives, and experiences.¹⁵

¹³ Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European cultural history*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

¹⁴ Paul Connerton, *How Modernity Forgets*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

¹⁵ Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 3.

Pierre Nora also addressed various ways that remembering contributes to the concept of a fractured collective memory. According to Nora's *Lieux de Memorie*, a seminal work on memory, "We speak so much of memory because there is so little of it left." As a result of a memory that is no longer present, societies create sites of memory in order to remember what is no longer present. Nora does not use the word "sites" literally but refers to the mnemonic and nostalgic power of commemorations, archives, monument, and namesakes. He remarked, that sites of memory exist "because there are no longer real environments of memory." Such sites emerge when fear emerges that the past cannot be recovered. These sites of memory exist on the battlefields of Franklin and Nashville where streets named after commanders, historical markers, historic sites, cemeteries, and monuments all attempt to hold on to bygone memories of the violent days in November and December, 1864.¹⁶

In *Sacred Ground*, Edward Linenthal took a more literal approach to sites of memory. He highlighted the mnemonic process by which Americans invest a sacred aura in their battlefields. Making battlefields "ceremonial centers" invited various constituencies to form different memories of their meaning within American society. Linenthal argued, "Many people believe that the patriotic inspiration to be extracted from these sacred places depends not only on proper ceremony but on a memorialized, preserved, restored, and purified environment." Also revealing how battlefields can become places of fractured memory he added, "On the other hand, these battlesites are civil spaces where Americans of various ideological persuasions come, not always reverently, to compete for the ownership of powerful national stories and to argue about the nature of heroism, the meaning of war, the efficacy of martial sacrifice, and the significance of preserving the patriotic landscape of the nation." Although the battlefields of Franklin and

¹⁶ Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire," *Representations*, No. 26Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory (Spring, 1989), pp. 7-24. 7.

Nashville never became National Military Parks, many Federal and Confederate veterans, citizens, and legislators expended substantial effort to consecrate these spaces. Each group, however, wanted to invest these battlefields with a significance born of a different collective memory.¹⁷

In *How Societies Remember*, Paul Connerton focused on the elements of ritual performance and commemoration as a purveyor of memory. This performance, according to Connerton links the past with the present, after the continuity with the past is disturbed. In the case of Franklin and Nashville, such performances and commemorations took place in the numerous reenactments that occurred in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, celebrations of the battles' centennial, reenactor marches, and various other commemorations that in some way exhibited memory of the battles.¹⁸

Tracking the lack of battlefield preservation in Franklin and Nashville and finding works discussing modern development proved difficult but not impossible. Various area newspapers frequently cover massive development projects throughout Franklin and, in recent years, discuss preservation concerns and their significance. Likewise, these newspapers also discuss various efforts to preserve Battle of Nashville sites although they have significantly less to say on the subject. I also benefited from a large collection of public records in Franklin and Nashville detailing how the cities treat preservation efforts. Moreover, documents, meeting minutes, and newsletters from different preservation groups gave critical insights about their efforts and activities.

¹⁷ Edward T. Linenthal, *Sacred Ground: Americans and Their Battlefields*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993).

¹⁸ Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

The first chapter briefly describes the battles and discusses the immediate impacts upon soldiers participating in the fighting and citizen's attempts to deal with the tragic events they had just witnessed. These tasks began with treating the wounded in the numerous hospitals that dotted the Franklin and Nashville landscapes immediately after the battles, burying the dead in makeshift graves, and clearing the area of the debris inherently left by clashing armies. During this period, these efforts culminated at Franklin with the creation of the McGavock Confederate Cemetery where several factors necessitated the removal of Confederate soldiers from their original graves. At Nashville, they culminated with the reburial of Federal soldiers at the newly created Nashville National Cemetery.

I argue that many of the battles' participants and local citizens simply wanted to forget the horrors they witnessed in November and December 1864 and attempted to put the experience behind them as rapidly as possible. Many veterans simply did not say much about the terrible things they had witnessed and some refused to return to the bloody fields for several years, if at all. In fact, many of the accounts on which I rely were written several years after the battle, rather than immediately afterward. I will also argue that Reconstruction of the defeated, politically turbulent, and economically deprived South kept collective memory and commemoration of the Tennessee Campaign on the backburner for several years.

This chapter also discusses commemoration and the Battles of Franklin and Nashville. Although this early commemoration was limited, it represented considerably more activity than the immediate postwar period. Former Federals and Confederates pondered these commemorative issues together in veterans' magazines and in letters to the editor. Among some of the veterans, one sees a sweeping spirit of reconciliation that not only upheld their own bravery but also extolled the virtues of their former enemy. Leading citizens and lineage groups

assisted in this endeavor, hoping to commemorate the valor of the Lost Cause embodied by the Battles of Franklin and Nashville. On the other hand, some veterans of Franklin and Nashville wanted nothing to do with their former enemies and refused to embrace the Lost Cause.

The second chapter addresses memory of the Battles of Franklin and Nashville in popular culture, including those memories perpetuated by commanders, veterans, historians, various types of literature, and visual arts including paintings and film depictions. Civil War historiography, until relatively recently, particularly reveals the fractured nature of collective memory concerning the battles. In stressing Eastern Theater battles and commanders, Franklin and Nashville hardly merited attention in Civil War historiography before the fourth decade of the twentieth century. Although many historians mentioned the Battles of Franklin and Nashville, they did not extend any great value to them in the larger narrative of Civil War operations. I argue that many historians still continue this trend, although some rise in the significance of Franklin and Nashville in the last thirty years appears evident.

Franklin and Nashville also set the scene for a substantial amount of literature including novels, poems, and short stories. Most famously, Ambrose Bierce's collection of stories and Margaret Mitchell's *Gone With the Wind*. Hollywood, in some cases draws upon memory of Franklin, although never making extensive use of it. In more recent years, writers of historical fiction have set their sights on Franklin and Nashville. Similarly, a cottage industry of Civil War art now depicts aspects of the battles.

My third and fourth chapters discuss how many on both sides hoped the postwar spirit of reunification would lead to the establishment of national military parks at Franklin and Nashville as it had for other National Military Parks. These chapters detail the efforts rendered by many people and organizations to make that dream a reality but ultimately only describes their failure

in that venture. Differences in the collective memory of Franklin and Nashville, economic interests, diverging political factors, and unresolved differences about what the war meant contributed to the failures and ultimately paved the way to the loss of two Civil War battlefields. Moreover, this chapter explores how, after funding other battlefields, Congress became reluctant to make more expenditures for parks at Franklin and Nashville and crushed a pivotal aspect of perpetuating the memory of the battles.

The fifth chapter will describe the massive development that began consuming the Franklin and Nashville battlefields after 1900 and traces the politics of that development. In many ways, the failure of the national parks at Franklin and Nashville, and the fragmented memory of the battles contributed to this growth. This development continued into the twenty-first century when shopping malls, schools, factories, and other structures consumed the battlefields. In some cases, developers destroyed the battlefields quite willingly and in others it resulted from uncontrollable urban sprawl. In both cases, however, a fractured collective memory allowed this process to take root.

Chapters 6 and 7 address the politics of remembering the battles, primarily between 1900 and 2014. The forces of development received plenty of opposition from groups and individuals who sought to preserve memory of the battlefields in various ways, even as more of the sites succumbed to development. These methods included the naming of streets after features of the battle, the creation of driving tours, the protection of some remaining landmarks, re-enactments, and various commemoration ceremonies. Later, many preservationists and city leaders began a conscious effort to reclaim parts of the battlefields, especially at Franklin. At Nashville, preservation efforts also continue although there is precious little left to preserve.

A short epilogue describes the most recent efforts to reclaim the battlefields and perpetuate their memory, concluding with the sesquicentennial celebration of the battles. In many ways, memory of the Battle of Franklin is now alive and well. The city and preservationists have joined forces in a massive reclamation of battlefield land that some tout as the largest battlefield reclamation in history. On the other hand, memory of the Battle of Nashville, for several reasons, remains largely obscure. Little opportunity exists for further preservation. While some small preservation victories have occurred, memory of the Battle of Nashville emerges through living history demonstrations, lectures, and other educational programs. Although these remembrances and continued preservation efforts should be encouraged and continued wherever possible, sadly, these efforts are too little too late. Franklin and Nashville will never resemble the state of preservation that one sees in national battlefields at Gettysburg, Chickamauga, Antietam, Shiloh, and Vicksburg. Before veterans, writers, government officials, and preservationists assembled a unified and workable collective memory, Franklin and Nashville were already lost.

This dissertation not only offers a description of the many ways that fragmented memory occurs and its repercussions but also gives a perspective on the formation of collective memory associated with historical events. Hopefully, this dissertation sheds more light on central questions revolving around memory and the study of armed conflict. How does time interact with collective memory? How and why does the collective memory and resulting commemoration of a battle shift over various periods? New questions also emerge when one ponders who maintains ownership of a collective memory. The most important question, however, emerges when one asks what an event really means. Memory projects often seem to elicit more questions than answers, rendering the precise workings of collective memory

impossible to fully understand. By focusing on the battlefields of Franklin and Nashville scholars may obtain some new answers about the complicated nature of collective memory and slowly unravel its mysteries.

Chapter 1 - Old Times Are Best Forgotten . . . Then Remembered: Memory of Franklin and Nashville in the Late Nineteenth Century

The Battles of Franklin and Nashville proved traumatic for those who experienced them or dealt with their aftermath. In the period immediately following the battles and extending through Reconstruction, few Southerners bothered to remember the battles outside the context of the Lost Cause, which stressed valor, sacrifice, and the Southern memorialization of these virtues. Although Federal veterans later remembered the battles, they too remained largely silent during Reconstruction, a period of national turbulence. While many former Confederate soldiers and southern civilians in the area had good reasons to forget the battles, former Federal soldiers had little reason to remember the Battles of Franklin and Nashville during this period, with the exception of looking after their war dead. Most did not remain in the area after the war and were not directly affected by its aftermath. Veterans of both sides only began remembering the battles beginning in the latter part of the nineteenth century, as reconciliation swept the reunited nation. Northerners, however, largely abdicated commemorations of Franklin and Nashville to Southerners, a tantamount endorsement of the Lost Cause.¹ Southerners' willful effort to forget the battles and Northerners' ambivalence toward them during Reconstruction contributed to a fractured memory of the Battles of Franklin and Nashville that persisted well into the next century.

In order to understand the memories that developed around the Battles of Franklin and Nashville after the war, one must first understand the traumatic events that occurred in late 1864. After escaping from Spring Hill, Tennessee, General John M. Schofield's army moved north toward Franklin with General George Wagner's division fighting a rear guard action to protect

¹ The notion of Northerners accepting the Lost Cause in order to promote reconciliation is a central argument made by David Blight in *Race and Reunion*.

Schofield's rapidly retreating columns. Schofield arrived in the town early on the morning of November 30 only to discover that the bridges across the Harpeth River were burned and damaged. He immediately called for engineers to repair the bridges and ordered his army to begin constructing fortifications south of the town. While Schofield looked to these matters and made his headquarters at Fort Granger, north of the Harpeth River, he delegated the supervision of the defenses to General Jacob Cox, who made his headquarters in the Carter House, nearly in the center and just behind the Union breastworks.

Hood's men marched north on the Columbia Pike in pursuit of Schofield's Federal force. Determined to flank the Federals out of the town if possible, Hood sent General A.P. Stewart and his corps east across Henpeck Lane to the Lewisburg Pike, where they continued their northward march into Franklin. While Hood established his headquarters on Winstead Hill, two divisions of General Benjamin Franklin Cheatham's corps moved into the Harpeth River Valley towards Franklin on the Columbia Pike, marching through the gap between Winstead and Breezy Hills. A third division moved west of Winstead Hill. General Stephen D. Lee's corps was not with the Army of Tennessee's main element. Lee's men, along with most of the army's artillery, had been left at Columbia, Tennessee a few days earlier to create a diversion while the remainder of Hood's army attempted to outflank Schofield and cut him off from Nashville. Though Lee's men now rapidly marched up the Columbia Pike to rejoin Hood, they did not arrive until the night of November 30 when the bulk of the fighting at Franklin was over.

After passing between Winstead and Breezy Hills, Gen. Patrick Cleburne's division of Cheatham's corps deployed east of the Columbia Pike while General John C. Brown's division formed west of the pike. Cheatham's third division, commanded by General William Bate, formed on Brown's left. Stewart's Corps, meanwhile began deploying on Cheatham's right

flank, west of the Lewisburg Pike. Hood observed the deployments from his command post atop Winstead Hill. Cleburne rode forward to observe the Federal defenses of Franklin. He found that the exhausted Federal soldiers had already constructed three complete lines of earthworks. Despite these daunting defenses, Hood announced his decision to attack the Federal forces around Franklin. Many of Hood's corps and division commanders disapproved of this decision. Cheatham told him that he did not think it a good idea while the Confederate cavalry commander, General Nathan Bedford Forrest, protested Hood's decision and pleaded for the commander to give him some infantry so he could cross the Harpeth River and flank Schofield from his defensive works at Franklin.

Hood could not be swayed, however, and decided to attack immediately. At 4:30 in the afternoon, bands began playing and the Confederate Army of Tennessee moved forward. Cheatham's corps made the first contact with the enemy when Cleburne's and Brown's divisions overwhelmed the two brigades of General George Wagner's division positioned about a half mile in front of the main Federal line. Cheatham's men hotly pursued the fleeing Federal soldiers and followed them into the main line of earthworks.

A fierce fight in the center of the line erupted as Confederates temporarily broke through the Union works at the Carter House. General Emerson Opdycke's brigade, positioned on the slope just behind the Carter House, moved forward with his men and in bitter hand-to-hand encounters, helped push the Confederates back outside of the works. As the Confederates stubbornly withdrew, they desperately clung to the outside of the works. The Confederates tried time and again to move across the Federal earthworks, but each time the Federals tenaciously defended their position, pouring musket and artillery fire into the exposed attackers while clubbing those who came within reach with the butt of their rifles. Cheatham's Corps paid a

heavy price, particularly among its commanders. Cleburne was killed outside the Federal works between the Cotton Gin and the Columbia Pike. One of his brigade commanders, General Hiram Granbury, was killed in the middle of Columbia Pike outside of the Federal works. Brown's division fared little better. Brown was wounded, while three of his brigade commanders, Gist, Carter, and Strahl, were killed, and one, General George Gordon, was captured.

On the east side of the Columbia Pike, Stewart's corps engaged in a similar struggle. Exposed to artillery fire from Fort Granger, Stewart's divisions under Loring, Walthall, and French, began overlapping. The bend in the Harpeth near the Lewisburg Pike, which winds northwest before entering Franklin, forced Stewart's corps to shift constantly to their left. While the overlapping of formations proved difficult for Stewart's commanders to correct under artillery fire, the men soon encountered other problems. Within a short distance of their works, the Federal defenders constructed an abatis of fallen osage orange trees. This thorny defensive obstacle proved nearly impenetrable, forcing Stewart's men to shift left even farther. They attempted to hack their way through the obstacle while within easy range of Federal defenders, many of whom were armed with repeating rifles.

Under a withering fire from the Federals and their formations significantly compromised, Stewart's divisions rapidly began losing men and control. Confederate forces threw themselves towards the Federal works where they were repelled several times. The men withdrew, but only to reform and repeat the attack. Stewart's corps made several desperate assaults between the Carter Cotton Gin and the Lewisburg Pike, each proving bloody and disastrous. General John Adams, a Confederate brigade commander was killed near the Cotton Gin while attempting to leap the works on his horse. Three other brigade commanders in Stewart's corps; Quarles, Scott, and Cockrell, were wounded. By midnight, with his army nearly shattered and Federal forces

still in command of the field, Hood's men stopped attacking. Battered and bloodied, the Army of Tennessee remained on the battlefield, clinging to the outside of the earthworks.

Dawn on December 1, 1864 revealed a scene of ghastly horror for those who witnessed it. Dead and wounded from the battle covered the ground south of Franklin. In addition to the dead and wounded lying in every conceivable position, one could also see the clutter of an army scattered around the battlefield. Amid the streams and pools of blood flowing from the dead and dying bodies, dead horses, weapons, and lost equipment also littered the battleground. Soldiers of both sides as well as many of Franklin's citizens recorded the horrible and sites that surrounded them. These post-war narratives represented traumatic memories for those who wrote them, with most noting that these were the worst scenes they had ever witnessed. In many ways, these horrific memories contributed to the loss of the battlefield at Franklin. Many participants of the battle, both military and civilian, wanted to forget the gruesome carnage they had seen at Franklin as soon as possible. Combined with the widespread destruction across the South and Southerners' ill feelings toward Reconstruction, these terrible memories ensured that collective memories of the battle lay dormant for several years, contributing to the loss of the battlefield.

So great was the carnage and devastation of the Battle of Franklin that many who witnessed it found themselves incapable of describing the scene. Years after the battle, Confederate soldier Sam Watkins of the 1st Tennessee Infantry still found it impossible to relate the horrors he had seen. Watkins wrote in his memoirs,

Kind reader, right here my pen, courage, and ability fail me. I shrink from butchery. Would to God I could tear the page from these memoirs and from my own memory. It is the blackest page in the history of the war of the Lost Cause. It was the bloodiest battle of modern times in any war. It was the finishing stroke to the Independence of the Southern Confederacy. I was there. I saw it. My flesh trembles, and creeps, and crawls, when I think of it today. My heart almost ceases to

beat at the horrid recollection. Would to God that I had never witnessed such a scene! I cannot describe it. It beggars description. I will not attempt to describe it. I could not.²

Other soldiers likewise found themselves at a loss for words regarding Franklin. R.D. Jamison of the 45th Tennessee Infantry went to school near Franklin before the war and was very familiar with the area. Arriving with Lee's corps late on the evening of November 30, Jamison did not participate in the fighting but later recalled what he saw the next morning. He stated, "such a scene presented itself to our view that I cannot undertake to describe and was so appalling that the very thought of it makes me shudder." Jamison's regiment spent most of December 1, 1864 caring for the wounded and burying the dead.³

Some of the most vivid scenes of the battle's aftermath come from Hardin Figures, a fifteen-year-old Franklin boy living on Main Street. Figures witnessed the beginning of the fight at Franklin, watching from the tops of trees and barns until the deadly minie balls became so thick that he decided to take cover in his cellar. A Federal general established his headquarters in the Figures home and wounded soldiers from both sides sought shelter and treatment there. Figures emerged from the cellar and dressed their wounds, lit the fireplaces to keep them warm, and made drinks for them. He later even buried some of the men who succumbed to their wounds.

Early on the morning of December 1, Figures left his home to tour the battlefield, which Federal soldiers had evacuated during the previous night. Figure's narrative captured the traumatic memories and horrible scenes that confronted soldiers and citizens that day. He stated,

The first dead person that I found was a little Yankee boy, about my own age, lying in the middle of the street with his hands thrown back over his head, pale in death. The sight of this boy

² Sam Watkins, *Co. Aytch: A Side Show of the Big Show*, Wilmington, NC: Broadfoot, 1990. P. 218.

³ Henry Downs Jamison and Marguerite Jamison McTigue, *Letters and Recollections of a Confederate Soldier, 1860-1865*, 1964. P. 176.

somehow impressed me more than the thousands of dead men I was to look upon. It would be impossible to describe what I saw and heard. Inside of the breastworks were the dead and wounded Yankees; outside and for a long distance back were the dead and wounded Confederates. Men were going about over the field with such lights as they could procure, hunting for dead and wounded comrades and friends, men, shot and wounded in every part of the body, were crying out for help, telling their names and calling for friends to help them. It was at once a weird and gruesome sight.

From the Lewisburg Pike on the east, along, in front of and just south of the Federal breastworks as far as the Columbia Pike and west of the pike as far as the locust thicket, the dead and wounded were so thick upon the ground that it might be said without exaggeration that one could walk upon the dead and never touch the ground. A pit, or ditch made by throwing up the breastworks, was full of the dead. Sometimes they would be piled on one another several deep. In front of the Yankee battery which faced the Columbia Pike you would find a man with his head off. Others had arms and legs shot off, and some were cut in twain or almost so. I remember seeing one poor fellow, sitting up and leaning back against something, whose whole under jaw had been cut off by a grape shot, and his tongue and under lip were hanging down on his breast.⁴

Figures continued his narrative of the battle's bloody aftermath and the condition of the battlefield:

The Federals were not buried until the following Saturday after the battle was fought on Wednesday. They were buried generally just as they had fallen by pulling dirt from the breastworks down on them. Many of them had been stripped of their clothing by living soldiers who were almost naked.

On Saturday it began to rain, and on the outside of the breastworks in the ditch where so many soldiers were killed the water was literally running blood. Many of the dead Yankees along near the old gin house were killed by being struck over the head with the guns in the hands of the Confederates standing on the breastworks above them.

Right in front of the Carter House, on the margin of the pike, there was a locust tree, then about five inches in diameter . . . a Yankee soldier standing behind this tree was shot through the head, instant death and rigidity following. His left shoulder was against the tree, his head had dropped on his bosom, his gun in his left hand had kept him from falling on the left side, and his heavy iron ramrod in his right hand supported him on that side, and there he was standing in that position dead.⁵

The terrible experience of Franklin's aftermath remained with Figures in other ways. In an 1882 letter to one of the soldiers he tended to in his home, he expressed the horror he still felt about what he had witnessed. He declared, "The history of that night is fixed and fastened upon my memory like a horrible dream . . . when I give freedom to my thoughts , and allow them

⁴ Hardin P. Figures, "A Boy's Impressions Of The Battle Of Franklin," *Confederate Veteran*, Vol. XXIII, P. 6.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

pilgrimage to the realms of the past, they hinge upon the greatest and bloodiest battle of the war, and become lost amid the shock, and clash and thunder of battle.” Although Figures tried to restrain the memory of Franklin’s aftermath, the carnage he had witnessed still permeated his mind for the rest of his life.⁶

Hardin Figures’s experience was only one of hundreds recorded about the traumatic events of that day. Moscow Carter, son of Fountain Branch Carter and a paroled Confederate soldier, lived in a house on the Southern edge of Franklin. The Carter residence served as the headquarters of Union General Jacob Cox and became the focal point of the Battle of Franklin. Some of the heaviest fighting during the battle occurred across the Carter property. After the battle, Moscow Carter recalled that the ground around his entire yard was “dyed with blood” and covered with the brains of soldiers killed outside of the house. Carter counted 57 dead bodies in the small area around his house and almost one month after the battle he acquired a yoke of oxen to remove seventeen dead horses from the yard.⁷

Frank Cheatham could not bear to return to the battlefield for many years, haunted by the traumatic experience of Franklin. Finally, Cheatham returned in 1883 to show a reporter from the *Cincinnati Enquirer* the lines of the battle and discuss the events of that bloody day. Reflecting on the engagement, he discussed the large-scale death he witnessed on the field. He admitted to the reporter, “This is the first time I have visited this battle-field since the fight took place and I have talked more of the events of the war today than during all the past fifteen years.” Cheatham added, “I have never read a true story of this battle. It would be hard to write one.” Clearly the Battle of Franklin was a traumatic experience he would most likely rather have forgotten. More

⁶ H.P. Figures to Captain W.V. Davis, 30 May 1882. *Oh for Dixie!: The Civil War Record and Diary of Capt. William V. Davis, 30th Mississippi Infantry, C.S.A.* Ed. Joe and Lavon Ashley, Colorado Springs: Standing Pine Press, P. 218.

⁷ Jacob D. Cox, *The Battle of Franklin, Tennessee*, November 30, 1864. 1897.

importantly, however, it was an event that took him fifteen years before he found the ability to return to Franklin and discuss it.⁸

Those who survived Franklin did not have long to dwell on the horrors they had experienced. After leaving Franklin, John Bell Hood marched the remainder of his Army of Tennessee to the outskirts of Nashville where Federal General George Thomas prepared the city's defenses for Hood's arrival. Reinforced by Schofield's men arriving from Franklin, Thomas also received men from General A.J. Smith's XVI Corps. Hood deployed his army on hills south of the city, hoping to draw Thomas out of the city and attack his position. General Cheatham's corps formed Hood's right flank with the survivors of Granbury's Brigade defending an earthen work on the far right of the army. General Stephen Lee's Corps held Hood's center while Stewart's Corps took control of the vulnerable Confederate left, refused at nearly a right angle with Hood's main line. On the left, Stewart's men began constructing a series of redoubts near the Hillsboro Pike.

In Nashville, Thomas received a series of messages from Grant urging him to immediately attack Hood's army. The Federal commander delayed action, however, in an attempt to organize and equip his forces for action. Just as Thomas became prepared to attack, an ice storm hit Nashville rendering movement against Hood impossible. Upset by the delay, Grant sent General John Logan to Nashville to relieve Thomas deciding to go and assume command himself. Grant began the journey to the Western Theater but in the meantime, the ice melted and Thomas developed a plan for the impending battle. He decided to use diversionary attacks against the Confederate center and right while executing a wheeling movement against the Confederate left. On December 15, General Steedman's Union division moved against

⁸ "Gen. Cheatham, His Story of the Bloody Battle of Franklin, Tenn., The Most Desperate Hand to Hand Contest of the War," *The Butler Weekly Times*, May 16, 1883. 3.

Cheatham's men on the Confederate right but his attacks were repulsed. Smith's men attacked Stewart on the left successfully capturing the Confederate redoubts one by one and forcing Stewart's line to collapse.

During the night, Hood relocated a new line one mile farther south. In this new, shortened line, Cheatham replaced Stewart's men on the Confederate left, a position anchored on Compton's (later known as Shy's) Hill. Stewart moved to the Confederate center and Lee's corps held the Confederate right anchored on Peach Orchard Hill, just east of the Franklin Pike.

On December 16, 1864, Thomas again attacked Hood. Once again, Thomas ordered diversionary attacks against the Confederate right and center and a flanking movement against the Confederate left. Steedman's division, including regiments of United States Colored Troops, gallantly attacked Lee's position on Peach Orchard Hill before being repulsed with heavy losses. Wood's IV Corps moved against the Confederate center, where Stewart's men successfully used a stone wall as a defensive position. On the Confederate left, however, Schofield and Smith's units successfully assaulted Cheatham's position on Shy's Hill and General James Wilson's Federal cavalry worked its way to the Confederate rear. The assaults by Smith and Schofield successfully overran Confederate positions on the hill and, combined with the movements of Wilson's cavalry that nearly encircled Cheatham's men, started a panic among the defending Confederates. Soon the panic spread from Cheatham's men to the rest of the Confederate line as Cheatham and Stewart's Corps abandoned the field in total confusion. Hood's Army of Tennessee only narrowly avoided complete destruction by the gallant rear guard action undertaken by Lee's Corps, which covered the disorderly Confederate retreat.

The Battle of Nashville also proved traumatic to the soldiers and civilians who in some way experienced the event. As it did with Franklin, memory of the battle largely lay dormant

through the years of Reconstruction. Although their memories of Nashville were not as traumatic as those associated with Franklin, participants nevertheless remembered the Battle of Nashville in grisly detail. Sam Watkins of the First Tennessee recalled Nashville well. Like many Confederates, he found little worth remembering, although he stressed the brutal weather conditions. Watkins also discussed the decimation of Confederate leadership that occurred at Franklin and argued that this contributed to the collapse at Nashville. Watkin's remarked that after Franklin the army, "seemed to be somewhat like a flock of geese when they have lost their leader. We were willing to go anywhere, or to follow anyone who would lead us. We were anxious to flee, fight, or fortify. I have never seen an army so confused and demoralized. The whole thing seemed to be tottering and trembling." Pulling himself from this traumatic thought, Watkins went on to describe the panic among the retreating Confederates in elaborate detail.⁹

Lumsden's Confederate Battery received the onslaught of Federal attacks attempting to take the Redoubt No. 4. James R. Maxwell helped crew one of the cannon posted inside the hastily-constructed earthworks of the redoubt. Working under artillery fire that preceded the Union attack, Maxwell remembered, "Just then Private Horton, No. 3 of my gun, went down with a shot in his groin; he was carried to the rear, and that night we buried the poor fellow near the Franklin Pike." Maxwell recalled other traumatic events during the battle. He remembered, "Helm Rosser, a lad of seventeen, the youngest of three brothers that belonged to the battery, had his head shot off by a shell, scattering his brains in the face of Capt. Lumsden." The Federal attack eventually managed to overwhelm Redoubt No. 4 and some of its defenders made it back to the main Confederate line. Later that night, Maxwell poured water from his canteen so that

⁹ Watkins, *CO. Aytch*, 221-226.

Lumsden could bathe his face. Noticing that he would pick things from his beard, Maxwell asked what it was and Lumsden replied, “That is poor Rosser’s brains, Maxwell.”¹⁰

Sergeant Major Sumner Cunningham of the 41st Tennessee described the traumatic feelings that pervaded throughout the Army of Tennessee after the retreat from Nashville on December 16, 1864. He noted that Confederates would canvas the Franklin Pike in search of their unit, but Cunningham observed the progressive breakdown in unit cohesion that occurred at Nashville. He remarked, “By this time it was not the question, ‘where is my regiment,’ but where is a comrade or a personal friend. It was a sad weary night as we marched to the rear with no human hope to encourage us.” Cunningham’s statement not only reflected the experience of the battle but also the trauma associated with the loss of one’s comrades.¹¹

The horrors of Nashville were not confined to the battlefield. Emily Compton described the nightmarish scene her parents’ home near Shy’s Hill, that was quickly converted into a Federal hospital where over 150 soldiers from both sides were brought. Chaplain Edwards of the 7th Minnesota described the hospital scene at the Bradford House, also near Shy’s Hill. He remarked that blood stained nearly all the floors and walls of the home. Moreover, not only had the house been heavily damaged during the battle, but many of the Bradford family goods had also been stolen.¹²

The Battle of Nashville, much as the Battle of Franklin had, proved a disturbing experience for its participants. Years or decades passed before many recounted their experiences. It was not until after Reconstruction that most survivors of the battle finally found the ability to record their harrowing tale. The length of time it took soldiers and citizens of Franklin and

¹⁰ James R. Maxwell, “Lumsden’s Battery at Battle of Nashville,” *Confederate Veteran*, Vol. XII, 1904. 484-485.

¹¹ David Logsdon, *Eyewitness to the Battle of Nashville*, (Nashville: Kettle Mills Press, 2004). 112.

¹² *Ibid.* 117-118.

Nashville to mentally revisit the blood days of late 1864 suggests the high level of trauma associated with those events and the Civil War in general. Participants sought to reconcile the death they witnessed on an unprecedented scale during the conflict. Although this took place in various forms, those who survived tried to make sense of such carnage. In the South, whites found little time or need to remember Franklin or Nashville during the unnerving transition to a society without slavery and the associated battles for political and social control. Other than paying respect to their dead and working to enshrine the Lost Cause, Southerners found little time or need to remember Franklin or Nashville.¹³

Northerners also experienced their own form of social trauma during the years of Reconstruction. After the Civil War, the North shifted from a system of free labor ideology to one centered on corporations. This dramatic transition brought with it massive cultural changes and social upheaval including the accumulation of great wealth by a few individuals, labor strikes, and violence. Like Southerners, this development helps explain the ambivalence of Northerners toward forging any memory of Franklin or Nashville during Reconstruction. Practical matters consumed their focus as they adjusted to a new society in the wake of the Civil War, much as they did for Southerners. This left little time to remember or contemplate the Battles of Franklin and Nashville, resulting in more than a little temporary amnesia.¹⁴

Despite the fact that Tennessee underwent an abbreviated Reconstruction and was spared the years of military occupation that other Southern states experienced, the times proved no less turbulent. During this period, most citizens occupied their time with matters that held more

¹³ Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War*, (New York: Vintage Books, 2008); Eric Foner, *A Short History of Reconstruction: 1863-1877*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1990).

¹⁴ Ibid; Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007).

practical significance than remembering Franklin and Nashville. Those still living in Franklin and Nashville, and throughout middle Tennessee, greatly felt the horrible effects of the war and its aftermath. Local legal institutions encountered many problems and were largely inadequate in solving them. In state politics, turmoil existed between Radicals and Conservatives who vied for control, much as they did on a national level. Wealthy Southerners remained at the top of the social order but their wealth, in the absence of slavery, drastically decreased. Poor whites largely replaced slaves as a labor force, which resulted in conflict when former planters failed to realize that they could not treat their new labor as they had their slaves. According to historian Stephen V. Ash, few Middle Tennesseans “. . . below the rank of the highborn . . . had leisure in the postwar years to ponder weighty questions of class and ideology. Most were preoccupied with making a living in hard times.” This preoccupation meant even those living in the areas where the Battles of Franklin and Nashville occurred did not bother to remember them.¹⁵

During Reconstruction, the sole memory of the battles of Franklin and Nashville maintained by both sides revolved around caring for the dead. The creation of the McGavock Confederate cemetery in Franklin best exhibited how people remembered the battles during Reconstruction, if they remembered them at all. The Federal dead had been removed from the battlefield by 1865 to nearby national cemeteries. Confederate dead from the battle, meanwhile, were initially buried where they fell, primarily in and around the Federal earthworks they died attacking. The graves, scattered all along the southern portion of the town and marked with wooden headboards, served as a grim reminder of the battle’s ferocity. Over time, however, these headboards gradually disappeared, rotted away by the elements, torn down to make way for

¹⁵ Paul H. Bergeron, Stephen V. Ash, and Jeanette Keith, *Tennesseans and Their History*, (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2007); Stephen V. Ash, *Middle Tennessee Society Transformed, 1860-1870: War and Peace in the Upper South*, (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2006).

farming, or burned by less fortunate individuals needing fuel. To avoid obliteration of the graves and their markers, Franklin citizens established a board to undertake removal of Confederate graves from the battlefield in 1866. John and Caroline McGavock donated a portion of their property near Carnton for the reburial of the Confederate dead. States with soldiers who would be interred in the cemetery funded the reburial as did the McGavock family.¹⁶

Efforts to establish appropriate burial for the Confederate dead was further aided by the fundraising campaign of Mary Gay, who resided near Atlanta. Shortly after the war's end, Gay visited Franklin looking for the grave of her half-brother, Lieutenant Thomas J. Stokes of the 10th Texas, who was killed in the battle. She quickly realized that agriculture would soon obliterate the graves of fallen Confederates if they were not removed to another location. She later wrote the editor of the *Christian Index* and asked for help in her fundraising. She quoted a letter she had received from John McGavock stating, "We desire to appropriately enclose, and to tastefully embellish, the sacred spot dedicated to this use. All this, and much more, is eminently due the memory of those heroic men, who fell, as it were, in the 'last ditch,' defending constitutional rights." Gay's campaign succeeded in raising sufficient funds from across the South for the reinternment of Confederate dead as well as the erection of a wrought-iron fence around the cemetery border. The establishment of the McGavock Confederate Cemetery fit well within the Lost Cause tradition of remembering the dead and their brave sacrifice. Throughout Reconstruction, those in Franklin could remember the battle through the dead and hardly utter a word about the fighting. With the work of removing the dead from their battlefield graves and

¹⁶ Eric Jacobson, *The McGavock Confederate Cemetery: A Revised and Updated Compilation*, (Nashville: Vaughn Printing, 2007). 22;26-28.

reintering them completed in 1866, the new cemetery unceremoniously became a site of memory for the Battle of Franklin.¹⁷

The repatriation of General Patrick Cleburne's remains to his adopted hometown of Helena, Arkansas, further exhibited the proclivity to remember the Battles of Franklin and Nashville during Reconstruction through care of the dead. In 1870, a group organized and funded by the Ladies' Memorial Association of Phillips County went to Ashwood Cemetery at St. John's Episcopal Church near Columbia, Tennessee to recover Cleburne's body. On their way back to Arkansas, large crowds, including former Confederate President Jefferson Davis, General Cheatham, and former Tennessee Governor Isham Harris, gathered to greet the procession and to celebrate its purpose. Arriving in Helena, Cleburne's remains were reburied in Evergreen Cemetery.¹⁸

Although Nashvillians similarly remained largely silent about it during Reconstruction, they also remembered the Battle of Nashville through the act of caring for its dead. Established in 1856, Mount Olivet Cemetery became a site of memory for the Battle of Nashville. In 1869, the Ladies' Memorial Society of Nashville organized the removal of approximately 1,500 Confederate burials from Nashville cemeteries and battlefields across middle Tennessee, including the Nashville battlefield, and supervised their reinternment in the newly established Confederate Circle in Mount Olivet. This act, and the establishment of the McGavock Confederate Cemetery at Franklin, largely occurred in response to the removal of Federal dead from Franklin and Nashville to national cemeteries while Confederate dead were ignored and left in their battlefield graves. Such treatment proved unsettling to Southerners. Moreover, by

¹⁷ Ibid; Mary A.H. Gay to Rev. H.H. Tucker, *Weekly Atlanta Intelligencer*, June 20, 1866.

¹⁸ Jacobson and Rupp, *For Casue and For Country*, 540.

looking after their dead, citizens in Franklin and Nashville sowed the seeds for a future memory of the battles.¹⁹

Though memory of the Battles of Franklin and Nashville remained fractured in the decade after the war's end, this slowly began to change after the end of Reconstruction. Veterans played a key role in this change by finally writing and recording their remembrances of the battles in letters, newspapers, veterans' publications, and books. More importantly, veterans and citizens alike began remembering the battles through various commemorations and reunions. Not surprisingly, commemorations by Southerners possessed decidedly Lost Cause overtones by emphasizing Southern courage and honor in the face of defeat. More surprisingly, however, the spirit of reconciliation proved a significant memory perpetuated during reunions, frequently joined with the Lost Cause narratives.

One such commemoration occurred in 1889 when a group of Nashville women erected a 45 foot tall Confederate monument in the middle of the circle at Mount Olivet Cemetery around which 1,500 Confederates were buried. Inscriptions on the monument very elegantly described its purpose: "This shaft honors the valor, devotion, and sacrifice unto death of Confederate soldiers of Tennessee. The winds of heaven, kissing its sides, hymn and everlasting requiem in memory of the unreturning brave." The inscription also noted that the monument was "Erected through the efforts of women of the State in admiration of the chivalry of men who fought in defense of home and fireside and in their fall sealed a title of unfading affection." Such inscriptions not only perfectly encapsulated the Lost Cause sentiments with which Southerners

¹⁹ Mark Zimmerman, *Guide to Civil War Nashville*, 30; John Allyn, "Nashville Military Burials" www.bonps.org/features/nashville-military-burials/; John Neff, *Remembering the Civil War Dead*, 128; 157-158.

wished to remember many dead from the Battle of Nashville but also their collective memory of the battle.²⁰

Ten years later, thousands gathered on the 35th anniversary of the Battle of Franklin to dedicate the Confederate monument in the town square. Although a generic monument to all Confederate soldiers of Williamson County, its symbolism certainly revolved around the Battle of Franklin. Well within Lost Cause tradition, the local chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy took the place of a monument association and raised the necessary funds. J.H. Henderson speaking on behalf of the UDC ladies, touted the virtues of southern women and their leadership in erecting the monument. Henderson also commented on the debate that had existed over the monument's location. Whereas some had wanted the monument placed on the battlefield or in the McGavock Confederate Cemetery, Henderson stated that it was ultimately placed on the public square so that it would be seen and appreciated every day by both locals and visitors to Franklin. Henderson's remarks did not focus solely on the Battle of Franklin, however. Instead he concentrated his speech in defending the Myth of the Lost Cause. He argued, "While history for a season may be colored by the conquerors, and thus shadow the truth, in time it will right itself, and the world will know, as we now know, that no age or country has ever produced the superior of our countrymen in courage, fidelity, and nobleness of character, and we wish to offer for coming generations our humble testimony of these virtues."²¹

Henderson then introduced General George Gordon, a veteran of Franklin who had been captured during the battle. After making some remarks about the battle, Gordon compared Franklin's casualties with Waterloo and Konniggratz, arguing that those statistics proved that the Battle of Franklin was "the bloodiest of modern times." Gordon also waved the flag of the 11th

²⁰ "Confederate Monument at Nashville," *Confederate Veteran*, Vol. I, 1893. 62.

²¹ *Confederate Veteran*, Vol. VIII, 1900, 5;172-173).

Tennessee and said, “I do not exhibit this flag and speak thus so much to individualize heroic deeds and special commands as to indicate the general prowess, courage, and self-sacrifice that characterized the action of that valiant, war-worn, and battle-scarred army known in history as the Army of Tennessee.” In a footnote to his address, Gordon stated, “Every command engaged displayed a courage rarely equaled, and perhaps never surpassed.” Finally, after thanking the ladies of the UDC and the monument’s contributors, Gordon, like Henderson, embarked on a defense of the Lost Cause. He professed, “We can never do adequate honor to their names and memories. They died as it became men to die-in defense of the laws, constitution, and independence of their country. Be it said to their glory that they never engaged in a cruel, criminal, and commercial war of aggression, but strictly a war of defense.” After blaming the outbreak of war on the North, Gordon declared, “Finally, let no man, unchallenged, asperse the memory of our sacred dead, our fallen comrades, with the charge of treason and rebellion. They fell in defense of the liberty and independence of their country, consequently were heroes and patriots.” Gordon continued, “But let their history in granite so fittingly summarized in the mottoes on this monument, vindicate their memory, pronounce their eulogy, and perpetuate their example. Peace to their spirits! Honor to their ashes!” To Gordon, the Battle of Franklin, the Lost Cause, and Confederate memory were clearly inseparable.²²

Other commemorations revolved around Franklin in the post Reconstruction period that exhibited a memory of the battle. Killed on the battlefield at Franklin, General Hiram B. Granbury’s body, along with other Confederate generals killed during the battle, was taken to the Ashwood cemetery at St. John’s Church, near Columbia, Tennessee and buried. In 1893, the Granbury Camp of the United Confederate Veterans disinterred Granbury’s remains and brought

²² Ibid, 6-10.

them to Granbury, Texas, a town that had subsequently been named for the general, for reburial. The editor of *Confederate Veteran* wrote, “The remains were reinterred here November 30, 1893, just twenty-nine years after he sacrificed his life for the land he loved.” Large crowds attended the even as the magazine noted, “More people were in our town on that occasion than ever before.” The residents of Granbury and the surrounding area also raised money in the hopes of erecting a monument to Granbury on the town’s square.²³

Reunions became another way that veterans of the battles and those attending could remember the Franklin and Nashville. More reunions occurred at Franklin than Nashville, suggesting Franklin held more significance in Southern memory than did the Battle of Nashville. Reunions of both battles, however, contained many of the same Lost Cause themes. One of the earliest reunions took place on October 18, 1877 as the 20th Tennessee gathered in Franklin. A train from Nashville carried the veterans to the Franklin railroad depot and from there they moved to McGavock’s Grove and the nearby Confederate cemetery with much celebration. Under their regimental flag, the men marched toward the grove where a large meal was prepared for them. Bands played the familiar tunes of Dixie and the Bonnie Blue Flag and some estimated the crowd in McGavock’s Grove to be no less than 8,000 people. While the Lost Cause proved the dominant overtone of the reunion, a reconciliationist narrative occurred simultaneously. N.N. Cox, a Civil War veteran, Franklin attorney, and future congressman, told his listeners that the regiment’s reunion was not a political affair and stressed friendship and mutual patriotism. Other dignitaries, some former Confederate generals and veterans of the Battle of Franklin, also addressed the veterans and simultaneously spoke of the Lost Cause and reconciliation. Even General J. P. Brownlow, a former Federal officer and son of Tennessee’s Reconstruction

²³ *Confederate Veteran*, Vol. XII, 1904. 175.

Governor, attended the reunion as a representative of Federal veterans. Demonstrating the spirit of reconciliation that characterized the reunion, Brownlow addressed the veterans of the 20th TN, saying, “Soldiers-Johnnies. . .I did not appear before you to make a speech, nor for the purpose of swapping coffee for tobacco . . .but to thank you in behalf of the Federal soldiers, for your kind invitation to meet with you and partake of your hospitality. I thank you, and I hope you may all live to enjoy many returns of this day.” Dr. Deering Roberts, a former member of the regiment, addressed the assembled crowd about the unit’s history. Giving heavy doses of the Lost Cause by stressing valor, sacrifice, and virtue, Roberts largely avoided discussing details of the Battles of Franklin and Nashville. Instead, he focused on the bravery and sacrifice of Confederate leaders Tod Carter and Thomas Benton Smith.²⁴

Another Confederate reunion occurred at Franklin on September 14 and 15, 1892. The State Association of Confederate Veterans conducted its business meeting at the Williamson County courthouse before moving with much fanfare to McGavock’s Grove, where many of their dead comrades lay. Like the previous Confederate reunions at Franklin, the former Confederates paid their respects to John and Caroline McGavock and speakers extolled the Lost Cause virtues of the brave southern leaders, the fallen generals, southern rights, and southern women. Moreover, the speakers continued their denial of slavery’s centrality in causing the war. In addition to the speeches, the former Confederates walked over the battlefield, visited the cemetery, and enjoyed a hearty meal at picnic tables in McGavock’s Grove that stretched one

²⁴ “1877 Franklin Reunion for 20th Tennessee Regiment, *The Daily American*, October 19, 1877; “Gen. J.P. Brownlow’s Speech”, *The Nashville Daily American*, October 20, 1877 both in Rick Warwick, Williamson County: Civil War Veterans-Their Reunions and Photographs, (Franklin: The Heritage Foundation of Franklin and Williamson County, 2007). 9-14; 23-28.

and a half miles. One estimate placed the assembled crowd, including veterans, at 15,000 people.²⁵

On November 30, 1914, veterans of both sides gathered for a joint Blue-Gray Reunion at Franklin commemorating the 50th anniversary of the battle. Veterans walked the battlefield, visited the McGavock Confederate Cemetery, and listened to speeches from numerous dignitaries, including the commanders of the two largest Civil War veterans organizations, the United Confederate Veterans and the Grand Army of the Republic. Although plenty of Lost Cause themes emerged during the festivities, much of the reunion centered on messages of reconciliation. Pervasive reconciliationist themes referred to “brothers again” and “wounds healed.” A newspaper printed a photograph of the UCV and GAR commanders symbolically shaking hands at the Carter House, where 50 years before Confederates and Federals engaged in deadly combat.²⁶

In June 1897, Confederate Veterans held a reunion in Nashville in conjunction with the Tennessee Centennial Exposition. Reconciliation, however, was the order of the day. *Confederate Veteran* described the atmosphere: “The whole city put on a holiday appearance. In every quarter public buildings and private residences were profusely decorated. The national colors were blended and interlaced in the most artistic fashion with the bonnie blue flag. It was easy to detect a vast resurgence of patriotic feeling. During the whole of the three days we did not hear one bitter word nor detect one single trace of invidious sectionalism.” Old Confederate veterans gathered in the Union Gospel Tabernacle where they were addressed by dignitaries who celebrated the veterans’ Southern virtues of manhood, bravery, and sacrifice while extolling their

²⁵Warwick, *Williamson County Civil War Veterans*, 31-39.

²⁶ Warwick, *Williamson County Civil War Veterans*, 61-63.

role as patriots and exemplary Americans in a reunified nation. One of those dignitaries was Tennessee Governor Robert Taylor, who remarked, “Let the silver trumpets sound the jubilee of peace; let the veterans shout who wore the blue; let them kill the silken folds of the gorgeous ensign of the republic and fling it to the breeze and sing the national hymn. . . Let the veterans bow who wore the gray, and with uncovered heads salute the national flag. It is the flag of the inseparable Union.” Taylor continued, “But who will scorn or frown to see the veterans of the South’s shattered armies . . . sometimes put on the old worn and faded gray and unfurl for a little while that other banner, the riddled and blood-stained stars and bars, to look upon it and weep over it, and press it to their bosoms for it is hallowed with recollections tender as the soldier’s last farewell.” After the speeches, the veterans marched in a military parade.²⁷

Bishop O.P. Fitzgerald welcomed the assembled Confederate veterans on behalf of the mayor of Nashville, greeting them as heroes, “whose names will be a patent of nobility to their children to the latest generation.” He added, “Justice will be done to the cause for which you fought and to the men who proved the sincerity of their convictions by dying from them . . . The fame of the Confederate soldier is safe. He has won his place and he will keep it. His cause may be called the ‘Lost Cause,’ but nothing that was best and noblest was lost. Honor was not lost; high ideals of manhood were not lost.” Fitzgerald also spoke of the Confederate veterans’ marvelous past victories, neglecting to mention the great defeat they suffered just a short distance away. General John B. Gordon, commander of the United Confederate Veterans, responded to the welcome addresses. He described Tennessee’s pivotal role in the nation’s history and paid tribute to some of the state’s most famous personalities including Andrew Jackson, James K. Polk, and Sam Houston. Referring to Tennessee’s prominent Civil War

²⁷ *Confederate Veteran*, Vol. V., 1897. 340.

History, Gordon stated, “her valiant sons rushed into the ranks of both armies, and from the superabundance of her talent she gave leaders, civil or military, to both sides.” Gordon added, “She furnished to the Southern army some of its most dauntless divisions and brilliant leaders.”

²⁸As Gordon spoke within a few miles of the Nashville battlefield, the Confederate Reunion continued with hardly a passing mention of the Battle of Nashville.

During the latter part of the nineteenth century, memory of the Battles of Franklin and Nashville fractured on multiple levels due to the trauma resulting from the battles’ violence and defeat, societies that were in flux, and general ambivalence. Both sides reeled from the traumatic experiences they witnessed, not wanting to remember the many painful aspects of the engagements. The most obvious way of remembering Franklin and Nashville during this period centered on caring for the soldier dead. During Reconstruction, both sides found more important things on which to focus. Rather than making wholesale efforts to remember the battles, both Northerners and Southerners adjusted to their new and changing society. Finally, Northern acquiescence to the Lost Cause during the early period of commemoration fractured the memory of the battles in another significant way. In their acceptance of the Lost Cause, Northerners largely surrendered their memory of Franklin and Nashville to Southerners, which left many aspects of the battles unaddressed. Despite Northern acquiescence and the resulting dominance of Southern memory regarding the Battles of Franklin and Nashville, various competing memories still emerged in the years following Reconstruction.

²⁸ Ibid, 341.

Chapter 2 - Battles Denied and Battles Edified

“ . . . posterity will award to all if their deeds have been such as to save their names from oblivion.”

General John McCallister Schofield, 1897

In addition to commemorations, various forms of media also played significant roles in shaping the memory of Franklin and Nashville. Historians, writers, veterans, and popular culturalists all contributed in different ways to constructing a narrative of the events. Historians generally downplayed Franklin and Nashville and the Western Theater in general in favor of Eastern Theater battles such as Gettysburg and Antietam. Union and Confederate veterans wrote differing accounts of the battle and fought for years to solidify their version of the events as the dominant memory of Franklin and Nashville. Novelists, poets, and authors assisted the construction of the battles' memory, all too often stressing Lost Cause themes. Likewise, film portrayals of Franklin also emphasized the Lost Cause, though in at least one case, their contribution to the battle's memory was minimal. Nevertheless, these forms of media played a critical role in establishing a collective memory of the two battles.

The treatment of Franklin and Nashville in Civil War historiography has deeply affected the collective memory of the two battles. Most historians have actually hindered the formation of a cohesive memory of the battles by relegating them to the margins. These Eastern-centric historians generally treat western battles as insignificant or peripheral events and stress the war's Eastern Theater as the Civil War's most important area of operations. A few western battles do receive some significance, especially those battles perceived as turning points or major Federal victories, such as Vicksburg and Atlanta. Franklin and Nashville, however, fail to meet these

criteria. By November and December 1864, the ultimate defeat of the Confederacy was clear, assured by the fall of Atlanta in September 1864, and Lincoln's reelection in November. Nothing that occurred at Franklin and Nashville changed the war's outcome, though it did perhaps hasten it by destroying the Confederacy's major field army in the west. Despite the bloody campaign and the destruction of the Confederate Army of Tennessee, by that point the Confederacy's fate had already been sealed.

Three early historical works highlighting the trend of emphasizing Eastern Theater battles are John Draper's *The American Civil War*, Edward Pollard's *Southern History of the War*, and the papers of the Southern Historical Society. Draper exhibits this trend all too well. Though Draper mentions western battles, including Franklin and Nashville, his discussion of these battles is limited to eight and a half pages. This includes a map of the battle at Franklin and simply giving a broad overview of the fighting. In comparison, Draper's discussion of the third day at Gettysburg receives five pages.¹ Edward Pollard's *Southern History of the War* similarly marginalizes Franklin, Nashville, and other western battles. Pollard devotes a mere four and a half pages of his 600 page work to Franklin and Nashville. Within these pages, the author mainly focuses on Confederate casualties at Franklin and criticizes the leadership and tactics of Confederate commander John Bell Hood.² *The Papers of The Southern Historical Society Papers* also largely ignore the Battles of Franklin and Nashville. In 52 volumes, one finds scant references to these late-war western battles. Clearly these authors placed more emphasis on events that occurred in the Eastern Theater.³

¹ John William Draper, *History of the American Civil War*, 3 vols. (New York: Harper and Brothers), 1870.

² Edward Pollard, *Southern History of the War*, (New York: The Fairfax Press), 1977. Reprint

³ *Southern Historical Society Papers*, 52 vols. (Wilmington: Broadfoot), 1990.

Although the Eastern Theater almost completely dominated the earliest Civil War histories, a historiographic school emerged early in the twentieth century that stressed the significance of the Civil War's Western Theater. Among others, Thomas Hay, Albert Castel, Steven Woodworth, James Lee McDonough, Richard McMurry, Benjamin F. Cooling, Thomas L. Connelly, Larry Daniel, and Wiley Sword all made substantial contributions to this school. Though their works failed to seriously challenge the supremacy of the Eastern Theater, they nevertheless successfully demonstrated the significance of the Western Theater. Almost universally, however, they still failed to substantially incorporate Franklin and Nashville into their narratives. A good example of this was Larry Daniel's engaging study of the Army of the Cumberland. Although the entire work discussed the operations of one Federal army in the Western Theater, Daniel makes quick work of Franklin and Nashville with three paragraphs.⁴

One early historian did devote substantial attention to Franklin and Nashville. Thomas R. Hay's *Hood's Tennessee Campaign* represented a "critical monograph study and evaluation" of the often overlooked Western Theater, a subject the author described as "virgin and practically unexplored." Hay attempted to fill that void by discussing the Tennessee Campaign of 1864. The author, however, took a one-sided perspective in his study by only addressing the Confederate side of the campaign. Moreover, Hay focused less on the Battles of Franklin and Nashville than on the strategy of the campaign and his criticisms of Hood.⁵

Hood's Tennessee Campaign inspired other historians operating within the Western Theater School to begin extensive studies of Franklin and Nashville. In *The Army of Tennessee*,

⁴ Steven E. Woodworth, *Decision in the Heartland: The Civil War in the West*, (Lincoln: The University of Nebraska Press), 2011; Larry Daniel, *Days of Glory: The Army of the Cumberland*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press) 2006.

⁵ Thomas R. Hay, *Hood's Tennessee Campaign*, (New York)1929.

Stanley Horn devoted an entire chapter to the Battles of Franklin and Nashville. Especially critical of Hood, Horn provided a detailed narrative of both engagements. Although the work amounted to little more than a traditional military history, Horn sought to demonstrate that the battles were worthy of scholarship. Like others before him, Horn compared Franklin to Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg to argue for its equal coverage in Civil War historiography.⁶ In *Autumn of Glory*, Thomas L. Connelly concentrated on the Western Theater and focused some of his effort on the Battles of Franklin and Nashville. Like Horn, however, Connelly only addressed the Confederate Army of Tennessee. Although he discussed the main actions occurring during the battles, Connelly situated his work within the larger framework of high-level operations where he criticized the actions and conduct of most of the army's senior commanders. Without surprise, the author directed most of his scathing criticism regarding Franklin and Nashville toward John Bell Hood.⁷

The first substantial and exclusive treatment of the Battles of Franklin and Nashville emerged in the 1950s. The first of these works was Sims Crownover's "The Battle of Franklin," published in the *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*. The author not only described the armies and the fighting of both sides but Crownover also tied the Battle of Franklin to other battles and events in the war. Like *The Army of Tennessee*, "The Battle of Franklin" focused extensively on tactics. Significantly, however, Crownover treated Franklin as an important event of the war, even holding that the battle sealed the Confederacy's fate.⁸

⁶ Stanley Horn, *The Army of Tennessee*, (Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press), 1952.

⁷ Thomas L. Connelly, *Autumn of Glory: The Army of Tennessee*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971).

⁸ Sims Crownover, "The Battle of Franklin." *The Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XIV, No. 4 (December, 1955).

The first monograph of Franklin amazingly did not emerge until 1983. James L. McDonough's and Thomas L. Connelly's *Five Tragic Hours* became the first academic study of the battle. Although largely a tactical battle narrative, the authors described many factors leading to the battle and address why it was so bloody. McDonough and Connelly argued that Hood's appointment to command of the Army of Tennessee was the largest factor contributing to the Battle of Franklin. The authors contend that Hood was a commander who sought to emulate the military maneuvers of commanders he had witnessed in the Army of Northern Virginia, in particular Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson and Robert E. Lee. Unfortunately, Hood possessed neither the mental ability nor the military aptitude of his idols. McDonough and Connelly also fault Hood for conducting his campaign with neither realistic nor clear objectives. The high death toll at Franklin, the authors argued, resulted from the Confederate frontal assault against an enemy in entrenched positions and partially armed with repeating rifles, all while lacking proper artillery support. Perhaps most importantly, McDonough and Connelly briefly delved into issues of memory associated with the battle such as Franklin's failure as a national park, and the 1923 movie portraying the battle that never made it to the big screen.⁹

The school of historians arguing for the incorporation of the Western Theater into the overall Civil War narrative also focused some of its efforts on the Battle of Nashville. In *The Decisive Battle of Nashville*, Stanley Horn argued that Nashville was, in fact, the decisive engagement of the Civil War. Confederate defeat at Nashville, according to Horn, sealed the fate of the Confederacy by destroying the Army of Tennessee. By December 1864, the Northern states were weary of war and beginning to lag in their financial support of the conflict. The

⁹ James L. McDonough and Thomas L. Connelly, *Five Tragic Hours: The Battle of Franklin*. (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee), 1983.

Battle of Nashville, however, changed all this. Moreover, Horn also held that Hood's plan to move beyond Nashville to the Ohio River or to join Lee's army was considered a realistic possibility at the time and other historians only dismiss it as a result of hindsight.¹⁰

In 2004, scholarly attention on Nashville was renewed with the publication of James L. McDonough's *Nashville: The Western Confederacy's Final Gamble*. The author offered an excellent description of the Tennessee Campaign, culminating with the Battle of Nashville. Like other works, McDonough's placed significant emphasis on Hood and the internal command strife occurring within the Army of Tennessee. More importantly, McDonough strongly highlighted the often overlooked animosity that existed within the Federal command structure. General U.S. Grant and Army of the Cumberland commander, General George Thomas maintained a rocky relationship, while relations between Thomas and General John M. Schofield were often resentful. Moreover, McDonough also included previously and largely ignored factors significant to the Battle of Nashville, such as the prominent role of the United States Colored Troops. Apart being an excellent battle narrative, *Nashville* gave a significant voice to common soldiers, civilians, and lower-level commanders.¹¹

Some authors added significance to the Battles of Franklin and Nashville by discussing them within the larger framework of the 1864 Tennessee Campaign. One such work was Wiley Sword's *The Confederacy's Last Hurrah*. Not only is Sword's account of the Tennessee Campaign an excellent combat narrative in its own right, but the work also centered on personality and drama. The author ably demonstrated how the Tennessee Campaign damaged

¹⁰ Stanley Horn, *The Decisive Battle of Nashville*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press), 1956.

¹¹ James L. McDonough, *Nashville: The Western Confederacy's Final Gamble*, (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press), 2006.

reputations, and affected its participants for the remainder of their lives. Moreover, Sword shows how the Tennessee Campaign destroyed romances. After Hood's failure in the campaign, Richmond socialite Sally "Buck" Preston called off her engagement with the defeated general. Confederate General Patrick Cleburne's death at Franklin ended his engagement with Mobile, Alabama belle, Susan Tarleton. According to Sword, the Confederate failure in this campaign put added pressure on Robert E. Lee as the Army of Tennessee's destruction freed more Federal armies to engage the Army of Northern Virginia. Calling the campaign the "dramatic pinnacle of the American Civil War," Sword successfully argued that events in the Western Theater were just as important as those in the Eastern Theater in determining the war's outcome.¹²

While one group of Civil War historians has striven to keep the Western Theater – along with Franklin and Nashville –in Civil War historiography, many historians have continued to marginalize the battles. Bruce Catton, one of the foremost Civil War writers, falls into this category. In his epic three volume *Centennial History of the Civil War*, Catton only provided a modest framework of the Battles of Franklin and Nashville. *Never Call Retreat*, the final volume of the series, dispatched with the battles in a scant three pages. In *Reflections on the Civil War*, Catton's discussion of the entire Tennessee Campaign appeared in a single paragraph alongside the fall of Atlanta, Lincoln's reelection, and the ongoing siege of Petersburg, all events that occurred late in the war and helped seal the fate of the Confederacy. The author places this small

¹² Wiley Sword, *The Confederacy's Last Hurrah: Spring Hill, Franklin, and Nashville*. (Lawrence: The University Press of Kansas), 1992.

contribution within the context of a war that was winding down and all but over after the fall of Atlanta, Lincoln's reelection, and the ongoing siege of Petersburg.¹³

Similarly, Shelby Foote's monumental narrative of the Civil War placed less emphasis on Franklin and Nashville than historians writing in the Western Theater genre. Nevertheless, the author devoted nearly 50 pages to the Battles of Franklin and Nashville as well as events occurring between the engagements. This may seem like a respectable or impressive discussion of the two battles. Foote's *Red River to Appomattox*, however, spanned over 1000 pages, making the space allotted for Franklin and Nashville rather insignificant. Foote's work provided an excellent narrative of events in the Tennessee Campaign, but failed to provide any original analysis.¹⁴

Other highly respected historians have shortchanged the Battles of Franklin and Nashville. In the Pulitzer Prize winning *Battle Cry of Freedom*, noted Civil War historian James M. McPherson discussed the most important aspects of the Civil War in a single volume. Addressing Franklin in the broadest strokes, McPherson's monumental work tackled these subjects in less than four pages. Like other authors, McPherson's mainly concentrated on the Confederate casualties at Franklin. Interestingly, the author compared the Battle of Nashville to a knockout blow in a boxing match.¹⁵ McPherson repeated this performance in *Ordeal By Fire*, a one volume narrative of the Civil War and Reconstruction. Franklin and Nashville received similar treatment. His work contained over 600 pages of text but only three and a half of which

¹³ Bruce Catton, *The Centennial History of the Civil War*, Vol. 3, *Never Call Retreat*, London: Victor Gollancz, 1966. See also Bruce Catton, Edited by John Leekley, *Reflections on the Civil War*, (New York: Doubleday and Company), 1981.

¹⁴ Shelby Foote, *The Civil War, A Narrative: Red River to Appomattox*, (New York: Vintage Books), 1974.

¹⁵ James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*. (New York: Oxford University Press), 1988.

were dedicated to the Battles of Franklin and Nashville. Two of these pages were devoted to maps of the battles. On the other hand, the Battle of Antietam merited eight pages.¹⁶

Although many historians failed to assign requisite significance to the Battles of Franklin and Nashville, veterans of the battles found them tremendously important. In fact, veterans and commanders wrote most of the first substantial histories of the battles. These veterans wrote for various reasons but most did not write simply to record a history of Franklin or Nashville. Arguments developed over the conduct of the engagements in the postwar years. Prominent Confederate and Federal commanders often feuded with one another over their role or conduct in various battles. They wrote memoirs and accounts of the battles to justify their actions and portray their own views of the battles as the correct narrative and memory. In this effort, commanders found considerable support from their former soldiers, whose own written recollections of the battles usually agreed with their commander's recollections. These accounts by both commanders and soldiers helped shape and perpetuate the early memories of Franklin and Nashville.

Not surprisingly, one of the feuding commanders who felt the need to justify his actions at Franklin and Nashville was Confederate commander John Bell Hood. Hood largely wrote his memoir in response to the criticisms of Confederate General Joseph E. Johnston who not only blamed Hood's actions for the staggering casualties of the Atlanta Campaign, but also for the low morale that existed in the Army of Tennessee after Hood assumed command from him, and the failure of the Tennessee Campaign. Johnston wrote,

¹⁶ James M. McPherson, *Ordeal By Fire: The Civil War and Reconstruction*, (Boston: McGraw Hill), 2001.

General Hood asserts in his published report, that the army had become demoralized when he was appointed to command it, and ascribes his invariable defeats partly to that cause. The allegation is disproved by the record of the admirable conduct of those troops on every occasion on which that general sent them to battle – and inevitable disaster. Their courage and discipline were unsubdued by the slaughter to which they were recklessly offered in the four attacks on the Federal army near Atlanta, as they proved in the useless butchery at Franklin –and survived the rout and disorganization at Nashville – as they proved at Bentonville.¹⁷

Hood subsequently defended his actions against Johnston’s accusations. In *Advance and Retreat*, Hood painted his actions in the best light possible. He argued that the attack against Schofield at Franklin was essential to regaining the tactical advantage in the campaign by destroying Schofield’s force before it could reach the safety of Nashville. The Confederate commander also downplayed the extent of Confederate casualties at Franklin. Rather than discussing his collapse at Nashville in depth, Hood instead focused on the skillful defense that protected his routed army. Hood attempted to convince his readers that he was always in control during the campaign, operating with a master plan of receiving reinforcements from the Trans-Mississippi Department before moving beyond Nashville to the Ohio River or to join Lee in Virginia.¹⁸

Confederate commanders were not the only ones who squabbled with one another and attempted to shape the memory of Franklin and Nashville. Federal commanders also engaged in rather nasty and prolonged fights to construct the dominant memory of the battles. In the aftermath of the Battle of Franklin, many allegations surfaced over who was responsible for the near fatal mistake of positioning two of General George Wagner’s brigades in front of the Federal defensive line. Referring to this detrimental posting in his memoir, General Schofield,

¹⁷ Joseph E. Johnston, *A Narrative of the Operations Directed During the Late War Between the States*, (New York: D. Appleton and Co.),1874.

¹⁸ John Bell Hood, *Advance and Retreat*.(Edison, NJ: The Blue and Grey Press), 1985. Reprint.

the Federal commander at Franklin, noted, “the blunder respecting the two brigades of Wagner’s division came near being disastrous and the repulse of the assault in spite of that blunder makes it highly probable that if the dispositions ordered had been properly made the repulse of the enemy would have been easy beyond reasonable doubt.” To deflect any criticism of his generalship, Schofield shifted blame to Wagner and his two brigade commanders. He stated that these officers posted forward of the line “ought to have been tried by court martial, and, if found guilty, shot or cashiered for sacrificing their own men and endangering the army.”¹⁹ All of this overlooked, however, that Schofield was in command and ultimately everything that occurred during the battle was his responsibility. He had a lot to answer for on this particular matter. Writing in 1897, Schofield could favorably justify his actions and in so doing, shape the memory of the battle. George Wagner, who died in 1869, did not have that luxury.

In the years following Schofield’s memoir, other XXIII Corps officers wrote their accounts wherein they also blamed Wagner’s IV Corps units for the major tactical mistake. These accounts included one by Levi Schofield, a Schofield staff officer, and another by General Jacob Cox. The attempts by members of the XXIII Corps to justify their actions and establish their account as the dominant memory of Franklin were hardly uncontested. These narratives, along with Schofield’s memoir, prompted veterans of the IV Corps to outline their memory of the battle.²⁰

One of the most forceful defenders of Wagner’s division at Franklin was Captain John K. Shellenberger, a member of one of Wagner’s forward brigades during the battle. Shellenberger claimed that Schofield and his loyal following dishonored his own unit with their unfounded

¹⁹ John M. Schofield, *Forty-Six Years in the Army*, (Tutis Digital Publishing), 2007. Reprint.180;182.

²⁰ Levi T. Schofield, *The Retreat from Pulaski to Nashville*, (Cincinnati: Press of the Caxton Co.) 1909; Jacob D. Cox, *The March to the Sea: Franklin and Nashville*. New York, Charles Scribner,1882.

accusations against Wagner's IV Corps brigades. These accusations claimed that Wagner's men abandoned the field in chaos and confusion, fleeing the carnage until they reached the Harpeth River, north of the battlefield. The veteran captain instead blamed Schofield for what he called the "disgraceful and costly blunder." He charged Schofield with being across the Harpeth during the battle, far to the Federal rear and "well beyond the range of every rebel bullet that was fired." According to Shellenberger, had Schofield been on the line this blunder certainly would not have occurred. Shellenberger attempted to shape the memory of Franklin by even calling for an official inquiry into the fiasco but to no avail.²¹

In the postwar years another feud developed between Federal commanders and, once again, each side attempted to cement its version as the correct memory of Franklin. This argument, like the debate over Wagner's misplaced brigades, also pitted veterans of the XXIII and IV Corps against one another. In *March to the Sea*, Cox, who temporarily commanded the XXIII Corps at Franklin, claimed that he was "commandant of the line" at Franklin while Schofield made his headquarters approximately one mile north of the battlefield. General David Stanley, commanding the IV Corps, later argued that he was the senior officer on the field until he was wounded. According to Stanley, Cox's claim to have commanded the field was as a blatant attempt to deny him the credit he deserved. While the two generals feuded over who was truly in command at Franklin, neither accepted responsibility for Wagner's blunder.²²

²¹ John K. Shellenberger, *The Battle of Franklin, Tennessee November 30, 1864*, (Cleveland), 1916. 5-7; 41.

²² Cox, *The March to the Sea*, 87; Jacob D. Cox, *The Battle of Franklin*; David S. Stanley, *Personal Memoirs of Major General David Sloane Stanley, U.S.A.*, Cambridge, 1917; Donald B. Connelly, *John M. Schofield and the Politics of Generalship*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press), 2006. 139.

Similar postwar attempts to shape the collective memory of Nashville emerged from Federal commanders. These efforts also grew into longstanding arguments. Before the battle, Grant increasingly grew impatient with Thomas for not immediately attacking Hood and considered relieving him on several different occasions. Later, Grant even dispatched General John Logan to relieve Thomas and assume command before deciding to go to Nashville and take command himself. Before Thomas could be relieved, however, he attacked Hood on December 15, 1864, and Grant reversed his decision.

The biggest feud among Federal commanders after the war centered on Schofield's role in attempting to undermine Thomas prior to the Battle of Nashville. On the night of December 9, Thomas, with Grant's most recent order to attack immediately in hand, assembled his corps commanders and solicited their advice on the Commander in Chief's directive. A raging ice storm prompted Thomas, once again, to delay his attack on Hood south of the city. After the war, Thomas's council-of-war became the subject of much controversy. Differing accounts emerged with regard to the advice that Schofield gave to Thomas and at what point he spoke during the meeting. Generals James Steedman and James Wilson claimed that Schofield spoke last among the assembled corps commanders (as was customary for the senior corps commander to speak last at such meetings) and very quietly, simply agreed to follow Thomas's orders. Schofield, however, claimed that he spoke first in uncompromising support of Thomas's decision to delay the attack.²³

In March 1870, an anonymous article, "Secrets of History –the Battle of Nashville-Was Grant's Order a Blunder?" appeared in the *New York Tribune* and criticized Thomas's conduct at Nashville, while giving a rather flattering portrayal of Schofield. It was signed "One Who Fought

²³ McDonough, *Nashville*, 151-152.

at Nashville.” Thomas, still on active duty and commanding the Military Division of the Pacific, told his staff he believed that Schofield had written the piece because of the information and criticism it contained. Thomas felt that such intrigue was a gut-wrenching betrayal. He immediately began working on a rebuttal on March 28, 1870, to defend his version of the Battle of Nashville. Thomas, however, never finished his justification. As he worked, his pen suddenly scrawled off the margin of the paper. Thomas had suffered a stroke and died later that evening, never getting the opportunity to properly defend his actions at Nashville. The *New York Tribune* column had been written not by Schofield, but by one of his staff officers, apparently with Schofield’s blessing.²⁴

On June 22, 1881, the controversy took an even nastier turn when General Steedman’s accusation against Schofield, “Robbing the Dead,” appeared in the *New York Times*. Steedman charged Schofield with sending telegrams to Grant proceeding the Battle of Nashville that disparaged Thomas and urged his removal and replacement with Schofield. Although it is not clear if Schofield sent such telegrams to Grant, what is clear is that Schofield did not respect Thomas’s military abilities. Schofield, of course, never hinted at this low opinion of Thomas in his autobiography. He only claimed to have never dreamed of assuming command from Thomas at Nashville and lent his superior nothing but his whole-hearted support. Personal differences between the two men had existed for years, dating back as early as Schofield’s time as a cadet at West Point when Thomas had refused to vote against his expulsion. Schofield said, “Only twelve years later I was able to repay this then stern denial of clemency to a youth by saving the veteran

²⁴ Brian S. Wills, *George Henry Thomas: As True as Steel*, (Lawrence: The University Press of Kansas), 2012. 443-445.

soldier's army from disaster and himself from the humiliation of dismissal from command on the eve of victory."²⁵

General officers were not the only ones who struggled to control the memory of Franklin and Nashville. Lower-level soldiers and veterans of the battles read and commented on the works written by their commanders, thereby entering the mnemonic Battles of Franklin and Nashville. These soldiers joined their generals with great enthusiasm. After reading their commanders' first histories of the battles, individual soldiers often wrote their own version of the events. These often loyally agreed with the accounts by the officers who had led them on the battlefield and also brought them into conflict with other soldiers. Veterans of both sides not only recounted their own experiences in the battles, but argued over who was in command at a particular time and place and assigned blame for blunders committed during these engagements. In these efforts, soldiers defended the reputation of their units and commanders and tried to assert their own position as the dominant or correct memory of Franklin and Nashville.

Unsurprisingly, Federal veterans of Franklin usually spent their efforts defending or assigning blame for the blunder committed by George Wagner's forward brigades. For example, the editor of the *National Tribune* quoted veteran Charles T. Weber of Frankfort Station, Illinois, who quipped, "Wagner's Division had no writers but all fighters and the Twenty-third Corps has some good writers left." Weber directed his comment as a jab toward those commanders and

²⁵ Ibid., 443-445 ; Connelly, *John M. Schofield and the Politics of Generalship*, 152. James L. McDonough, *Schofield: Union General in the Civil War and Reconstruction*, (Tallahassee: Florida State University Press), 1972. 132. John M. Schofield, *Forty-Six Years in the Army*, 241.

veterans of the XXIII Corps whose writings blamed Wagner and his men for the near catastrophic debacle at Franklin.²⁶

In fact, Franklin's Union veterans argued about these details so much in the *National Tribune* that they prompted T.P. Rockafellow, a veteran of the Army of the Potomac's 13th Pennsylvania Cavalry, to respond in 1906. Exasperated, Rockafellow said, "After Forty-three years of fighting don't you think it about time for the boys to let up on the battle of Franklin long enough to bury the dead and take care of the wounded? There were other battles. It seems to me there was something doing in the Army of the Potomac."²⁷ Rockafellow's dismissive remark prodded P. James, a veteran of the 26th Ohio, to respond in jest. James asserted, "Comrade Rockefeller [sic] ... is a little sensitive, and says the Army of the Potomac was also doing things. Yes, after our Western Generals, Grant and Sheridan, took hold of it." James's comment amounted to a slapstick remark about the Army of the Potomac's somewhat dismal record before Grant's appointment as Union General in Chief. James added, "But all the armies did well, and any comparison is foolish."²⁸

Other veterans were more serious in their assessment of the Battle of Franklin. To them, the memory of Franklin was important, despite overlooking its significance. Veteran Alonzo T. A. Seaman of the 16th Kentucky wrote, "According to my way of thinking that little difficulty has never had a fair shake in history."²⁹ Other veterans shared the same assessment of Nashville. James S. Pressnall, a veteran of the 63rd Indiana, articulated well the memory of the battle that its Federal veterans wanted to perpetuate. According to Pressnall, "Nashville . . . [was] a struggle of

²⁶ Charles T. Weber to *The National Tribune*, May 3, 1906. 3.

²⁷ T.P. Rockafellow to *The National Tribune*, December 27, 1906. 6.

²⁸ P. James to *The National Tribune*, February 28, 1907.6.

²⁹ Alonzo T. A. Seaman to *The National Tribune*, March 18, 1909. 7

vital importance for if the union forces defeated the enemy, they would have absolute control of eight of the original seceding states, which if we could hold a few months, certainly would lead to the downfall of the rebellion. On the other hand, if the enemy succeeded in capturing Nashville, it might prolong the war indefinitely.” According to Pressnall, Nashville was a significant battle that made an overall contribution to the war whether Union forces achieved victory or experienced defeat. While the veterans of Franklin and Nashville experienced the same types of hell that Eastern Theater veterans saw, the old Western Theater veterans expressed remorse that more people did not acknowledge their contributions and sacrifice during the war.³⁰

Just as both Federal and Confederate veterans commemorated battles differently in the postwar years, so did they write about them differently. Federal veterans often wrote within the framework of what historian John Neff has referred to as the Cause Victorious myth. In this type of memory, Federal veterans of Franklin and Nashville wrote about the battles as though they were huge stepping stones to achieving a victory for the Union cause, essential steps in reuniting the nation that made it stronger.³¹ T.H. Stevens, a veteran of the 124th Indiana, illustrated the Cause Victorious in 1883, claiming “The battle of Franklin has never been assigned its proper place in the history of the late war. Not one person in ten thousand realizes the responsibility that rested on that brave little army, or appreciated the peril that we were in from the time we left Columbia until we reached Nashville.”³² T.W. Williams of the 175th Ohio similarly stated in 1900,

The battle of Franklin has been justly classed as one of the five desperate combats of the war . . . for six hours the roar of the cannon, the rattle of musketry, and the shouts of combatants made up

³⁰ David Logsdon, *Eyewitnesses at the Battle of Nashville*, (Nashville: Kettle Mills Press), 2004. 123.

³¹ John R. Neff, *Honoring the Civil War Dead: Commemoration and the Problem of Reconciliation*, (Lawrence: The University Press of Kansas), 2005.

³² T.H. Stevens to *The National Tribune*, June 21, 1883, 7.

a scene that utterly baffles description. The earth tumbled, the battle smoke obscured the heavens, and the Nation's rich, red blood flowed in torrents. Pickett's famous charge at Gettysburg did not exceed it. No battlefield of the war can show more desperate fighting.³³

Both Williams and Stevens not only attempted to cement a memory of Franklin into the collective consciousness but also argued that the Union cause marched to victory at Franklin against all odds.

Federal veterans also placed Nashville within the mythos of Cause Victorious. Many veterans spoke of the fighting at Nashville with an air bordering on inevitability and significantly influenced by hindsight. R.B. Stewart, a veteran of the 15th Ohio later noted:

The battle of Nashville was decided at Franklin two weeks before it was fought, and it was only the wreck of an army that lay siege to the capital of Tennessee. . . . We who were shut up for two weeks within the defenses of the city had a good understanding of the situation, and a full assurance of what the result would be. It was true that we had retreated from Franklin, but that was on the program, and did not humble us in our estimation at all. We had reached the limit of our backward march and now were ready to fight, and somehow we all had the impression that whatever the fighting would be in character, it was going to be our last.³⁴

In addition to placing Franklin and Nashville within the elegant parameters of Cause Victorious, Federal veterans also prided themselves on providing a correct narrative of the battles. Attempts to do this led to arguments between Union veterans of Franklin and Nashville over the battles' more trivial details. These details included the regiments composing any given brigade, which units captured enemy colors, which battery of artillery inflicted the most damage on the enemy, and so on. Though this minutiae may seem inconsequential, verbal battles over them often spanned years and became quite heated.

³³ T.W. Williams to *The National Tribune*, May 31, 1900, 3.

³⁴ David Logsdon, *Eyewitnesses at the Battle of Nashville*, v.

Confederate veterans of Franklin and Nashville, on the other hand, wrote about the battles quite differently than their Federal counterparts. Former Rebel soldiers usually wrote about their experiences in these battles with a Lost Cause perspective. Arguing less about trivial details, Confederate veterans generally agreed on a narrative of Franklin and Nashville that stressed valor, courage, and sacrifice in the face of overwhelming odds. Like their early commemorations of the battles, the Lost Cause myth enabled veterans to cope with the pain of defeat and to find something noble in the midst of postwar social chaos.

Many Confederate veterans writing about the Battle of Franklin focused on the bravery and noble sacrifices of their dead commanders. General Daniel C. Govan penned one such account of Franklin in which he described his division commander, General Patrick Cleburne, before the attack and only minutes before his death. Govan noted, “General Cleburne seemed to me more despondent than I ever saw him. I was the last one to receive any instruction from him, and as I saluted and bade him good-bye I remarked, ‘Well, General, there will not be many of us that will get back to Arkansas,’ and he replied ‘Well Govan, if we are to die, let us die like men.’”³⁵ Sumner A. Cunningham, veteran of the 41st Tennessee, wrote a similar account about his commander, General Otho Strahl that also conveyed Lost Cause themes. Cunningham had been beside Strahl outside of the Federal breastworks, pinned down and receiving enfiladed fire. He later remembered,

I felt that there was no rule of warfare whereby all the men should be killed, and said to General Strahl suggestively: ‘What had we better do?’ His reply was instant: ‘Keep firing.’ . . . it became more and more difficult to get the loaded guns, and eventually the soldier who had been firing by my side was shot and fell against me with agonizing groans. Utterly unable to do anything for him, I simply asked him how he was wounded . . . At the same instant . . . General Strahl was struck; and throwing both hands above his head, almost to a clasp, he fell limber on his face, and I thought he was dead. When I asked the soldier how he was wounded, the General

³⁵ David R. Logsdon, *Eyewitnesses at the Battle of Franklin*, (Nashville: Kettle Mills Press), 2000. 12.

thought I spoke to him, and said he was wounded in the neck, he didn't know how badly, and then he called for Colonel Stafford . . . to turn over command to him. He crawled away. . . Members of his staff started to carry him to the rear, when two bullets struck him, either of which, it is said, would have been fatal.³⁶

Chaplain James H. McNeilly, a veteran of Quarles Confederate brigade, wrote from a Lost Cause perspective that spoke to the inevitability of defeat. He recalled the scene moments before the Confederate assault:

The men seemed to realize that our charge on the enemy's works would be attended with heavy slaughter, and several of them came to me bringing watches, jewelry, letters, and photographs, asking me to take charge of them and send them to their families if they were killed. I had to decline, as I was going with them and would be exposed to the same danger. It was vividly recalled to me the next morning, for I believe everyone who made this request of me was killed.³⁷

McNeilly miraculously survived the Battle of Franklin; his unit was decimated in the assault.

Historians and veterans were not the only people helping to shape the memory of Franklin and Nashville. Those who wrote and created various forms of popular culture media significantly influenced how the battles would be remembered through their literature, historical fiction, films, and artwork. They did this both by focusing on specific events during the battles but also by highlighting various personalities associated with the battles. These types of media left their mark on the battles' memory by perpetuating and solidifying certain tropes. Arguably, more than any other source, these forms of media have shaped how we remember the battles today.

In *Causes Won, Lost, and Forgotten*, noted Civil War historian Gary Gallagher outlined four main interpretive traditions emerging in Civil War films and art. These traditions provide a valuable framework for evaluating the literature, art, and film associated with Franklin and

³⁶ Ibid., 61.

³⁷ Ibid., 13.

Nashville. Gallagher argued that these forms of media fall into Lost Cause traditions, the Emancipation tradition, the Reconciliation tradition, and the Union Cause (what historian John Neff has called the Cause Victorious). An examination of pop-culture media perpetuating and shaping the memory of Franklin and Nashville reveals that these various forms of media largely fall within those categories established by Gallagher, especially the traditions of the Lost Cause, the Union Cause, and Reconciliation. Moreover, some forms of pop-culture media associated with Franklin and Nashville fall into another category; the Hero Worship Tradition. As Gallagher noted, these categories frequently blend and incorporate elements from one or more of the interpretive traditions. The media that portrays Franklin and Nashville is no exception.³⁸

One of the most common types of memory these forms of media perpetuated was the Myth of the Lost Cause. For example, in her *Tennessee Centennial Poem*, Mary A. A. Fry tied Franklin and Nashville's memory to the Lost Cause narrative that romanticized the plantation South, deified Confederate leaders and soldiers, downplayed slavery as a motivating cause of the war, and painted the conflict as a hopeless struggle against the odds where Confederates came up short but fought honorably. Concentrating part of her poem on the two most significant battles of the Tennessee Campaign of 1864, Fry wrote:

The battle of Franklin was fought, of sad memory,
Where gallant General Pat Cleburne lay dead on the field
And Strahl, Adams, Gist, and Granbury death forced to yield
At the battle of Nashville Hood's army was defeated
And with sad hearts these gallant heroes then retreated³⁹

³⁸ Gary W. Gallagher, *Causes Won, Lost, and Forgotten: How Hollywood and Popular Art Shape What We Know About The Civil War*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press), 2008.

³⁹ Mary A.A. Fry, *Tennessee Centennial Poem: A Synopsis of the History of Tennessee, From its earliest settlement on Watauga to the present time with short Biographies of her most Prominent Men*, (Chattanooga: Published by the author), 1896. 129

Fry's poem not only invoked a Lost Cause memory but also engaged in the Hero Worship Tradition by mentioning Cleburne, Strahl, Adams, Gist, and Granbury, five of the six Confederate generals killed at Franklin.

One poem conveyed a Lost Cause interpretation and specifically dedicated its effort to the Battle of Franklin. Referring especially to the Confederate soldiers and their assault at

Franklin, *The Battle of Franklin* noted:

Tw'as on the Harpeth's bloody marge,
Our Comrades made the daring charge:
With steady tramp and deafening yell,
They braved the hissing ball and shell
That thickly through the darkness fell:
With front as firm as e'er the shore,
The tumbling bullows lay before.⁴⁰

The poem continued with an increasingly romanticized version of the Confederate attack in front of Franklin. In perfect Lost Cause tradition, the author wrote,

While nobly rushed our gallant Braves,
Some won the works—some found their graves!
For native land they loved so well! –
Brave comrades lying 'long the round,
Where Glory's hands had lain them down.⁴¹

Aside from romanticizing the Confederate attack at Franklin and deifying Confederate leaders, *The Battle of Franklin* focused on cementing a Lost Cause memory of Confederate Captain Tod Carter. A Franklin native, Carter found himself on the afternoon of November 30 charging toward the Federal breastworks that had been constructed across his father's property. Mortally wounded in the attack, Carter died two days later in the same room in which he had been born. The poem incorporated this story into its perpetuation of the Lost Cause, saying,

⁴⁰ J.M. Oliver, "The Battle of Franklin," *Confederate Veteran*, Vol. 16, 1908. 598

⁴¹ Ibid

Where it is said, three years before,
A soldier stepp'd from his mother's door,
He paused, to take a long, last look
On forms that in his heart he took; --
With a throbbing breast and a changing cheek,
To his mother, one last farewell speak!
Brave soldier, rest! The world around
Could not afford you sweeter ground⁴²

John Trotwood Moore continued this Lost Cause theme in the pages of *Confederate Veteran* in 1897. Not only did Moore's poem perpetuate the Lost Cause narrative of the Battle of Franklin, it also attempted to highlight Cleburne's heroic status, always synonymous with the Lost Cause interpretation. Moore wrote in "Cleburne's Banner":

Ringgold Gap, New Hope, and Dalton,
Peachtree Creek—Atlanta, too—
Till it kissed the blood Harpeth,
Where it broke the ranks of blue—
Till it kissed bloody Harpeth,
And its blue was turned to red,
When it floated from the breastworks
Over gallant Cleburne—dead!⁴³

Margaret Mitchell's 1936 novel *Gone With the Wind* provided one of the best examples of literature that promoted the Lost Cause memory of the American Civil War. *Gone With the Wind* depicted a highly romanticized version of the plantation South, slavery, the Civil War, and Reconstruction. Significantly, Mitchell helped perpetuate a Lost Cause memory of the Battle of Franklin by using it as a pillar of the Lost Cause in her novel. Franklin appeared in only a few references throughout the novel. Although Mitchell does not exhaustively focus on the battle, she uses Franklin in such a way as to suggest that all Southerners were familiar with the event without need of an explanation. In this way Mitchell incorporated Franklin into her Lost Cause

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ John Trotwood Moore, "Cleburne's Banner," *Confederate Veteran*, Vol. 5, 1897. 569

narrative of the Civil War. Franklin became an unspoken surrogate for valor, sacrifice, and courage. Surprisingly, the connections between the Battle of Franklin and *Gone With the Wind* go much deeper than simple references to the battle and an implicit understanding of its place in southern memory. When writing *Gone With the Wind*, Mitchell drew heavily from Mary Gay's book, *Life in Dixie During the War*. Gay was the same lady whose brother was killed at Franklin and who had raised money across the South for the McGavock Confederate Cemetery.

Not all literature, however, perpetuated Lost Cause themes. In fact, some literature tried to bolster the heroic reputation of Federal commanders who served at Franklin and Nashville. In 1886, Mrs. D.N. Bash attempted to influence the memory of Franklin by portraying General David S. Stanley, commanding the IV Corps at Franklin until he was wounded, as a heroic figure in the battle. In *The Hero of Franklin* Nash referred to the chaotic moment when Wagner's Division was overrun in front of the main Federal line, opening the breach through which Confederate units poured. According to the poem, Stanley became the hero in the battle when he "snatched victory from the jaws of defeat." Nash wrote:

All honor, then, to every man whose valor saved the day
Upon the field of Franklin, and turned the bloody fray.
And when one's children's children shall read of heroes past,
Around the name of Stanley a glory shall be cast.⁴⁴

Narratives that centered on reconciliation as a way of remembering the Battles of Franklin and Nashville also appeared. When the women of Nashville erected the Battle of Nashville Peace Monument in 1926, John Trotwood Moore contributed another one of his poems for the north side of the monument. Moore exhibited a memory of the war that was not unusual

⁴⁴ Mrs. D.N. Bash, "The Hero of Franklin," in Joseph Gale, *Minty and the Cavalry: A History of Cavalry Campaigns in the Western Armies*. Harrisburg, PA: Edwin K. Meyers, 1886. 31.

for the period and blended a narrative of reconciliation with Lost Cause themes. His poem on the monument read:

Oh, valorous Gray, in the Grave of your fate
Oh Glorious Blue, In the long dead years
You were sown in sorrow and harrowed in hate
But your harvest today is a nation's tears
For the message you left Though the land has sped
From the lips of God to the ear of man:
Let the past be past, Let the dead be dead,
Now and Forever, American⁴⁵

Even the famous writer Ambrose Bierce, lent his literary talents to describing aspects of the Battles of Franklin and Nashville. Serving in the Federal army as a staff officer in General Sidney Post's brigade and positioned across the river from the fighting, Bierce watched the battle from the opposite bluff. Among other things, Bierce wrote about Wagner's folly and the resulting breach of the Federal lines in *What Occurred at Franklin*. He also spoke of the smoke that frequently obscured his view. Overall, Bierce matter-of-factly described his view of the battlefield and what occurred that day, but he still could not avoid some of his typical cynicism and odd sense of humor. Noting the scale of Confederate casualties among the leadership, Bierce remarked, "It was a great day for Confederates in the line of promotion."⁴⁶

Bierce brought some of that same cynicism and odd humor to a story he wrote that took place during the Battle of Nashville. The entire story is a play on words. An officer in the field sends a message to division commander General Samuel Beatty, asking to be relieved because he was suffering from *An Attack of General Debility*. Receiving the message, the commander misinterpreted its meaning, stating that General Debility was one of the finest cavalry officers in

⁴⁵ The Battle of Nashville Peace Monument, Nashville, TN.

⁴⁶ "What Occurred at Franklin," in *Complete Works of Ambrose Bierce*, Delphi Classics, 2013.

the Confederate army and that Beatty had served under him in Mexico. According to Bierce, Beatty sent him to guide a relief column to the embattled brigade commander. When he arrived, Bierce remarked, “. . . the forces of General Debility had conquered nobody but the brigade commander—his troops were holding their ground nobly, reading dime novels, playing draw poker pending the arrival of our succoring command.” Bierce added, “The official reports of this affair explained, a little obscurely, that there had been a misunderstanding, but my usual gallantry elicited the highest commendation in general orders, and will never, I trust, be forgotten by a grateful country.” Clearly Bierce poked fun not only at his commander for misinterpreting the order, but also at himself.⁴⁷

More recent historical fiction has also perpetuated memory of the Battles of Franklin and Nashville. In *The Black Flower* (1997), Howard Bahr related the experience of a Confederate soldier from Mississippi. Setting the majority of the novel around the Battle of Franklin, Bahr described the horrors of the battle through the experiences of this Confederate and his comrades. In doing this, Bahr gave more than a silent nod to the Five Tragic Hours memory of the battle. Lost Cause themes also emerged from *The Black Flower*. Confederate leaders, notably Generals Nathan B. Forrest and Patrick Cleburne, appeared in the novel as brave, heroic, and fatherly figures. The same themes emerged later with numerous references to the dead Confederate generals who eventually lay on Carnton’s back gallery, symbolizing fallen bravery at Franklin. Nevertheless, the author accurately and ably depicted actual historical figures. The novel continues with Bahr’s main character becoming romantically involved with a young woman who is caring for him at Carnton after he is wounded in the battle. Together they set out to look for his missing comrades where they witness the horrors of the battle. In the final pages, the young

⁴⁷ Ibid., “An Attack of General Debility”

woman continues to nurse the wounded Confederate as he nears death following the amputation of his arm. As the novel concludes, one can see the death of the main character as Bahr's metaphorical device to highlight the pointless nature of the Battle of Franklin.

Bahr returned to the Battle of Franklin as the backdrop for *The Judas Field* in 2006. The central character, a Confederate veteran of Franklin, remains haunted and tormented by his experience in the battle despite the passage of 20 years. A lifelong friend reveals to him that she is dying and that her last wish is to return to Franklin from Mississippi and recover the remains of her father and brother, both of whom were killed in the battle. The former Confederate reluctantly agrees to accompany her. Eventually, they stand on the ground where he fought years before and the sight of the Carter Cotton Gin triggers anew his memory of Franklin. Bahr's book helps readers understand the ways in which many veterans remembered Franklin and addresses the importance of place in assisting memory.

In 2005, Robert Hicks's *The Widow of the South* was published. Hicks's work proved fictional in more ways than one. Nevertheless, the novel perpetuated certain memories of Franklin. Like other works, *The Widow of the South* did much to further the Five Tragic Hours memory of Franklin. It told the story of Caroline McGavock, the lady of Carnton. During the Battle of Franklin, her home became a Confederate field hospital. After the war, she took on the role of caring for the Confederate cemetery a short distance from her back door. To be sure, Caroline McGavock played a significant role as keeper of memory for all the men buried in the cemetery and her actions endeared her to many Southerners, as evidenced by the glowing references to her in the *Confederate Veteran* and her obituary. Such undue emphasis on Caroline McGavock, however, as the "widow of the south" neglected the efforts of others, such as Mary Gay, to remember the soldiers buried in the McGavock Confederate Cemetery. Although a work

of fiction, Hicks also distorted historical fact, depicting Caroline McGavock engaging in an extramarital, albeit platonic, affair with one of the book's central characters, despite any historical evidence supporting such a claim. Moreover, the supposedly nonfiction chapter of the novel at times even rival the fiction of the other chapters by perpetuating absolute falsehoods concerning Caroline McGavock. Hicks remarked, "The story is often told that when Oscar Wilde made his infamous tour of America in 1882, he told his hosts that his itinerary should include a visit to 'sunny Tennessee to meet the Widow McGavock, the high priestess of the temple of dead boys.'" In reality, however, Oscar Wilde's tour of the United States never brought him any closer to Franklin than Memphis, Tennessee.⁴⁸

Franklin also received unusual literary treatment in 2008 when *Cleburne* appeared. Justin Murphy's graphic novel showed in unflinching detail the violence that occurred during the Battle of Franklin to including spattering brain matter and bodies being dismembered and exploding amid accurate artillery fire. Both the story and the illustrations perpetuate a Lost Cause narrative of Franklin, largely by deifying the subject, General Patrick R. Cleburne. In numerous illustrations one sees Cleburne and his division surging forward against seemingly hopeless odds. That Cleburne would somehow eventually fall, bravely leading his men, is a pervasive theme of the section treating Franklin. Moreover, Murphy's graphic novel, like other literature, symbolically shows the Carter House and Cotton Gin in addition to elaborate depictions of the Federal earthworks.

Depictions of the Battle of Franklin have also appeared on film. On September 27, 1923, thousands gathered south of Franklin to film battle scenes for part of director Allen Holubar's

⁴⁸Robert Hicks, *The Widow of the South*, (New York: Grand Central), 2005; "Mrs. Caroline E.W. McGavock," *Confederate Veteran*, Vol. 13, 1905. 177-179 ;<http://www.oscarwildeinamerica.org/lectures-1882/comparison-with-previous-itineraries.html>.

The Human Mill, a film adaptation of John Trotwood Moore's *The Bishop of Cottontown*. In many ways, Holubar's filming reawakened memory of the Battle of Franklin. Extras, many veterans of World War I, demanded Confederate uniforms from the costume manager. Visitors and spectators clogged Franklin's streets and the downtown area. Over 6,000 showed up to watch the reenactment of the battle and more than 600 dressed for the battle scenes in the uniforms of the blue and the gray. The battle was complete with explosions, blank cartridges, and a grand Confederate charge and subsequent combat that Holubar's crew had trouble stopping. Perhaps as a testament to the film's authenticity, the scene rekindled memories for some of the old Confederate veterans who watched and participated in the filming. One old rebel fought with a deputy sheriff who kept him restrained behind the spectator area as the old man yelled at him, "Let me at 'em boy! I fit 'em in '64 and I ain't afeered to fight 'em now!" While *The Human Mill* reawakened memory of the Battle of Franklin during its filming, the film never had a chance to perpetuate memory of the battle on the silver screen. Within a few weeks of completing filming in Franklin, Holubar died suddenly. The film was stored in a warehouse where it was tragically destroyed by a fire.⁴⁹

Franklin also appeared in one of the most beloved Civil War movies ever produced. Margaret Mitchell's novel *Gone With the Wind* made it to the big screen in 1939. Like the novel, however, Franklin only received a passing mention in the movie. Two ladies are talking to one another when one remarks, "Fanny Elsing told Dr. Meade that Captain Butler finally admitted that he was honored for his services at the Battle of Franklin."⁵⁰ Much as it was in Mitchell's novel, however, Franklin's place in southern memory is clear and needed no refinement in the

⁴⁹ James B. Jones, "The Third Battle of Franklin, September 27, 1923," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* (Fall, 1997): 170-181; McDonough and Connelly, *Five Tragic Hours*, 183-184.

⁵⁰ *Gone With the Wind*, 1939. Film.

movie's dialogue. Franklin is universally understood as a moment of great Confederate bravery, yet one too traumatic to detail.

Like other media, postwar art depicted various aspects of Franklin and Nashville that helped perpetuate and influence memory of the battles. With Franklin, art almost exclusively stressed Lost Cause themes, frequently focusing on Confederate General Patrick Cleburne, probably Franklin's most famous personality. In *Cleburne*, David Wright portrayed Cleburne on the southern outskirts of Franklin before the attack. Cleburne appears as a dashing figure astride his horse, looking to his rear as if nervously waiting for the final order to advance or to say one last goodbye. In the background, his men gather in small groups, quietly waiting and surveying the battlefield on which many of them are about to die. In the best of the Lost Cause tradition, Cleburne and his men seem to sense their impending doom but are nevertheless determined to move forward against all odds.

Don Trojani also focused on Cleburne, portraying him during the attack against the Federal works at Franklin in *General Patrick R. Cleburne*. Cleburne looks determined as he and his men experience withering fire from the Federal position. Behind Cleburne, one sees a setting sun and the Hardee Corps flag, specifically carried by Cleburne's Division. Such symbolism suggests that Cleburne is bravely leading his men forward "into the sunset." Many other figures in the painting look to Cleburne, clearly indicating that he is the center of attention. Through the smoke of the rifles, one can also see the Carter House in the background, always a recognized symbol of the Battle of Franklin.

Focusing on Cleburne as Franklin's Lost Cause hero, Mort Kuntzler depicts Cleburne's lifeless body the morning after the Confederate assault in *Bringing Cleburne In*. In the painting's

center, Cleburne's men are carrying their dead general on a stretcher to a waiting ambulance with reverence and respect. All attention centers on Cleburne, as evident in Kuntsler's use of light. Like other artwork depicting Franklin, the Carter House and Cotton Gin appear in the background. The dark foreground of Kuntsler's work is littered with the dead bodies of numerous Confederate soldiers who bravely fell before the Federal works with their commander. This ghastly carnage not only alludes to the Five Tragic Hours memory of Franklin but also to the Lost Cause and Hero Worship traditions.

While almost all art depicting Franklin contains Lost Cause themes, Cleburne is not the focus of all art. In *Almost Home*, Mark Maritato portrays Confederate Captain Tod Carter before the attack. Much like Franklin's Lost Cause literature that frequently centered on Carter and his tragic death, Maritato similarly showcases this often told story, showing Carter mounted on horseback before his regiment who are in formation and ready to advance toward Franklin. Illustrating stories of bravery typical of the Lost Cause narrative, Maritato captures the famous moment in Franklin's Lost Cause tradition when Carter called on his regiment, "Follow me boys! I'm almost home!" This story frequently comes with the caveat that Carter, as a quartermaster, did not have to participate in the fight but refused to let anything keep him from "going home."

While art depicting Franklin frequently centers on Cleburne and almost exclusively on the Lost Cause, art focused on the Battle of Nashville often contains threads of the Cause Victorious memory of the battle. In Howard Pyle's *The Battle of Nashville*, perhaps the most famous work of art dedicated to the battle, Minnesota soldiers charge toward Confederate positions near Shy's Hill, visible in the painting's background. The Federal soldiers look rugged and determined as they confidently advance, bracing themselves for a barrage of lead. The

realistic work shows the bleak indicators of cold and miserable weather, melting snow, and mud. The sense of movement one sees in the painting, including the presence of one soldier who goes forward despite an obvious bloody bandage wrapped around his head, and the presence of the tattered and torn regimental colors suggests their belief in the Union cause.

Approximately 20 years after the Battle of Nashville, Louis Kindt painted a study in preparation for a Battle of Nashville Cyclorama, much like those in Atlanta and Gettysburg. Nobody, however, ever commissioned a finished version and the Battle of Nashville Cyclorama never came to fruition. Nevertheless, the study exhibited many Cause Victorious themes. Federal soldiers, with their colors flying in the breeze, and led by mounted officers advance confidently toward the Confederate defenses. Parts of the study depicting Confederate positions have the appearance of a defeated wasteland. On the other hand, Federal soldiers and units in the study possess a soldierly, martial, and glorious appearance.⁵¹

In 1994, Frank Wright completed *The Battle of Nashville, December 14, 1864*. Despite having an incorrect date in the title, Wright's art also exhibits many elements of Cause Victorious. Much like Louis Kindt's Battle of Nashville Cyclorama study, Wright's painting places the Federals in a position of strength at Nashville, showing that they clearly outnumber the Confederates on the battlefield. Moreover, most Confederates in the work appear wounded, in the act of surrendering, or dead. More importantly, however, Wright emphasized the Federal commanding general, George Thomas, who is shown mounted on a dashing white horse with hat in hand, confidently directing his men. The attention focused toward both Thomas and the victory his soldiers are achieving place this work not only in the Cause Victorious, but also in the Hero Worship Tradition.

⁵¹ www.tnmuseum.org/custpage.cfm/frm/50767/sec-id/50767

Although various forms of media helped perpetuate memory of the Battles of Franklin and Nashville to differing degrees, the Lost Cause interpretation clearly won the mnemonic Battle of Franklin. On the other hand, the Cause Victorious narrative of Nashville prevailed in most media formats, suggesting that northern memory won the mnemonic Battle of Nashville. While the Hero Worship Tradition appeared in media from both Franklin and Nashville, the Emancipation Tradition was mostly non-existent. While a dearth of media exists with the two battles when compared with more prominent Civil War engagements, this media nevertheless helped perpetuate numerous memories of the battles. More importantly, however, these traditions and the memories they helped cement also manifested in the coming years with the efforts to establish national military parks at the two battlefields.

Chapter 3 - An Opportunity Wasted: The Failure of a National Military Park for Franklin

Millions of visitors from across the United States and the world travel each year to the nation's battlefields and National Military Parks. In these parks, the visitors see monuments, plaques, and headstones commemorating the battles and the individuals who fought in them, and attesting to the horrible carnage that took place on many of the fields of conflict. Moreover, visitors can tour many of these battlefields from their car on roads that connect prominent sites and view many interpretive markers along the way. They can also walk across many of these fields, see the cannon that adorn many the fields, and ponder what occurred there. The fields surrounding Franklin and Nashville, however, are dotted less with monuments, headstones, and cannon than with shopping centers, pizzerias, golf courses, and large residential areas. The reasons for lacking preservation at Franklin and Nashville can be traced back to the first efforts to establish National Military Parks there and reveal how the fractured memory of both Franklin and Nashville ultimately hamstrung these early efforts.

Franklin and Nashville suffered, in part, because early efforts to establish National Military Parks were led by individuals closely associated with the battles themselves, namely veterans of the engagements and their children. In the 1890s, when the nation created the first five National Military Parks, a handful of Civil War veterans in Congress led a valiant fight for Franklin and Nashville at the federal level. Their efforts, however, were not enough to outweigh the opinion of their congressional colleagues who argued for fiscal responsibility. After all, the National Military Parks proved rather expensive and many congressmen argued that the most significant Civil War battlefields had already been preserved. Congressional efforts continued throughout the early twentieth century. As the ranks of Civil War veterans in Congress dwindled,

the next generation of legislators, including some children of the battles' veterans, continued pursuing various efforts to establish National Military Parks at Franklin and Nashville. Their efforts, however, met the same results as their predecessors.

Significantly, efforts to commemorate the battlefields were weakened at the state level. Tennessee legislators showed little interest in preserving the battlefields during the first few decades of the twentieth century. In fact, the state showed even less interest than the Federal Government. Although the state of Tennessee had the opportunity to preserve parts of the two battlefields, the failure to legislate the preservation of Franklin and Nashville indicated the ambivalence of many Tennesseans. Moreover, the mechanism for properly caring for and administering parks that would have resulted from such legislation did not yet exist. These two factors likewise contributed to the failed collective memory of the battles.

Local aspects also contributed to the divided and incoherent memory of Franklin and Nashville. Some groups and individuals worked hard to preserve the battlefields and advocated their establishment as National Military Parks by the federal government. Other citizens, however, wanted to leave the memory of Franklin and Nashville in the past and were much more interested in survival, economic progress, and selfish interests. Hence, they found little reason to set aside the battlefields, remember them, or perpetuate their memories.

Finally, unforeseen circumstances contributed to the failure to preserve the Franklin and Nashville battlefields. Some of the most substantial attempts to preserve the spaces suffered from bad timing when unforeseen events, such as the outbreak of the World Wars and economic downturns, interfered with any sympathies legislators may have had for funding National Military Parks and battlefield preservation.

The idea of a National Military Park began during the decade of the 1890s. Congress not only intended these parks to preserve major battlefields of the American Civil War but also for professional military officers to use in their training. In many cases, the outgrowth of National Military Parks resulted from expansions of National Cemeteries already existing on or near the battlefields.

Some of the work for creating the parks began before the federal government became involved. The major organizations behind this work were memorial associations who sought to preserve the fields, establish monuments, and shape the battles' interpretation. In 1890, Congressman Byron Cutcheon of Michigan, a federal veteran of the Civil War, introduced a bill advocating the establishment of Gettysburg National Military Park. He remarked, "If this work is to be done, it must be done by the Government. It is equally impracticable for either the Northern or the Southern States to undertake it, and it is too great a work for the memorial association to undertake, and foreign to the object of its organization. It must be done by the National Government or remain undone." Although memorial associations existed for the battles of Franklin and Nashville, sadly, the work of establishing National Military Parks there "remained undone."¹

There were many reasons, however, to create National Military Parks at Franklin and Nashville during 1890s. During this decade Congress appropriated money for National Military Parks at Chickamauga-Chattanooga, Gettysburg, Shiloh, Vicksburg, and Antietam. Many veterans of the battles were still alive and could help mark the positions of their units and other prominent landmarks. As these veterans passed, however, their first-hand knowledge of the

¹ Ronald F. Lee, *The Origin and Evolution of the National Military Park Idea*, 1973.
www.nps.gov/parkshistory/online_books/history-military/nmpidea.htm

battles died with them, making it much more difficult to mark locations and perpetuate the memory of those battles. The 1890s were also a period when the feeling of reconciliation swept through the country and this spirit became the backbone that supported the federal government's role in establishing national parks on many Civil War battlefields. If the federal government was going to convert Franklin and Nashville into National Military Parks, no time was better as a large amount of the land encompassing the battlefields was still undeveloped.²

As the years passed, however, this opportunity rapidly diminished as the population of Middle Tennessee grew. The turn of the century also marked a large industrial expansion that consumed large portions of these battlefields, especially at Nashville. Historian Timothy B. Smith has noted, "Because most Civil War battles were fought around towns where transportation routes crossed, that coming expansion in the early 1900s would forever destroy the historic fields. Likewise, the era before the social expansion of the 1900s was a time when the land on which battles had been fought could still be purchased at reasonable cost." Franklin and Nashville proved no exception to these rules.³

² This chapter had benefitted from and would not have been possible without the substantial treatment this topic has received from Timothy B. Smith. These works include, *The Golden Age of Battlefield Preservation: The Decade of the 1890s and the Establishment of America's First Five Military Parks*, (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press), 2008; *This Great Battlefield of Shiloh: History, Memory, And The Establishment Of A Civil War National Military Park*, (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press), 2004; *A Chickamauga Memorial: The Establishment of America's First Civil War National Military Park*, (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press), 2009; "Civil War Battlefield Preservation in Tennessee: A Nashville National Military Park Case Study," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*. Vol. 64, no. 3 (2005). 236-247. Also; "What Could Have Been: Civil War Battlefield Preservation at Franklin," in Steven E. Woodworth, *The Tennessee Campaign of 1864*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2016. I wish to express my sincere appreciation and thanks to Dr. Smith who not only contributed to my thinking about the Franklin and Nashville battlefields and agreed to read my less than perfect drafts but also very generously put my mind at ease by telling me not to worry about overlapping research when I realized I was looking at much of the same material he had already used.

³ Smith, *The Golden Age of Battlefield Preservation*, 2-6; 32.

To see the fractured nature of collective memory concerning the Battle of Franklin, one only needs to examine the legislative history of efforts made to establish a national park. Such an examination reveals that no one coherent narrative of Franklin's significance ever surfaced. Although many supported the effort, little overall support for a national park emerged. Moreover, those supporting and advocating a Franklin National Military Park hinged their efforts largely on the bloodiness of the battle. Franklin's large death toll, however, failed to convince Congress that its memory was worth perpetuating as a national park.

In 1900, Congressman Nicholas N. Cox of Tennessee first introduced a bill to make a national park at Franklin. Appropriately, he was a former Confederate officer and veteran of the Tennessee Campaign of 1864. A parting act before leaving Congress, Cox's bill called for the acquisition of approximately 150 acres along the battle's "firing lines" and the areas in which graves from the battles existed. The bill, H.R. 9657, appropriated \$100,000 for the park and also made provisions for establishing roads throughout the park and the marking of troop positions but died a quiet death upon reaching the Committee of Military Affairs.

When Cox left Congress, Representative Lemuel Padgett continued the effort to perpetuate the memory of the Battle of Franklin by attempting to establish a National Military Park at Franklin. Padgett, a Democratic representative from Tennessee and member of the Committee on Naval Affairs, offered ten bills in the House of Representatives specifically dedicated to establishing a Franklin National Military Park. The bills he introduced contained the same provisions and language that were in the original bill that Cox had introduced in 1900 with very minor changes. On two other occasions, however, Padgett changed his tactics to preserve parts of the Franklin battlefield by introducing bills to provide a memorial arch over the Columbia Pike, the area near the heaviest fighting. Both bills, introduced in 1914 and 1916,

contained the same language and appropriated \$30,000 to erect the arch and the “proper inscriptions and designs, and statuary.” Remarkably, the bills noted that the citizens of Franklin wished to furnish the land for the arch at their own expense. The bills also indicated that the arch was “in memory of the heroism displayed by the soldiers of both sides in that battle” and was “designed to symbolize the return of the era of good feeling and sympathy between the sections of the country,” demonstrating a reconciliationist theme. These two bills, however, never made it out of the House committees to which they were referred.

Those wishing to perpetuate the memory of Franklin through the creation of a national park found another staunch advocate General Isaac R. Sherwood, a veteran of the Battle of Franklin, Ohio Congressman, and influential member of the House Committee on Military Affairs. Tirelessly marshaling support for bills that perpetuated Franklin’s memory, Sherwood remarked in a 1907 edition of the *Confederate Veteran*, “Surely the United States government should purchase the land where the battle was fought, and I believe will do so if the effort is made by the soldiers who took part in that terrible conflict.” Sherwood assured his readers that, “I shall aim to do my part in aid of such a movement and I could think of nothing that would interest me more than a reunion of those who fought on both sides on that battlefield.” Sherwood added another, more personal reason to establish Franklin as a National Military Park, “I have never been over the field since the war.”⁴

In December 1924, John Trotwood Moore, the Tennessee State Librarian and author of *The Bishop of Cottontown*, a novel partially set during the Battle of Franklin, urged Sherwood to once more use his influence to pass legislation for a Franklin National Military Park before his

⁴ “Concerning a Reunion at Franklin,” *Confederate Veteran*, Vol. XV, 1907. 419.

last days in Congress expired. Moore told him, “Now, as a fitting finale for an illustrious career, both civil and military, I want to ask you in behalf of myself and of the State of Tennessee, and the memory of the Blue and the Gray, that you take the lead in Congress for an appropriation marking the battlefield of Franklin, which stands today without a marker on it to attest the heroism of the contending armies.” Moore suggested that Sherwood lead the effort and he pledged his support and the support of the state of Tennessee.⁵

On his way to Washington from Ohio, Sherwood responded to Moore’s letter and told him he was in favor of markers for Franklin and would see what he could do upon reaching Washington. Sherwood added, “This matter should have been pushed long ago. The short session is not favorable to the project, but we will try.” Sherwood also revealed other problems associated with the memory of Franklin when he remarked, “You know patriotism is not a live sentiment anymore I am sad to say,” despondently referring to Moore’s call for him to lead another “patriotic enterprise” and introduce a bill to establish a national military park at Franklin.⁶

Moore wrote Sherwood again on December 29, 1924, and agreed that the Franklin and Nashville battlefields “should have been marked long ago.” He also expressed his regrets that Sherwood was leaving Congress. Moore also wrote to Tennessee Congressman Joseph W. Byrns, asking for his cooperation in supporting the legislation. Then, however, an interesting

⁵ Moore to Sherwood, December 18, 1924, Box 16, Folder 13, *Papers of John Trotwood Moore*. TSLA, Nashville.

⁶ *Ibid*, Sherwood to Moore, December 24, 1924, Box 16, Folder 7.

turn of events occurred that did not bode well for a national military park perpetuating the memory of Franklin.⁷

On January 8, 1925, Tennessee Congressman William C. Salmon wrote Moore telling him that he had received information reporting that General Sherwood was ill and unable to introduce a bill in the House of Representatives to establish a national park at Franklin. Sherwood, however, evidently had agreed to introduce such a bill despite his condition. Unaware of this, Congressman Salmon introduced H.R. 10771, which authorized acquisition of the battlefield and appropriations for suitable markers. Salmon told Moore, “I am more than interested in this matter and shall bend every effort in behalf of the passage of the Bill.”⁸

While the House referred the bill to its Committee on Military Affairs, its members debated an Army Appropriations Bill, to which numerous Congressman offered amendments. Taking advantage of this opportunity, Salmon proposed an amendment that included funding for a national park at Franklin. This proposal authorized the Secretary of War to purchase the land and erect monuments and markers at a cost not to exceed twenty thousand dollars.⁹

Salmon’s amendment to the Army Appropriations Bill drew an immediate objection from Congressman Lester Dickinson of Iowa. Hoping to prevent more congressmen from objecting, Salmon passionately defended his amendment. He began by calling Franklin, “the most bloody and fiercest battle of the Civil War,” one in which “more men were killed in proportion to the number engaged than in any other engagement during the entire four years of the Civil War,” a

⁷ Ibid, Moore to Sherwood, December 29, 1924. Box 16, Folder 13.

⁸ Ibid, W.C. Salmon to Moore, January 8, 1925, Box 7, Folder 12; House Resolution. 10771, *Congressional Record*, 68th Congress, 2nd Session. 636.

⁹ *Congressional Record*, 68th Congress, 2nd Session, Proceedings and Debates, 1498-1499.

direct quote from Isaac Sherwood's discussion of Franklin in his book *Memories of the War*. Salmon added, "Why this battleground has not heretofore been recognized I do not know but in order that the history of this battle, the historic points of this battleground, should be preserved for future generations, I think it expedient and wise that the United States Government, in keeping with its commendable custom as with other battlegrounds, should preserve the chief points of interest of this great battle."¹⁰

Salmon informed the House about that his introduction of H.R. 10771 was at the request not only of the citizens of Ohio, but his home state of Tennessee as well. After pointing out that Sherwood, a fellow and esteemed Congressman, was a veteran of Franklin, Salmon quoted passages from *Memories of the War* and also read parts of John Trotwood Moore's *The Bishop of Cottontown*. Salmon stated, "A reading of the description of this battle and of the havoc made there, and the fact of it being a turning point of the Civil War, will interest every Member of this House, especially those from Ohio and those from the South."¹¹

Finishing to applause from his colleagues, Salmon indicated one of the problems with Franklin's memory. Revealing a characteristic that would plague the battlefield for generations, Salmon reported, "No doubt many of [you] are descendants of distinguished soldiers who fought in the battle and have passed through this battleground without being able to know the exact spot of this bloody battle." Congressman Dickinson then insisted on his point of order, arguing that action on Salmon's amendment to the Army Appropriations Bill would usurp the duties of the

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

House Committee on Military Affairs and was therefore improper. Dickinson's point of order was sustained and the debate ended.¹²

Despite this setback, Franklin's memory still had a chance for perpetuation. Salmon's bill worked its way through the House Committee on Military Affairs and on January 29, 1925, General Isaac Sherwood reported the bill back to the full House. No other legislation attempting to establish a national park at Franklin had ever made it to this point. The House of Representatives, however, took no further action on H.R. 10771, ultimately killing the bill. This was, perhaps, the best chance that ever existed for a coherent and unified collective memory of the Battle of Franklin and it had just suffered an ignominious death.¹³

Writing to Sherwood on May 4, 1925, John Trotwood Moore expressed his disappointment at the failure of Salmon's bill. Moore praised the Ohio Congressman for his efforts and leadership and told him that both Salmon and Tennessee Congressman Joseph W. Byrns had written him saying the bill would have experienced no success at all had it not been for Sherwood's involvement. Moore closed the letter by vowing to continue the fight. He wrote, "Perhaps we may have better luck next time, but when the statue goes up, if you are gone and I am here you may rest assured the name of Isaac R. Sherwood and his record will be put on it by me."¹⁴

Unfortunately, no future bills to preserve the battlefield and perpetuate Franklin's memory would ever become as successful as HR 10771. The two most successful and

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *U.S. Congressional Serial Set*, Vol. 8390, Report 1315, House Committee on Military Affairs, 69th Congress, 2nd Session

¹⁴ *JTM Papers*, TSLA, Box 16, Folder 13.

experienced Congressmen supporting legislation to preserve the Franklin battlefield and ensure the survival of its memory never again proposed legislation on the subject. Salmon died on May 13 1925 in Washington, D.C. Unsuccessful in his 1924 reelection bid, Sherwood left Washington, D.C. in March and returned to Toledo, Ohio, dying soon thereafter.¹⁵

Senator Kenneth McKellar of Tennessee also introduced a handful of bills in the Senate to acquire land and mark the Franklin battlefield, although none of them successfully made it out of committee. His bills contained the same language used in H.R. 10771 with minor alterations. In the first session of the Seventieth Congress, McKellar presented a petition sent by numerous organizations in Franklin that sought to have the Federal government acquire the Carter House. The petitioners spoke of the “general interest” of the site, stating, “. . . tourist visit it almost every day, there being hundreds of visitors from distant places within a year” Supported by the Franklin mayor, the local chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, the Kiwanis Club of Franklin, the district school board, and the American Legion among others, the petition stated that the land in question only amounted to two and a half acres. The petition also noted the excellent state of preservation on the site and touted Franklin as “the most severe battle of the war” and “the decisive battle of the war” and referenced the six Confederate generals killed as a result of the battle. The petition, however, was attached to one of McKellar’s bills and referred to the Committee on Military Affairs and printed in the record, but otherwise fell on deaf ears.

Fourteen years after the defeat of HR 10771, J. Will Taylor made one last gasp for a national park at Franklin. In April 1939, he introduced House Resolution 5960 in the 76th Congress. Unlike the previous bill, which had been referred to the House Committee on Military

¹⁵*Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/biosearch/biosearch.asp>

Affairs, HR 5960 was sent to the Committee on Public Lands.. In August 1939, while the bill was still under consideration by the committee, Taylor spoke from the House floor, reminding colleagues about the bill. He told the audience that he was the son of a Confederate veteran and launched into a passionate narrative of the Battle of Franklin. Finally Taylor told the assembled congressmen:

Such a park will be a fitting memorial to the intrepid men, both North and South, who gave here the 'last full measure of their devotion.' Such a park will serve as a wholesome inspiration to the youth of today and to their posterity. It will stand as a signal testimonial of a grateful Government, proclaiming through the years that those who suffer and die for patriotic convictions shall not perish in vain. Such a park and the cemetery . . . will also serve as a grim reminder that war is the greatest scourge of humanity and that no pains should be spared to avert a future repetition. The words of General Grant at Appomattox, 'Let us have peace,' should be instilled into the heart of every American. Let us have peace at home and by all means let us scrupulously refrain from any commitment or entangling alliance which might lead us to another conflict on foreign soil.

Despite Taylor's emotional plea, the House took no further action on H.R. 5960. One month after his speech, German and Soviet troops invaded Poland thus beginning World War II. No more attempts to establish a national park at Franklin ever occurred.

Although Franklin and Nashville never became National Military Parks, there was no shortage of people who labored for the idea. One of the groups most interested in seeing a national park for Franklin and Nashville were veterans of those battles. Among Confederate veterans, Sumner Cunningham, a Franklin veteran and editor of the *Confederate Veteran*, worked tirelessly to promote a national park for Franklin. In the pages of his magazine, he suggested a meeting for veterans of Franklin in 1906. Cunningham also revealed that owners of property significant to the battle were willing to sell it at actual values. He noted, "They [property owners] have made these offers and such a movement might be inaugurated whereby the government would be induced to purchase an area at least large enough to include the

principal parts of the battlefield.” He added, “There is no place in America more suitable for a monument to be erected by the government equally honoring the heroism of American soldiers than at Franklin.” Apparently, however, nothing came of this effort.¹⁶

Cunningham tried again the following year. Still mustering support for a national park at Franklin, he encouraged his readers to again gather on the battle’s anniversary in 1907. Even if only a few supporters could join him, Cunningham still believed they would have the influence and resources necessary to begin the movement to “purchase of the important parts of the battlefield for a government park, where there should be a monument in honor of both sides.”¹⁷

Cunningham was not the only Confederate veteran who hoped to preserve the Franklin battlefield. In 1909, W.L. Shaw, a former private in the 10th Mississippi Infantry, likewise shared his opinion of Franklin and the movement for its preservation with the *Confederate Veteran*. Shaw remarked, “It gives me much pleasure and satisfaction that an effort is on foot to have the battlefield of Franklin, Tenn., properly marked. It was indeed one of the bloodiest battles of the Confederate war. . .” He continued, “. . . I have always thought that Franklin without doubt was the bloodiest and, for the time we were engaged, the most severe and hardest contested battle of our Tennessee Army. Our gallant Cleburne fell while cheering his men forward when it was so dark we could see only be the flashing of guns. Our men climbed over their last line of works, while the Yankees fought us hard and well.”¹⁸

A National Military Park for Franklin also enjoyed the support of Federal veterans. Like their Confederate counterparts, they stressed the battle’s significance, justified the establishment

¹⁶ “Gathering at Franklin Suggested.” *Confederate Veteran*, Vol. XIV. August, 1906. 341.

¹⁷ “Concerning a Reunion at Franklin,” *Confederate Veteran*, Vol. XV, 1907. 419.

¹⁸ “Hard Fighting—Franklin—Munfordville” *Confederate Veteran*, February 1909. 221.

of a national park due to the battle's bloody nature, and deemed it worthy of preservation by the federal government. J.K. Merrifield, a veteran of the 88th Illinois Infantry and member of Opdyke's Brigade at Franklin, embodied the spirit of many Franklin veterans. He stated, "I believe this government should buy the ground and make the Franklin . . . battlefield a national park, and the different States should erect monuments there, as they have at Vicksburg, Chickamauga, and Gettysburg. This battle of Franklin was the turning point of the war in the Western armies."¹⁹

Captain J.M. Hickey, a Confederate veteran, later wrote Merrifield and, like other veterans, spoke of the significance of Franklin and presented a reconciliationist narrative of the battle. He told Merrifield, "Franklin has an interest that no other battlefield possesses in the record of the carnage which raged there from four in the afternoon until eleven at night. The heroic Confederacy was about to terminate in gloom and defeat with the surrender of General Lee at Appomattox, yet the battle of Franklin added another star to the shining crown of her achievements." Hickey added, "Many Confederate and Federal soldiers are anxious for the government to erect a monument to the valor of the soldiers of both armies in the battle of Franklin."²⁰

The quest to have a national park at Franklin also enjoyed the support of General John M. Schofield, federal commander during the battle. In response to a newspaper article calling for a Franklin National Military Park sent to him by former Confederate officer Thomas Gibson, Schofield replied, "I concur heartily in your general suggestion that the people should erect suitable monuments to commemorate the heroic sacrifices of the soldiers who gave their lives for

¹⁹ "From 'The Other Side' At Franklin," *Confederate Veteran*, Vol. XVI, 1908. 554.

²⁰ "Battle of Franklin," *Confederate Veteran*, Vol. XVII, 1909. 14.

the cause they had espoused and which they believed to be just.” In support of his opinion, Schofield added,

There the Confederate army made its last desperate effort to maintain an aggressive campaign. Its failure marked the beginning of the end—the restoration of the Union in which all now rejoice. The government of the United States might appropriately erect on that field a monument to commemorate the valor of the American soldiers, their fraternal reunion where the conflict was decided, and the glorious result to which this finally led in the hearty reunion of all the people.²¹

These veterans, both Confederate and Federal, appeared united in their calls for a National Military Park at Franklin. Reconciliation among the veterans was the order of the day and veterans on both sides presented strong arguments for establishing a National Military Park at Franklin in the first decade of the twentieth century. With such a solid and coherent memory of the battle’s significance, the chances to establish a National Military Park at Franklin were never greater than they were during this period. Unfortunately, the united front the battle’s veterans constructed failed to make Franklin important in the eyes of other important people. With the exception of a few key battles, historians, legislators, and other veterans still failed to see many western battles as significant and Congress continued their refusal to fund a national park for Franklin.

Veterans were not the only ones fighting to perpetuate the memory of Franklin. Civilians likewise called for a national park at Franklin and permeated their arguments with reconciliation. Among the non-veterans supporting a National Military Park for Franklin was Thomas Chalmers Harbaugh, a well-known poet, novelist, historian, and political writer from Casstown, Ohio, who had frequented many Civil War battlefields. Harbaugh forcefully argued for a national park that would solidify the memory of the battle and commemorate the valor of

²¹ “General Schofield Favored Monument at Franklin,” *Confederate Veteran*, Vol. XVI, 1908. 555.

the veterans of both sides who fought there. Writing to the *Confederate Veteran*, Harbaugh stated, “It has been my fortune to visit nearly all the great battlefields of the great war, and among them all there is none that so impresses me as the field of Franklin. This is not so much on account of its natural beauty as for the valor displayed there by the veterans of both sides, who there covered themselves with imperishable glory.” The author also questioned why nothing had ever been done to map or memorialize the Franklin battlefield, adding, “It deserves monuments upon which should be inscribed the deeds of the men who fought there, that coming generations visiting this spot could read the lines dedicated to American valor.” Harbaugh thought it a “crying shame” that Franklin had not been commemorated.²²

Harbaugh continued advocating preservation of the battlefields at Franklin. He argued, “There is no more historic structure in our country today than the Carter House. A mighty memorial should rise where it stands, a memorial dedicated to the heroes of both armies who met on that ill-fated field, hand to hand, bayonet to bayonet, each struggling in the autumn dusk like Titans for the ascendancy.” Harbaugh stated that a “memorial shaft” should be erected at Franklin before the last veterans joined the “‘universal bivouac’, and none would be left to attend the dedication of a monument to their valor at Franklin.” Harbaugh then closed his letter with the admonishment, “Kentucky has erected at Chickamauga a monument to all her sons who fought there. Let Tennessee or the general government do the same at Franklin.”²³

While Harbaugh urged action to preserve the battlefield and to solidify Franklin’s memory, unintentionally, he revealed one of the major problems contributing to a fractured

²²T.C. Harbaugh, “The Battlefield of Franklin,” *Confederate Veteran*, Vol. XVI, 1908. 555; Judy Deeter, “The Poet from Casstown,” <http://mchistorical.blogspot.com/2011/04/poet-from-casstown.html>. July 5, 2013.

²³ *Ibid.*

memory of the battle. He remarked, “It was not an epoch-making battle like Gettysburg or Chickamauga, but it stands out as a field of individual heroism above the many conflicts of the sixties.” Unfortunately, most Americans did not feel this heroism made Franklin worth remembering.²⁴

In 1908, Harbaugh wrote *The National Tribune* after recently returning from another visit to the Franklin battlefield. He described to his readers the changes taking place around the battlefield, noting that the famous Carter Cotton Gin was gone. The Carter House still stood, however, and little development had taken place near the earthworks. Surprisingly, some efforts had even led to a crude marking of the sites where Confederate Generals Cleburne and Adams died leading their men against the Federal breastworks.²⁵

Harbaugh, however, expressed frustration that the federal government had not made Franklin a national park. He stated, “I cannot see why the National Government has taken no steps toward marking the battlefield of Franklin.” Alluding to General “Stonewall” Jackson’s final words, he hoped such steps would take place before the last of Franklin’s veterans, “passed over to rest ‘in the shade of the trees.’” He argued, “The cost would not be great, as not much land would have to be secured and I understand that the necessary area could be purchased at no exorbitant figure. It is the desire of every Franklin participant whom I met to have the field marked.” Finally, Harbaugh impatiently told his readers, “Other battlefields of no more importance than Franklin have been tableted, and it should not be left unmarked. I understand

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ T.C. Harbaugh, “The Battlefield of Franklin: It Should Be Made a National Park,” *The National Tribune*, November 26, 1908. 2.

that a movement is on foot looking to the proper marking of this place, but it must be pressed before it is too late.”²⁶

In Franklin, many locals actively lobbied for a National Military Park. Significantly, women were among the most vocal supporters lobbying for such a park. These women substantially contributed to the effort for the park and the effort to perpetuate memory of the Battle of Franklin. In this work, women belonging to various battlefield associations and organizations such as the United Daughters of the Confederacy not only worked to further their practical goals of promoting the Lost Cause and perpetuating a Confederate memory of the war but also used these commemorative roles to pursue political ends. Most importantly, they managed to pursue these goals all while fitting well within the limits of their prescribed nineteenth century gender roles. These women contributed in a way that former Confederate soldiers could not. As historian Caroline Janney has noted, “Because women, and not ex-Confederate soldiers, directed early memorialization efforts, white Southerners hoped that Northerners would perceive their work as less politically motivated and threatening.”²⁷ In fact, encouraged one another to support the leading role women were playing and even coordinated their calls for a national park with female leaders.

One of the most active women in championing for a national park at Franklin was Susie Gentry, the recording secretary for Franklin’s chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy and a member of several other historical and patriotic organizations. Gentry and the

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Caroline E. Janney, *Burying The Dead But Not The Past: Ladies’ Memorial Associations and the Lost Cause*. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008). 5-6. Janney addresses the role of Ladies’ Memorial Associations in Virginia that helped create and perpetuate a Confederate memory of the war through their commemorative acts. This model also works well for examining the roles women’s organizations played in perpetuating the memory of Franklin and Nashville.

other daughters' involvement with the crusade to establish a national park at Franklin might have begun with a prompt from Nelson W. Evans of Portsmouth, Ohio in April 1900. Evans, a local author, asked Gentry if she and her organization would like to see Franklin become a national park. Evans explained that this was impossible with the Nashville battlefield due to the substantial development that had already consumed it but informed Gentry that, "Atlanta is moving everything to have a National Park, and the Secretary of War had recommended one at Fredericksburg." Evans still saw the possibility of establishing such a park at Franklin. Offering to use his influence, Evans hoped Gentry and the UDC ladies could gain the support of Tennessee legislators in Washington while Evans told Gentry he would endeavor to gain the support of his Ohio congressmen and senators. Evans also informed Gentry that he knew Cornelius Cadle, chairman of the Shiloh National Military Park Commission and cautioned her that land owners should not ask too much for the land required or "it would probably interfere with the desired act."²⁸

Gentry evidently acted on Evan's advice and contacted one of Tennessee's congressmen. On February 24, 1902, she received a reply from Congressman L.P. Padgett of Columbia, Tennessee. Padgett assured her that he was "in hearty sympathy with the movement to establish a National Military Park on the Battle Field of Franklin." The Tennessee Congressman had already made impressive strides toward this end, telling Gentry he had already introduced a bill in the House of Representatives and had been corresponding with other "representative citizens relative to the matter."²⁹

²⁸ Nelson W. Evans to Susie Gentry. April 5, 1900, Vertical File, Susie Gentry Collection, Civil War Folder, Williamson County Archives, Franklin, TN.

²⁹ Ibid, L.P. Padgett to Susie Gentry. February 24, 1902.

Susie Gentry's involvement did not stop with Evan's proposal. In December 1902, W.J. Whitthorne wrote Gentry informing her that Frank H. Smith, of Columbia, Tennessee, and proprietor of Columbia Brick Works had offered to donate one thousand painted boards to mark the locations of Confederate units at various points during the battle. Whitthorne told Gentry, "I could not think of anyone who would take more interest in this suggestion than yourself or one through whom Confederate soldiers would prefer having their deeds commemorated." Significantly, this revealed a fracture in the memory of the battle as Whitthorne made no mention of marking the positions of Federal soldiers.³⁰

Several weeks later, Smith himself wrote Gentry about the markers. He noted that the boards were four to five inches wide and three quarters of an inch thick. Smith suggested the markers appear the following ways:

General PR Cleburne's Div.

4 P.M. Nov 30 1864

Gen P.R. Cleburne

Killed Nov 30 __ P.M.

Smith added that the boards "should be nailed to locust or cedar posts, firmly set in the ground, sufficiently high to prevent defacement . . ." He also suggested that "Every extreme point of advance in the separate attacks of the various commands should be marked, and every spot of special interest, Federal or Confederate, such as Headquarters, Hospitals, Batteries, etc." Smith also revealed his hope for the markers. He told Gentry, "At some future day when the genl

³⁰ W.J. Whitthorne to Susie Gentry. December 23, 1902, Vertical File, UDC Folder, Williamson County Archives.

gov't or the State wish to mark these positions of troops, these temporary boards that I have been waiting to put up for so long a time will enable the more durable records to be more accurately placed after present sources of information have passed away." Smith contended "Posterity loves Detail" and with his generous contribution, worked toward providing as many details as possible to future generations.³¹

Smith's letter also reveals several substantial aspects regarding the memory of the Battle of Franklin. First, his letter stands in sharp contrast to the letter that Whitthorne wrote Susie Gentry. Whitthorne only mentioned marking Confederate positions while Smith's plan allowed for the marking of significant Federal and Confederate landmarks. Secondly, Smith's letter reveals that he was aware of the significance of memory and wanted markers placed to perpetuate it before that opportunity eroded with the passing of Franklin's remaining veterans. Moreover, it is also significant that Smith foresaw an opportunity to preserve the memory of Franklin and the battlefield in order to assist what he considered the eventual state or federal effort to maintain and preserve the battlefield. Significantly, he recognized that memory of the battle would continue fading as the years passed. Erecting markers immediately would allow the Federal government to accurately place more suitable markers at a later date. Finally, Smith did not arbitrarily provide an example for how the markers would look when he suggested their format and content to Gentry. He clearly saw Confederate general Patrick Cleburne's unit and death as the most important aspect of the battle. Unfortunately, Smith seems to have been one of the relatively few people who saw Franklin's memory and preservation as worthwhile endeavors.

Although it is unclear if Gentry and the Franklin Chapter ever erected the markers, at one point they indicated they intended to accept the markers and place them on the battlefield. In

³¹ Ibid, Frank H. Smith to Susie Gentry. February 6, 1903.

May 1906, Tennie Pinkerton Dozier, a member of the Franklin UDC chapter and chairman of its National Park Committee, made a report to the annual convention of the UDC's Tennessee Division. Dozier reported, "We are still anxious to have the battlefield of Franklin converted into a national park, and are doing all we can to have Congress make an appropriation for the purpose." She recognized Evans and Smith for their interest and generosity and described how the markers donated by Smith,

. . . are to be placed on the battlefield of Franklin at points where the batteries and our regiments were stationed at different hours during the day of battle, November 30, 1864. Our chapter will most gratefully accept the most generous offer, and will be pleased to assist in this work by providing the posts on which the markers are to be placed and learning the correct points at which to place them. All of the property owners have been seen and all will be pleased to have the markers on their land.³²

Dozier's report to the convention interestingly returned to the idea of exclusively marking Confederate positions during the Battle of Franklin. No mention was made of Smith's suggestion to mark both Federal and Confederate positions. Clearly, the Franklin Chapter was willing to accept the help of anybody willing to assist them in the fight for a National Military Park at Franklin. They were obviously, however, more interested in establishing a dominantly Confederate memory of the battle.

Tennie Dozier and the Franklin UDC continued their efforts to have the federal government establish Franklin as a National Military Park. By 1909, however, Dozier had adopted more of a reconciliationist theme in promoting a national park for Franklin. In a letter to the *Confederate Veteran*, Dozier informed the publication's readers that her purpose was to

³² Tennie Pinkerton Dozier UDC Minutes Scrapbook, *Minutes of the Seventh Annual Convention. Tennessee Division, United Daughters of the Confederacy. Held at Clarksville, Tenn., May 6-7, 1903*, The William D. McCain Library, Elm Springs, Columbia, TN.

inform Franklin veterans of both sides that the UDC was “making an earnest effort to perpetuate the valor, courage, and true heroism displayed by them on that fated November 30, 1864. That we may do this we wish to have at Franklin, a national park.”³³ Turning to such a reconciliationist theme not only made Dozier’s case more politically acceptable but also allowed for the existence of a strong Confederate memory.

By 1909, Dozier and the UDC National Park Committee also found themselves accepting the current attitude toward preservation and scaled down their efforts accordingly. She noted, “At one time we desired to have included in this park a greater portion of the battlefield. We shall be happy now to have that portion on the left of the Columbia Pike on which was the old cotton gin and, that part of the Federal breastworks on which Gen. John Adams fell and near which brave Pat Cleburne gave up his life and many others on both sides breathed their last.” Dozier continued to outline her vision for the Franklin National Military Park stating, “On the right of the pike we wish the Carter place, on which still stands the Carter house and the old bullet-riddled smokehouse, which were between the two lines of battle.”³⁴ This scaled-down proposal included only a few acres of the battlefield and was very modest.

To continue making her national park proposal palatable, Dozier continued to stress reconciliationist themes. She added, “We wish to connect these two pieces of ground, hallowed by the blood of brave men, sons of both the North and the South, by a beautiful memorial arch, a monument to the soldiers of 1861-65. We wish not only to tell them of our plans to honor them but also to ask their hearty cooperation in this work.”³⁵ This cooperation was most critical at the

³³ “National Park at Franklin,” *Confederate Veteran*. Vol. XVII. 1909. 136.

³⁴ “Forty-Fifth Anniversary at Franklin” and “National Park for Franklin,” *Confederate Veteran*. Vol. XVIII, 1910. Pg. 15-16.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

federal level. To obtain this support, Dozier called on Franklin's veterans to urge their legislators to vote for a bill to appropriate funds for a national park at Franklin. Like other locals pushing for the park, Dozier realized that time was not on their side telling her readers, "The bill must be introduced soon, before more of these brave men have answered their last roll call." Dozier also attempted to solidify Franklin's memory and noted,

There is certainly no more historic battlefield in Tennessee—nay, in this country—than that of Franklin. No battle was more grandly fought than was Franklin. Charge after charge was made, the men often in hand-to-hand encounter. As fast as one division was shattered and broken another went bravely forward into the very jaws of death, until six Confederate generals lay dead on or near the breastworks and many in the ranks on both sides had laid down their lives for their country.³⁶

Dozier's use of reconciliationist language does not hide that the memory she sought to impose through the Franklin UDC Chapter's National Park Committee was still largely a Confederate narrative. Although Dozier continued waxing poetic and incorporating the language of reconciliation, she never escaped her tendency to stress the central elements of Confederate memory; valor, courage, bravery, and sacrifice.

Mrs. Dozier still sought support for a national park at Franklin into 1910. Vigorously promoting the idea, she constantly discussed the importance of the Battle of Franklin with congressmen and veterans. The *Confederate Veteran* reported on the work of Dozier's committee during the 45th anniversary of the battle, saying, "There is no spot on the American continent more deserving of such distinction to the men of both South and North, and the women of Franklin leave no worthy act unperformed to carry out the project." Dozier addressed those assembled for the anniversary's commemoration activities in the auditorium of the decorated

³⁶ Ibid.

Battle Ground Academy, where she again presented her committee's plan. Speaking on behalf of the Franklin Chapter, UDC, and perhaps in an overly optimistic tone, she stated, "we trust that this long-deferred hope of ours is soon to be realized." Addressing the women in the audience she continued, "As Daughters of the Confederacy, daughters of the South, the deeds of heroism and self-sacrifice that on every battlefield distinguished 'the men who wore the gray' is our heritage, but we feel that the heroism of the men who made the battle of Franklin one of the grandest in the history of this country is peculiarly ours to commemorate." She added, "It is our duty as well as our pleasure to perpetuate the valor displayed by them . . ." ³⁷

Dozier informed the gathered crowd of her continued correspondence with Tennessee legislators, including J.B. Frazier, L.P. Padgett, Robert L. Taylor, John M. Hickey, and N.N. Cox. She had received advice and support from these men and was told that the citizens of Franklin should send supporting resolutions and petitions. Noting the letters of support her chapter had already received, Dozier again pleaded with the audience saying, "Franklin Chapter, UDC, wishes to ask again the most active cooperation of every living man who took part in this battle. Please act at once. If any member of the Committee on Military Affairs . . . is your friend, please urge him to consider it favorably." ³⁸

Despite her zealous work on the Franklin Chapter's National Park Committee, Dozier's attempt to establish the memory of Franklin met significant resistance and ultimately failed. In 1910, Congressman George W. Gordon, a former Confederate general and Franklin veteran, wrote Dozier a very discouraging letter. Although he supported the efforts she made toward a National Military Park for Franklin, Gordon reported that the House Committee on Military

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

Affairs was “not favorably disposed” to appropriate the money requested for the park.” Gordon, also Commander in Chief of the United Confederate Veterans, remarked, “There is growing sentiment in the country that no more military parks should be created and that the commissions created to take charge of the parks already established . . . ought to be abolished because of the expense of the needless offices, which are practically sinecure with a salary of \$3,000 per year . . .”³⁹ Gordon’s standing within Congress and among Confederate veterans was critical to creating a National Military Park at Franklin. His letter to Dozier, however, cast a shadow of impending doom over the effort.

Other Franklin citizens worked to bring a national park to Franklin and to establish a memory of the battle. One of these was Park Marshall, who had been a young boy when the battle occurred. Although Marshall vigorously promoted the National Military Park, his frustration appeared evident in the *Confederate Veteran*, which published his Memorial Day address in Franklin in 1912. He told his listeners, “I have been one of those who have been endeavoring to get the government to map and mark this battlefield. It ought to be done, and the military affairs committee of Congress has seemed to favor it; but certain circumstances have so far prevented action looking to that end. Now, why can’t the people of this vicinity do it themselves, temporarily if need be, if the government continues to delay action?”⁴⁰ Despite calls to have the Federal government in some way officially recognize the battlefield, nothing occurred. Some locals, like Marshall, grew increasingly frustrated at the lack of activity. Sensing

³⁹ Ibid; McDonough and Thomas Connelly, *Five Tragic Hours*, 179;183; Crutchfield and Holladay, *Franklin, Tennessee’s Handsomest Town: A Bicentennial History, 1799-1999*, (Franklin: Hillsboro Press, 1999,) 267.

⁴⁰ Park Marshall, “Memorial Day at Franklin, Tenn. Extracts from Address By Park Marshall, June 3, 1912.” *Confederate Veteran*, Vol. XX, 1912.

that they were missing the limited window of opportunity existing to remember the battle, these sympathetic locals attempted to act on their own to preserve memory of the battle.

Marshall also called attention to more practical aspects concerning the Franklin battlefield. He remarked that, “The places are fading from memory and the aspects being changed by roads, streets, and houses. Strangers come from afar and ask with interest questions about the battlefield which you cannot answer satisfactorily.” To remedy this situation Marshall argued that markers should be placed at the significant landmarks of the battlefield.⁴¹

Park Marshall then pleaded with his audience to put these plans into motion. Admonishing the citizens of Franklin, he told them, “Now, do the one thing lacking and mark these places. Outside of sentiment of the direct motive people respect communities that respect their own history. You have a Commercial Club here. If they should join with the ladies and others . . . they could easily put this through.” Marshall then reiterated the significance of these matters stating, “More persons than you realize come from afar to see this battlefield, and many more would come if these places I have mentioned were well marked and our own people educated by a map and a booklet to better understand them. Such markings are of actual value, and among many other properties are suggestions in the youth which will in time turn the course of many a life to higher and nobler aims.”⁴²To Marshall, marking the battlefield would do much to preserve memory.

Although Marshall failed in this attempt, he continued his efforts throughout the passing years. Despite testifying before Congressional committees about the significance of the Battle of Franklin, Marshall was never able to bring a National Military Park, or even significant

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

government monumentation eluded Franklin. This failure due to fractured memory occurred at both the federal and local level. In 1926, Congressman E.E. Eslick who represented the Franklin district wrote to Marshall who was now serving as Mayor of Franklin and requested the cost of the property where the battle was fought. Marshall replied that the expected cost would run \$872,000. Franklin's council, however, adopted a resolution asking that the federal government not build the national park saying "it would be detrimental to the town on account of the fact that some hundreds of homes of citizens would be taken." Without substantial local support, little hope existed for a Franklin National Military Park and memory of the battle faded even further into the past.⁴³

Time and again over multiple decades, the opportunity existed to protect the battle's memory through preservation and commemoration. When bills were introduced, Congress did nothing. When veterans of the battle sought action, nothing happened. When locals attempted to rally others in the community to do something, nothing happened. Despite the valiant attempts made by some veterans, commanders, civilians, legislators, and locals to perpetuate memory of the battle by establishing a national park at Franklin, this never occurred. Many devoted substantial portion of their lives to accomplishing this goal; all for naught. As the veterans passed in ever increasing numbers, establishing a national park at Franklin became even less of a priority. Franklin citizens concerned themselves with the present rather than remembering the past. In the end, the opportunity to create a Franklin National Military Park had been squandered. Although endless opportunities existed to protect the battlefield in the decades after the battle, none managed to overcome the fractured memory of November 30, 1864.

⁴³ "Civil War Park for Franklin Discuss," *The Review Appeal*. March 4, 1926.

Chapter 4 - A Colossal Failure of Memory:

Just as legislative attempts to make Franklin a national park suffered from the battle's fractured memory, so too did the attempts to establish a National Military Park at Nashville demonstrate the failure to form a coherent memory of that battle. As was the case with Franklin, the 1890s presented the best time for preserving the battlefield at Nashville. Many of the veterans were still alive to help mark the fields and record their activities while Congress was favorably disposed toward funding National Military Parks. Much as it had at Franklin, fiscal conservatism combined with other factors that prevented the preservation of the Nashville battlefield and the perpetuation of its memory.¹

Establishing the memory of Nashville through preservation of the battlefield, however, could only take place within a very narrow window of opportunity. Nashville's population exploded throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. In 1860, Nashville's population was 16,988 but by 1880 that number had climbed to 43,350. By 1900, Nashville's population had skyrocketed to 80,865. Many people, both black and white, moved to the city from rural areas during this period in search of jobs. Nashville led Tennessee's cities in manufacturing and industrial development and its many rail connections made the city a leader in food processing and shipment, especially flour mills and meat-packing facilities. Urban sprawl began consuming the battlefield driving some local and federal officials toward its protection.²

¹ Timothy B. Smith, "Civil War Battlefield Preservation in Tennessee: A Nashville National Military Park Case Study." *The Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, vol. 64, no. 3 (2005): 236-247.

² Don H. Doyle, *Nashville in the New South: 1880-1930*, (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1985.) 235; Paul H. Bergeron, Stephen V. Ash, Jeanette Keith, *Tennesseans and Their History*, (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1999). 189.

Many locals not only supported the idea but contributed substantially to make it a reality. One such group was the Nashville Battlefield Association, first organized in 1909. The association was instrumental in bringing the plight of the Nashville battlefield to the attention of Congress and their action ultimately resulted in the introduction of H.R. 6179 and the testimony of Park Marshall and Sumner Cunningham before the House Committee on Military Affairs.

Advertising the newly formed group in the *Confederate Veteran*, Park Marshall argued that Nashville was “the decisive battle of the great War between the States” and that “For four eventful years the brave and chivalrous Army of Tennessee defended the territory lying between Virginia and the Carolinas . . .” Recounting some of their famous campaigns, including the “unfortunate battle of Franklin,” Marshall, in typical language of the Lost Cause, said of the Battle of Nashville, “It was certainly a momentous cast, and the Confederacy lost—lost, as one may say, through sheer exhaustion. The remnants, though still later fighting bravely in North Carolina, were really fighting without reasonable hope other than honor. This is why Nashville may be deemed the decisive battle, if any one was such in the war.”³ To Marshall, the Nashville battlefield needed to become a national park due to the decisive nature of the battle.

The association sought to make the park a viable option and politically palatable to Congress by appealing to their interest in a low cost project with few expensive maintenance considerations. The advertisement reiterated an earlier sentiment expressed in *Confederate Veteran* upon the formation of the Nashville Battlefield Association, “The land upon which the battle of Nashville was fought is far too valuable for an extended park, but it is desired that a national park shall be made out of some central or otherwise important part of the field, that driveways be opened and built so as to properly connect the system of roads, and that all chief

³ Park Marshall, “Nashville Battlefield Merits Attention” *Confederate Veteran*, 1909. 221.

points be durably marked. It is expected that different State organizations may erect handsome commemorative monuments.”⁴

Justifying such a proposal, the Nashville Battlefield Association added, “The battle of Nashville was the decisive battle of the war, as it practically destroyed the army which for four years had defended the west and rear of Lee. This is in no sense to celebrate the defeat. Many feats of heroism were exhibited in this last important struggle. It is the history of the battle at our doors that we wish to preserve.” Moreover, the association hoped to increase its base of support by accepting any interested person of legal age who paid the five dollar membership fee, whether or not they were from Tennessee. A similar advertisement also appeared in *The National Tribune*. The advertisement also made special note that “Ladies will be received into membership.”⁵

Arguing the Battle of Nashville’s significance on behalf of the Nashville Battlefield Association in the *Confederate Veteran*, Marshall remarked, “Nashville was a battlefield of more real interest than many others whereon larger armies contended and more men were lost.” He also recognized that “The markings that now in many places still attest to the struggles of forty-four years ago may still be traced,” and he called on readers to see that this occurred “before obliteration.” Because of Nashville’s significance, Marshall contended, “the government should the more readily do the work suggested by this association.” To Marshall, the Nashville battlefield was unique and most deserving of federal recognition.⁶

⁴ “Nashville Battlefield Association,” *Confederate Veteran*, vol. , 1909, 53.

⁵ *Ibid*; *The National Tribune*, March 10, 1910. Pg. 3.

⁶ Nashville Battlefield Merits Attention.

Originally desiring “a centrally located park of fifty to one hundred acres,” A statement Secretary of War William Howard Taft made to a Missouri Battlefield Association noting that the federal government had spent \$3 million on battlefield parks and not disposed to make further expenditures convinced the Nashville Battlefield Association to scale down their proposal considerably. Marshall and the Nashville Battlefield Association changed their plan to appeal to the fiscal conservatives in Congress. Informing readers of *Confederate Veteran* of the new developments, Marshall said that “anything like a twelve hundred or two thousand acres would be inadvisable.” He reported, “. . . the Association [is] not now asking for a park at all; but they do ask that a survey and a map of the battlefield be made by the government and that durable markers be placed at the important points and that certain driveways be constructed connecting with the present roads.” He assured his readers that, “A bill to this end has been prepared and will probably be introduced by Hon. Joseph W. Byrns, M.C. The cost will not be heavy for roads and markers and survey, and Congress should pass the act.”⁷

Though their modified proposal to Congress only included surveying, marking, and building roads at Nashville, The Nashville Battlefield Association held much grander, ambitious goals. The organization’s members also dreamed of creating a boulevard that would connect the Nashville National Cemetery with the Nashville battlefield then “on to Franklin . . . as patriotic men and women have determined that these important historic matters shall no longer remain dormant.” It was important to move quickly, however, as “The lines of the battle of Nashville could be quite accurately marked now, but in a few years those who remember the locations will not be accessible for historic work.” If Congress did not act soon on the bill, some of Nashville’s

⁷ Ibid

“most prominent citizens” had contemplated supplementing any government effort to purchase parts of the battlefield and acquiring additional markers.⁸

The Nashville Battlefield Association worked closely with the Nashville Board of Trade (also known as the Nashville Industrial Bureau and the Chamber of Commerce. As early as 1909, the organization considered “the subject of marking noted places on the battlefield.” The Nashville Board of Trade and the Nashville Battlefield Association shared many of the same members, including Governor James D. Porter, Major Wilbur Foster, and Park Marshall. One Nashville lady said, “The time has come in the development of our country when all realize that we must preserve our historical places which will more and more become points of attraction to tourists, as Bunker Hill at Boston and Chickamauga at Chattanooga. Appreciating this fact, the Chamber of Commerce of Nashville some years ago appointed a committee to locate the most important points of the great battle which was fought here in 1864.” Significantly, the Nashville Board of Trade supported the creation of a national park at Nashville because of its potential economic benefit. More importantly, they had already taken steps to mark the battlefield.⁹

In January 1910, Congressman Joseph W. Byrns of Tennessee introduced H.R. 6179 before the 61st Congress. The bill directed the Secretary of War to examine the battlefield at Nashville and “to locate and determine as near as possible the positions held by the different corps, divisions, and brigades of both armies on and near said battlefield . . .” Moreover, the bill directed the Secretary to map the battlefield showing troop positions, roads, residences, and landmarks both as they existed at the time of the battle and the way they currently lay. Finally,

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ “Hood’s Tennessee Campaign: Attention of Government Officials Solicited” *Confederate Veteran*, Vol. XVII, 1909. 13; Mrs. James E. Caldwell, unidentified newspaper article in scrapbook, The Mrs. James E. Caldwell Scrapbook, Tennessee State Library and Archives; “Maj. Foster Is Placed On Battle Committee,” Ibid.

the bill appropriated \$10,000 for the surveying, mapping, and marking of the battlefield as well as the construction of necessary roads and driveways. The House referred the bill to its Committee on Military Affairs and, shortly afterward, Senator Robert Love Taylor of Tennessee introduced a similar bill in the Senate.¹⁰

Later that month, The *Confederate Veteran* reported that the Nashville Battlefield Association had met recently and “there was manifest much zeal for carrying forward with the movement.” Among the attendants was Congressman Joseph Byrns, who had recently introduced H.R. 6179. The magazine also informed readers that members of the Nashville Battlefield Association had sought the support and cooperation of other prominent officials for Byrns’s bill, including General Grenville Dodge and Major General Frederick D. Grant, son of General Ulysses S. Grant. Dodge, a Union general during the Civil War, and later chief engineer of the Union Pacific Railroad, supported efforts that hoped to bring something resembling a national park to Nashville. Writing to the Nashville Battlefield Association in 1910, Dodge doubted if the efforts could “get it through, as Congress has taken the position that it will make no more national parks.” Dodge did, however, have a plan to overcome some of the reasons for Congress’s disapproval. He remarked, “The War Department has recommended that roads be built though these battlefields and tablets set up along the roads. I think if you would add to the bill that these roads should be maintained after they are laid out and built by either the State or city of Nashville you would have a very good show of getting it passed. Grant also enthusiastically supported the bill saying, “Of course I think an authentic map should be in existence of that great battle, and have always supposed that one existed . . . the sooner the

¹⁰ *Congressional Record*, 61st Congress, 1st Session; H.R. 6179 and S. 3711; United States Government, “Hearing Before The Committee on Military Affairs, House of Representatives on H.R. 6179 to Locate, Map, and Mark Field of Battle Fought Near Nashville, Tenn., December 15 and 16, 1864; To Construct Driveways, Etc.; And Make An Appropriation For Same.” Government Printing Office, 1910.

government gives the money for the purpose the better, so that the historic points can be established before the soldiers who participated in that action have passed away.”¹¹

Byrns arranged for a hearing on the bill before the House Committee on Military Affairs, which convened on the morning of April 7, 1910. In their testimony, several witnesses sought to solidify the memory of the Battle of Nashville. One of these witnesses was Park Marshall, a Tennessee native and member of the Nashville Battlefield Association who had also lobbied and labored extensively for a National Military Park at Franklin. Appealing to the congressmen’s fiscal conservatism, Marshall told the committee that Nashville’s citizens would be “liberal and generous” in the venture. He noted that these citizens would do the work of creating a park themselves but “For the Government to mark it will give it a dignity and credit that would not be possessed by the work otherwise.” Without the legitimacy of the federal government’s support of the project, Marshall worried, “it would be subject to more or less criticism, as that we had not marked it as it should be, or that we had given more credit to one participant than to another. . . . So we desire the United States to so mark this battlefield.” Marshall justified the federal government’s role by calling Nashville “the decisive battle” of the Civil War, and arguing that Hood’s defeat before the city opened Lee’s rear in Virginia and led to his eventual defeat.¹²

Significantly, however, Marshall understood the current political climate regarding the establishment of battlefields as National Military Parks. Hoping to make his cause politically palatable and affordable for Congress, Marshall argued, “We do not want to make this a park. We fully understand that the United States Government has adopted the policy of creating no more parks; they are too expensive, and so many demands would be made on the Government.”

¹¹ “Nashville Battlefield Association: Movement to Establish Boulevards and Markers” *Confederate Veteran*, Vol. XVIII, 1910. 14-15.

¹² “Hearing Before The Committee on Military Affairs, House of Representatives on H.R. 6179”

Marshall further elaborated on the difficulties involved in a park at Nashville. He believed “it would not really be desirable to make a large park there, because the land is desirable and valuable for building sites and for farming, and it would be hardly right; in view of its great utility for other purposes.” Whether it was called a park or not, Marshall’s testimony before the committee clearly revealed his desire to preserve the battlefield and the memory of the battle.¹³

Marshall also indicated the practical aspects of and the need for federal involvement on the Nashville battlefield. Responding to a question from Congressman Isaac R. Sherwood, himself a veteran of Nashville, Marshall noted:

On several days we examined this battlefield and it was with the greatest difficulty that we could locate some of the exact places where the battle was fought. At other places the works are still distinct. Looking at the map I have here, one acquainted with the places marked here will see that there is a fertilizer works which has destroyed the place where General Steedman and General Corbin and General Grosvenor and General Shafter all together attacked Cheatham’s right wing, on December 15. There is a company that has bought up all of the land just west of that point and built houses all over it. Then, across the Nolensville Pike there is what is called the Grand View Heights, a suburb, where they are building houses, and they have wiped these breastworks out. Over on the Hillsboro side where General Wood attacked General Stewart, there is the Belmont Heights addition, and I think the memory of these places ought to be preserved now, while it can be, and while the places can be known. We propose to assist you in finding these points and getting this ground and making all arrangements satisfactory.¹⁴

Finally, responding to another question, Marshall continued making his case before the committee. Arguing for the necessity of federally funded roads on the battlefield, Marshall said “There is not much travel through there. People come there from the North to see the battlefield, and also from the South, . . . , and they say, ‘We want to see the battlefield,’ and the citizens of Nashville cannot find that battlefield; and those who fought in the battle and were looking for

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Ibid

these places had great difficulty in deciding where they were.” Marshall remarked that citizens “going about their ordinary business” rarely crossed parts of the battlefield. This resulted in few county roads in the area, making the battlefield difficult to find. He indicated that the construction of roads by the federal government could assist visitors making their way to the battlefield. ¹⁵

Another witness testifying before the committee in support of the bill was Sumner A. Cunningham, editor of the *Confederate Veteran* and a veteran of Franklin and Nashville; who was active in efforts to establish national parks at both battlefields. Cunningham testified that, “The battles of Nashville and Franklin and Murfreesboro were of so great consequence that it is grievous to feel that the lines on those battlefields are being obliterated.” Cunningham repeated Marshall’s plan for the federal government to legitimize local efforts. Though there was already a local woman willing to buy “a number of acres, the most delightful place on the battlefield, for a monument,” local preservationist needed “the strength and the dignity of government control of the premises.” Cunningham recognized that Congress was “not in much spirit” for funding road building and the acquisition of park lands. He and other Federal veterans, however, still pleaded for marking these battlefields as soon as it can be done, and . . . , to give us something and take that sort of charge of it which will give it the dignity of having government control.”¹⁶

Those who testified all stressed the imperative of acting immediately to preserve the battlefield. Development in Nashville was beginning to destroy the battlefield and the ranks of the battle’s veterans dwindled rapidly. W.V. Cox, whose father had served as a Federal quartermaster who served at Nashville during the war, supported the testimony of Marshall and

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Ibid.

Cunningham. Cox told the committee, “I went over this ground when I was sent there, in 1906 and 1907 . . . We went to these principal points I have spoken of [Fort Negley and Fort Gillem], and to me it seemed a great misfortune to find that the most important ones, at least, were being leveled to the earth.” Washington Gardner, a Michigan congressman and federal Civil War veteran pointed at Isaac Sherwood and noted, “he is well on toward 80 years of age. General Grosvenor is 77 years of age . . . Here is Colonel Porter, 81 years old. These general officers, staff officers, and field officers are far advanced in life. They were on the field, and they understand it thoroughly. Boys like Cunningham and I, you fellows who were in the ranks, do not know much about the battlefield in general; about the locations; but the field officers and the staff officers do know.” Gardner then pleaded, “The marking ought to be made while these men live, not five, ten, or fifteen years from now, when they are gone.” Between them, they all stressed the urgency of acting quickly to save the battlefield.¹⁷

Most of the witnesses testifying before the committee indicated their hope that the federal government would map and mark not just Nashville but several Tennessee battlefields, including Franklin and Murfreesboro. Sumner Cunningham and Isaac Sherwood were especially vocal about this. Though Gardner supported Sherwood, Cunningham, and Marshall in the effort to have the federal government map and mark Franklin, Nashville, and Murfreesboro, he opposed the building of roads on the battlefield by the federal government, believing those tasks properly belonged to state and local governments.¹⁸

Another article about the activities of the Nashville Battlefield Association appeared in *Confederate Veteran* later in 1910. Referring to the hearing of H.R. 6179 before the House

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

Committee on Military Affairs, it reported that, “patriotic citizens of Nashville who organized the Nashville Battlefield Association are pressing the passage of a bill to secure accurate maps and markers, and sent a committee of two members—S.A. Cunningham, Vice President, Mr. Park Marshall, the Historian—to the capital to appear before the Committee on Military Affairs in a plea that ten thousand dollars . . . be made subject to the order of the Secretary of War in having accurate maps of and suitable markers placed on the battlefield.” The article also included the transcript of the hearing for its readers adding, “These gentlemen realize fully the importance of prompt action by Congress. It has been delayed already decades too long.”¹⁹

Despite the efforts of Sherwood, Garner, Grosvenor, Cunningham, and Dodge, many Federal veterans of Nashville simply remained content discussing, debating, and remembering the Battle of Nashville in the pages of the *National Tribune*. These men frequently wrote under the guise of Cause Victorious language, where they praised the significance of the victory to the Union cause and simultaneously extolled the decisiveness of the battle and the heroic virtues of its commander. Nearly all heaped praise upon the Federal commander, General George Thomas. A.E. Glanville, a veteran of the 10th Minnesota, who wrote, “Twenty-two years have passed since the battle of Nashville, one of the heaviest blows dealt the Confederacy during the noble year of 1864. It was not great like Gettysburg in the vast armies engage or the number of the slain; or, as at Stone[s] River, where “Greek met Greek,” and in mortal combat forced each other into mutual respect.” Glanville continued, “But it was great for substantial, glorious victory over a veteran army, so complete that it was never heard from again. Each move was made with such

¹⁹ “Marking Battlefield of Nashville: A Bill Before Congress Discussed in Committee” *Confederate Veteran*, Vol. XVIII, 1910. 281-284.

system and energy under a well devised plan that no regrets were heard then or since for opportunities lost or vain sacrifice of life. All honor to Gen. Thomas!”²⁰

Y.S.C. Miles, a veteran of the 8th Wisconsin, asked, “If what the rebel Generals told us at the dedication of the Chickamauga battlefield was true, that the battle of Chickamauga was the beginning of the end, what can we say of the battle of Nashville?” Miles states, “When the history of the Army of the Cumberland shall have been correctly written, the record of Gen. Geo. Thomas will need no defense at the hand of any living person. He was the solid phalanx at Stone[s] River, the Rock of Chickamauga, the central pivot of the Atlanta Campaign, and the avalanche at Nashville.”²¹

Fred Chamberlain, veteran of the Chicago Board of Trade Battery noted, “I think the battle of Nashville was one of the most decisive battles of the war.” Another veteran remarked, “. . . it was the only instance in the war where a battle was carefully planned and fought from start to finish as planned . . .” Although the battle clearly resonated with Federal veterans of Nashville, few of them specifically called for a national park there.²²

Confederate veterans, on the other hand, found little to say about the Battle of Nashville. Although a few soldiers recounted their experiences during the battle in *Confederate Veteran*, only a handful argued for the establishment of a national park there. Most Confederate veterans simply shared some of their observations about things that had occurred during the battle. With very few exceptions, Confederate veterans of Nashville found little worth remembering in such a colossal defeat and certainly nothing resembling a National Military Park at Nashville. The calls

²⁰ *The National Tribune*, July 8, 1886, 1.

²¹ *Ibid*, July 26, 1894.

²² *Ibid*, August 18, 1910. Pg. 3.

of those advocating preservation of the Nashville battlefield and before the House committee fell on deaf ears. H.R. 6179 died in the House Committee on Military Affairs and never became law. Sadly, while Congress refused to act on behalf of the battlefield, memory of the event withered on the vine.

After the defeat of H.R. 6179, many local organizations continued pushing for preservation of the Nashville battlefield without the aid of the federal government. Working jointly, the Nashville Battlefield Association and the Nashville Board of Trade had managed to erect twenty markers in 1912. These markers largely concentrated on troop positions of the first day of the battle and other fortifications around the city, such as Fort Negley, Fort Morton, Fort Casino, and Redoubt No. 1. After the failure of the federal government to establish a national park at Nashville by passing H.R. 6179 in 1910, these markers signified the only thing perpetuating memory of the battle and attempting to preserve its sites.²³

Another organization dedicated to preserving the Nashville battlefield and perpetuating its memory was the Ladies Battlefield Association (also known as the Ladies Battlefield Memorial Association and Ladies Battlefield Park Association), which formed in 1913. Mrs. James E. Caldwell, the association's president, suggested to her husband the acquisition of a three to four acre plot that had recently been cut off by the Nashville-Franklin interurban track and happened "to be part of the battle line and the very place where General Stephen D. Lee's forces were stationed." She felt the property should be obtained, a park created, and a monument erected. James Caldwell, who was a member of the Nashville Battlefield Association, took the

²³ Paul H. Beasley, *A Directory of Nashville and Davidson County Historical Markers*, 16.

suggestion to the association who purchased the land, along with the Nashville Industrial Bureau, and turned it over to the Ladies Battlefield Association.²⁴

Like the Nashville Battlefield Association, this organization held many ambitious plans for Nashville. In May 1913, Caldwell, the sister of a Confederate officer, wrote the Nashville Park Commission outlining her proposal. She also wrote to her legislators in Washington “with the hope that they might interest the national government in preserving these interesting relics of the Battle of Nashville . . .” In addition to a monument commemorating the battle, the plan included a restoration of Fort Negley “on its original lines” and also adopted an earlier proposal for a boulevard connecting historical sites. Reflecting on these plans in 1927, Caldwell explained that they envisioned the extension “of Capitol Boulevard through South Nashville to the fort and connecting with it such places of interest as the old city cemetery, South Field, where General Jackson reviewed his troops, and Reservoir Park.” The project, she also argued, would eliminate one of the city’s more run-down areas and improve the surrounding neighborhood, increasing property values in the area. According to Mrs. Caldwell, “Such a boulevard would form the structural backbone of the city—a Champs Elysees, if you please –with our Capitol at one end and Fort Negley at the other. It should be planned with the idea that its vista must never be disturbed and everything in connection with it should be carried out in an artistic way, for everyone who enters our city will cross it, thus being able to see it without having to make a pilgrimage, as they do in so many other places of interest.”²⁵

²⁴ Unknown newspaper article in Mrs. James E. Caldwell Scrapbook, TSLA; “Battlefield Monument to be dedicated this month” *Nashville Tennessean*, October 3, 1926; “Battle of Nashville is more than ordinary interest” *Nashville Tennessean*, October 3, 1926; “Communications; Battlefield of Nashville” *Nashville Tennessean*, June 11, 1927.

²⁵ “Communications; The Battlefield of Nashville”

The Ladies immediately began raising money for their ambitious proposal and increasing their membership. One fundraising event included hosting an historical ball held in Nashville's Maxwell House Hotel on April 16, 1914. The *Nashville Tennessean*, giving advance press to the event noted, "The Historical Ball to be given at the Maxwell House on April 16 to start a fund to be used for the erection of a monument to the Battle of Nashville should receive the support of every one as it is but the beginning of the preservation of our battlefield interest for park purposes." Although a successful event, the ball, as well as other fundraising efforts and plans, were soon brought to a screeching halt with the outbreak of World War I. Mrs. Caldwell never imagined that she would see another war after the Civil War and remarked, ". . . these efforts for the preservation of our important historical interests of the Civil War were ended in the serious thought of the distress and approaching destruction of our young manhood which we realized would be caused by the World War." Women of the Ladies Battlefield Association refocused their efforts away from battlefield preservation, busying themselves "in various kinds of war work."²⁶

In 1921, the association resumed its activities with a fundraising pageant on the lawn of Mrs. Caldwell's home, Longview. A subsequent meeting took place at the home of Mrs. Rogers Caldwell where plans for the Battle of Nashville Memorial were presented and over \$1,000 were raised through donations. The organization also received funding from the State of Tennessee and Davidson County.²⁷

²⁶ "When Knighthood Was in Flower at the Old Maxwell" *Nashville Tennessean*, March 29, 1914; Unknown newspaper article in Mrs. James E. Caldwell scrapbook; "Battlefield Monument to be dedicate this month"; "Communications; Battlefield of Nashville"

²⁷ "Battlefield monument to be dedicated this month" *Nashville Tennessean*, 3 October, 1926.

On June 28, 1924, Mrs. James E. Caldwell informed John Trotwood Moore, State Librarian, of the association's plans for the Battle of Nashville Monument and enlisted his support in fundraising. She told him, "The Ladies Battlefield Association of this city has decided that the battle of Nashville, one of the important engagements of the Civil War, must be commemorated by a Great Memorial for which a very beautiful design has been made by Mr. G. Moretti, a noted Italian sculptor." Caldwell enclosed a picture of Moretti's design, a shaft topped by a sculpture of two running horses restrained by a younger male figure, and told him that funding for the monument was to be raised through "popular contributions." She added, "The Association has a Memory Book in which will be put the names of the Soldiers who took part in this battle and also those who subscribe in their memory. This book will be put in the cornerstone of the monument."²⁸

Moore in turn sent a description of the monument to Congressman Isaac Sherwood, a veteran of the battle. He told Sherwood that if the federal government could appropriate \$10,000 and the city of Nashville contributed \$10,000 more, "it would be a happy culmination." Hoping to coordinate funding for the monument with a bill for markers at Franklin, Moore noted, "it would complete the entire program." Praising the work of "some patriotic ladies of Nashville," he described Moretti's design as "the most beautiful monument I have yet seen," which would be a fitting memorial to the Battle of Nashville, "as the high water mark of the Confederacy."²⁹

The experience of the United States in World War I also broadened the intention of the Battle of Nashville Monument. In the wake of another destructive conflict, the Ladies Memorial Association reconfigured the message of the memorial to commemorate not only the Battle of

²⁸ The John Trotwood Moore Papers, Box 7, Folder 4. June 28, 1924.

²⁹ Ibid, Box 16, Folder 13. December 29 1924 and January 1, 1925.

Nashville but also the First World War. The spirit of peace and reconciliation emerged in this broadened theme. A Nashville newspaper stated, “The idea of national peace obtained by the war between the states was augmented by a thought of the sacrifice made by the youth of the nation in the international war and its consequent unifying effect.”³⁰ Moretti’s sculpture paid homage to this peace and reconciliation. According to an article in the *Nashville Tennessean* describing the monument’s dedication, design, and symbolism, Moretti’s bronze sculpture “Symbolize North and the South, once separate, but now held together by the younger generation of the World War.” The article also stated that “In the glorified face of the youth and in his magnificently modeled body, he [Moretti] has expressed the idealism and strength of reunited America—the new America in which the South has so completely forgiven the past that it can erect on the scene of a bitter defeat a monument to peace, unity, and brotherhood.”³¹

Dedicated on Armistice Day, November 11, 1926, Colonel Luke Lea, a prominent Tennessean, former senator, and World War I veteran gave the dedication address. Lea noted, “This occasion represents more than the dedication of a monument conceived by love and born of beauty. It represents more than an expression of loyalty to our own heroic dead. It represents more than a sentiment of respect for our fallen foe.” Lea argued the monument “voices a challenge to civilization” in that it was a monument erected as a memorial to Confederate soldiers but also as a sign of respect for their Union foes and conquerors. According to Lea, Tennessee was “voicing a message that should be heard around the world, that a sovereign state

³⁰ Unknown newspaper article. The Mrs. James E. Caldwell Scrapbook, TSLA.

³¹ “Battle of Nashville Monument is more than ordinary interest” *Nashville Tennessean*, 3 October 1926.

is willing, nay desirous, of perpetuating in marble and bronze not alone the heroism and valor of its own beloved soldiers, but those same outstanding characteristics of the soldiers of its foe.”³²

Continuing his theme of reconciliation, Lea linked the spirit of reunion from the Civil War to the Spanish American War and through World War I. He stated, “This monument typifies not only the immortality of the Blue and the Gray in the days of the sixties. It speaks to eternity of the self-sacrifice and courage of the soldiers of Shafter and Miles when our Union again became a bond of patriotism and brotherly love. It will tell to the ages the story of the stirring days of 1917 and 1918, when the Stars and Stripes became recognized throughout the world, the emblem of justice, freedom, and equality.”³³

Finally, Lea remarked that the monument stood as a tribute to womanhood, who taught every lesson to men about “. . . every act of bravery, of self-sacrifice, of loyalty, and of devotion . . .” He concluded, “May this monument, dedicated to our heroic dead of three great wars, ever stand to consecrate the generations of all ages to the principles that inspired the soldiers upon the battlefield of Nashville, to offer their lives for their country.”³⁴

After the failure of HR 6179, Byrns and other congressmen continued introducing bills for a National Military Park at Nashville. Unfortunately, these bills failed to have any more success than did Byrns’s original bill. Perhaps one reason for this lack of support was that the bills introduced after 1910 contained almost exactly the same language and content as the original bill. It also appears likely that the United States’s entry into World War I interrupted attempts to establish a national park at Nashville. Byrns tried to revive the issue after the war by

³² Unknown newspaper article. The Mrs. James E. Caldwell Scrapbook, TSLA.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

introducing another bill in May 1919. This bill, like the other, died an inconspicuous death in the Committees of Military Affairs of the House and Senate. Nine years later, Byrns tried again, introducing H.R. 10291 in the first session of the 70th Congress. Senator Lawrence D. Tyson of Tennessee introduced the same bill to the Senate the following month. The memory of Nashville withered on the vine, it was not dead.³⁵

H.R. 10291, however, represented the last decent chance to perpetuate the memory of Nashville by creating the Fort Negley National Military Park. The bill, containing much of the language from his original bill of 1910, established a three-man commission to “to inspect . . . Fort Negley . . . and to study the available records and historical data with respect to the location and movement of all troops which engaged in the Battle of Nashville . . . with a view of restoring, preserving, and marking said fort for historical and professional military study.” This commission, consisting of an active Army officer of the Corps of Engineers, and a Federal and Confederate veteran of the Civil War, was to submit a report to the Secretary of War that included their recommendation for what land “should be acquired and embraced in a national park,” and the price at which that land could be purchased. Moreover, the bill directed the appointed commissioners to recommend the location of historical tablets, “both within and without the land to be acquired for the park, as they may deem fitting and necessary to clearly designate positions and movements of troops and important events connected with the Battle of Nashville.” Finally, H.R. 10291 authorized states having troops in the battle to enter the park and erect monuments, tablets, and other memorials to their troops, subject to the approval of the

³⁵ Congressional Record, 70th Congress, 1st Session, H.R. 10291 and S. 3257.

Secretary of War. The bill appropriated \$100,000 to establish the commission, purchase the land, and erect battlefield markers.³⁶

As with his 1910 bill, Congressman Byrns arranged a hearing before the House Committee on Military Affairs. The committee convened on the morning of February 2, 1928. The first person to speak before the commission was Mrs. Flora Gillentine, a Nashville citizen and Vice President General of the Daughters of the American Revolution who represented the Ladies Battlefield Association of Nashville. Gillentine then began her statement to the committee.

Gillentine urged the committee to buy Fort Negley, a 50-acre tract of land she said could be purchased for \$25,000. Gillentine stated, “It seems to me, as far as I know, this is an unprecedented thing. This is a group of southern women wanting to restore a national fort.” The efforts of Gillentine’s organization were sparked by local plans to build a night club on the grounds of the fort, which they believed “was desecrating holy ground.” She continued, “if history is authentic and accurate, this was one of the four decisive battles of the Civil War. We feel that this would be a splendid thing to do in this time of disruption, for southern women to make this gesture of restoring a national fort; this is a Union fort. We all know there are many cleavages to-day; there are bolshevists and communists wanting to disrupt the Government, and it seems to me this is a gesture towards solidarity that would have a great effect.” Like many other promoters of a National Military Park, Gillentine’s remarks included a tone of reconciliation.³⁷

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ U.S. Government, National Military Park at Fort Negley On The Battlefield of Nashville, Tenn: Hearing Before The Committee On Military Affairs House of Representatives, Seventieth Congress, First

Gillentine closed her remarks by arguing that establishing the Fort Negley National Military Park was the appropriate realm of the federal government while she assured the Congressmen the \$100,000 appropriation would be used for building roads in and around the proposed park. Her testimony received mixed reviews from the committee. After answering questions about the location and significance of Fort Negley, Congressman Lister Hill of Alabama told Gillentine:

The only thought I had in mind was that there are so many of these bills for old forts and posts that we would all like to see restored and set aside as battle monuments but there is a limit to which we can go. I had a letter in the last few weeks from people in my district, they want to restore and old battle field down there, and I wrote them very frankly and told them there was a limit to which we could go, and we have just reported out the bill for Fort Donelson.

Congressman John Speaks of Ohio then spoke to Gillentine saying, “The attitude of Congress has been very sympathetic and helpful. I think the country is in sympathy with the idea that all these places should be preserved as parks, and so forth. I am in full sympathy with it.” Gillentine, who was also in Washington, D.C. for a meeting of what she described as “For the cause and cure of war,” then faced questions from Speaks about these activities. From this point the situation rapidly deteriorated.³⁸

Gillentine’s advocated that preventing future wars rested in more military preparedness. Speaks remarked, “. . . with all of the nation’s heart praying that God will show the way to peace, universal peace, I am not in sympathy with these organized meetings to advance the idea that we need more preparedness, when we all feel that we have enough preparedness.” Gillentine

Session on H.R. 10291, Statements of Mrs. E. Gillentine, Nashville, Tenn, Hon. Joseph W. Byrns, Representative in Congress From The State of Tennessee, February 2, 1928. United States Government Printing Office, Washington, 1928.

³⁸ Ibid

responded aggressively, “Well, Roosevelt said ‘Talk soft, but take a big stick,’ didn’t he?” Sensing the oncoming disaster, Congressman Byrns moved to end the debate but Congressman William Wright of Georgia ignored him and asked Gillentine another question about Fort Negley. Gillentine responded then the conversation returned to the debate over military preparedness and Speaks thundered back, “The greatest propaganda machine in the world is right down in the War Department. They have got the men, the money, and everything.”³⁹

With this, the committee moved into executive session and adjourned afterward. Although a decent chance existed with this hearing to perpetuate a coherent memory of Nashville by establishing a National Military Park, a few factors combined to derail it. First, the large number of requests that Congress had received to preserve battlefields coupled with the committee’s recent report of the Fort Donelson bill predisposed it to look unfavorably on any more such requests. In the words of one historian, “It seems one reason Nashville died was because Fort Donelson lived.”⁴⁰ Second, Gillentine allowed herself to be drawn into a highly politicized debate with Congressman Speaks that had nothing to do with the bill under consideration by the Committee on Military Affairs. That, combined with her arrogant responses, failed to win Gillentine any points with the House committee. Due to these factors, H.R. 10291 did not survive the committee and never became law. The movement to establish a National Military Park at Nashville had failed and would never again appear before Congress. This failure also doomed the emergence of a coherent memory of the Battle of Nashville.

Although the Ladies Battlefield Association achieved some success in perpetuating the memory of the Battle of Nashville with the erection of the Battle of Nashville Peace Monument,

³⁹Ibid

⁴⁰Ibid; Smith, “Civil War Battlefield Preservation in Tennessee”

their grand vision for a park and the restoration of Fort Negley by the federal government failed, due largely to the testimony of Flora Gillentine, a member of the association. While the issue of a park and restoration of Fort Negley were not dead in the water and emerged again in later years, this failure to gain federal intervention for the effort substantially inhibited perpetuation of the battle's memory. Although there was a monument, the battlefield remained mostly unmarked and preserved. There were no massive historically- oriented boulevards, only the remaining possibility of acquiring a few fragmented acres of the battlefield.

If the federal government was unwilling to act on preserving the Franklin and Nashville battlefields and local groups only succeeded in erecting a single monument, why did the state of Tennessee refuse to act? Between 1900 and 1940, the Tennessee General Assembly failed to introduce a single bill that would preserve the battlefields of Franklin and Nashville. Several reasons may explain this inaction. State officials likely believed that such actions were the proper realm of the federal government. Moreover, the State of Tennessee had fewer resources to devote to establishing and maintaining parks at Franklin and Nashville. Furthermore, the mechanisms that the state needed to launch, coordinate, and achieve preservation of the battlefields did not exist. No state agency existed that could take proper measures to mark and preserve the battlefield. Furthermore, no agency in the state government collected data or recorded pertinent information that would assist later preservation attempts. Nevertheless, the failure of the state to take any action during this period reflected the fractured nature of memory concerning these Tennessee battles.

One organization that could have helped establish a coherent memory of Franklin and Nashville and preserve the battlefields was the Tennessee Historical Society. Established in 1849, its original members organized it “for the purpose of collecting and preserving facts related to the natural, aboriginal, and civil history of the state.” The Civil War interrupted the organization’s operations and it did not return to its home at the Tennessee Capitol building until 1874. Incredibly, the Tennessee Historical Society focused no activity on preserving the state’s battlefields and throughout the 1870s and 1880s largely concerned itself with collecting local and county biographical information. This complete lack of interest in Civil War sites continued in the twentieth century and “From the 1920s through the 1970s, the THS concentrated its efforts on publishing Tennessee history, hosting public lectures, and adding to its collections.”⁴¹

In January 1919, the Tennessee General Assembly established the Tennessee Historical Commission and defined its duties to “collect, compile, index, and arrange all data and information relating to the participation of Tennessee in World War I.” No such duties were ever assigned for the Civil War. The Tennessee Historical Commission did not have responsibility for the supervision of preservation, acquisition of historic sites, and the erection of historical markers until the Tennessee General Assembly made further legislation concerning the commission in 1951, 1959, and 1971. Moreover, the Tennessee General Assembly did not establish the Tennessee Wars Commission until 1994 when they expanded the role of the Tennessee Historical Commission to “coordinate, plan, preserve, and promote structures,

⁴¹ Ann Toplovich, “Tennessee Historical Society,” *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*.

buildings, sites, and battlefields associated with the American Revolution and the War Between the States.”⁴²

Finally, Tennessee had no system of state parks that could preserve the battlefields at Franklin and Nashville and ensure the perpetuation of their memory. In 1925, Tennessee created the State Park and Forestry Commission to begin obtaining land of historical and natural significance but its “contributions to the development of state parks was negligible.” After the creation of the State Park and Forestry Commission, Tennessee did nothing more to develop state parks until the creation of the New Deal Programs. In fact, there was not a single state park in Tennessee until 1937, long after the best conditions for preserving Franklin and Nashville and perpetuating a coherent memory of the battles had passed.⁴³

Memory of the battles of Franklin and Nashville also fragmented due to unforeseen circumstances. These factors included the outbreak of the First World War, the low priority given to the battlefields by the federal government, and the onset of the Great Depression. This fragmentation ensured that any proposal to establish National Military Parks at Franklin and Nashville failed.

One situation helping lead to the fractured memory of Franklin and Nashville and the failure to establish National Military Parks at those sites resulted from the large number of bills introduced in Congress to establish National Military Parks on Civil War battlefields in the aftermath of World War I. In order to manage this inundation of requests, Congress established a preservation policy. They turned to the Secretary of War Dwight Davis who directed Lieutenant

⁴² Herbert L. Harper, “Tennessee Historical Commission,” *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*.

⁴³ Beverly R. Coleman, “A History of State Parks in Tennessee” (Nashville: Tennessee Department of Conservation, 1967), 34.

Colonel C.A. Bach, Chief of the Army War College's Historical Section, to develop a program for studying and classifying America's many battlefields in a logical manner. Bach reviewed past Congressional actions regarding preservation and developed a scheme for "classifying battles according to their importance, and proposed preservation action corresponding to the relative importance of each category."⁴⁴

Bach established two categories for classifying battlefields. Class I included battlefields that were seen as worthy sites for establishing National Military Parks. According to Bach, these battlefields "should be battles of exceptional political and military importance and interest whose effects were far-reaching, whose fields are worthy of preservation for detailed military and historical study, and which are suitable to serve as memorials to the armies engaged." Class I included battlefields such as Gettysburg and Vicksburg⁴⁵

The second category that Bach established included battlefields important enough to erect national monuments on the site. Bach further divided these Class II battlefields into two subcategories. Class IIa battlefields comprised "Battles of such great military and historic interest as to warrant locating and indicating the battle lines of the forces engaged by a series of markers or tablets, but not necessarily by memorial movements." Bach identified battles such as Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville as Class IIa battlefields. Class IIb included the battlefields of Appomattox and Wilson's Creek and Bach noted that this classification was reserved for "Battles of sufficient historic interest to be worthy of some form of monument, tablet, or marker to indicate the location of the battlefield."⁴⁶

⁴⁴Lee, *The Origin and Evolution of the National Military Park Idea*.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Secretary of War Davis approved Bach's plan and Congress incorporated it into the 1926 Act for the Study and Investigation of Battlefields in the United States for Commemorative Purposes. This act authorized Davis to conduct "studies and investigations and, where necessary, surveys of all battlefields within the continental limits of the United States whereon troops of the United States or of the original thirteen colonies have been engaged against a common enemy, with a view to preparing a general plan and such detailed projects as may be required."⁴⁷

The act also directed the Secretary of War to submit an annual report to Congress on the battlefields surveyed. These reports commenced in 1926 and concluded in 1932. In its 1928 report, the Army War College Historical Section classified Franklin as a Iib battlefield and placed Nashville in Class Iia. Furthermore, the report held that Franklin was worthy of commemoration by a single monument on one acre of land. The report estimated the cost of the monument for Franklin at \$40,000 with annual maintenance totaling \$250. Also, the report studied 27 Class Iib battlefields and stated, "It will be noted that the estimated cost of commemoration varies widely. This variation is made because it is felt that distinctions in this class may be fittingly indicated by the type of memorial." While the report found Franklin worthy of a \$40,000 memorial, it recommended a \$100,000 monument for Appomattox. This classification of Franklin and Nashville reflected their low status in the pantheon of American battles. With such a low distinction on a national level, Franklin and Nashville had little hope of becoming National Military Parks. More importantly, the low classification of Franklin and Nashville revealed the fractured nature of memory associated with these battles. Although they

⁴⁷ Ibid.

were important to some, the memory of Franklin and Nashville clearly failed to resonate with the federal government.⁴⁸

The idea of National Military Parks to preserve the nation's most important battlefields picked up steam quickly. After the initial creation of the first parks, congressmen introduced thirty-four more bills in a short three year span. Besides being inundated by the number of such bills, Congress also worried about the expense. Their fears resulted in a radically downsized plan for establishing the remaining battlefields as national parks. Congress would no longer consider the purchase of entire battlefields. Instead they opted for the "Antietam Plan" that purchased narrow strips of land on what they perceived as the most significant portions of each battlefield. Such actions greatly reduced the cost of these parks and the "Antietam Plan" became a standard in battlefield preservation. Battlefields competing to become National Military Parks, such as Franklin and Nashville, suffered from such downsizing and the passing years saw proposals for these sites become smaller and smaller.⁴⁹

The creation and shaping of battlefield memory for these early National Military Parks largely took place while they were being constructed and soon afterward. At Shiloh, D.W. Reed, a veteran of the battle, greatly influenced the park's interpretation for years to come. By concentrating the bulk of his efforts on the portions of the battlefield on which he had fought, such as the Hornet's Nest, Reed made decisions about the battle's significance that shaped its memory. At Chickamauga, H.V. Boynton's actions as the first park superintendent likewise influenced his park's interpretation and design. As a result, both Reed and Boynton became

⁴⁸ Senate Document 187, 70th Congress, 2nd Session.; Ronald Lee, *The Origin and Evolution of the National Military Park Idea*.

⁴⁹ Lee, *The Origin and Evolution of the National Military Park Idea*; Smith, *The Golden Age of Battlefield Preservation*.

instrumental in shaping an early memory of their respective battles that ensured the survival of these sites. Franklin and Nashville, however, experienced no such luck. Failing to ever become National Military Parks, these battlefields never had a staunch advocate to elaborate and shape the finer points of the battles' memory, thereby enabling their long-term protection.⁵⁰

Moreover, the onset of the Great Depression killed any remaining chance Franklin and Nashville had for becoming National Military Parks. In 1930, Congress constructed an omnibus bill to address funding for fifty Class IIB battlefields that included Franklin. According to National Park Service Historian, Ronald Lee, "What then happened is not clear . . . the stock market crash of October 1929 signaled the onset of the Great Depression. It is likely that by May 1930 historic preservation and commemoration had fallen to a much lower national priority in the minds of members of Congress than it had seemed to occupy four years earlier." Although the battlefields at Franklin and Nashville had little chance of becoming National Military Parks before this period, the Great Depression and the failure of the omnibus bill to become law sounded the death knell for any federal action to preserve them. This was a devastating blow to the memory of both battlefields from which it would take generations to recover.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Timothy B. Smith, *This Great Battlefield of Shiloh*, 69; See also *A Chickamauga National Memorial*.

⁵¹ Lee, *The Origin and Evolution of the National Military Park Idea*.

Chapter 5 - Mnemonic Destruction: Franklin, Nashville, and the Politics of Development

“In a certain sense the desecration of this important and historic site is an outrage. From another perspective, however, it may be all too fitting. That one of the ugliest episodes of the most tragic of American wars should be overwhelmed by a greater monument—civilization—is a reminder that war is but a cruel and unacceptable aberration in man’s existence. The ultimate consequence of the Battle of Franklin and a thousand other conflicts—peace in a civilized world—perhaps may be a greater memorial, after all. –Wiley Sword, *The Confederacy’s Last Hurrah*

One of the most divisive factors preventing a coherent memory of the Battles of Franklin and Nashville was the massive residential, industrial, and commercial development that overtook the battlefields in the postwar decades and through the 20th century. Such development not only destroyed the physical spaces and landscapes of the battlefields but also helped obliterate an already fragile historical memory. Although a distinct memory of the battles resurfaced periodically, usually in the forms of preservation and memorialization attempts, such concerns generally gave way to development. Some people, especially in Franklin, tried to check this development but proved largely unsuccessful. As Franklin moved from an economy predominantly based on agriculture toward a more commercial and industrial economy in the mid-20th century, more development occurred and preservation efforts carried even less momentum. The resulting economic boom from development only encouraged more building as memory of the battles receded further and further from the public mind.

Following the Battle of Franklin, most of the ground over which Federal and Confederate armies fought remained open farmland well into the next century. Not until the 1960s did large portions of the battlefield succumb to suburbanization and the resulting commercial and industrial development. In fact, substantial portions of the battlefield remained undeveloped until the 1980s. A photograph taken from Winstead Hill that appeared in Thomas L. Connelly’s and

James Lee McDonough's *Five Tragic Hours* (1983) revealed the openness of the largely undeveloped vista of the battlefield. Amazingly, the photograph proved remarkably unchanged from 19th century photographs taken from nearly the same spot. Until this period, large portions of the battlefield remained available for preservation that potentially could have perpetuated memory of the battle.¹

In the first decade of the 20th century, early signs of development and commercialism emerged in Franklin. This came in the form of relic hunting on the old battlefield. On the one hand, such activities and the existence of these relics showed that memory of the battle was never too far from the minds of Franklin's citizens. On the other hand, relic hunting, although slightly destructive to the battlefield, provided a glimpse into the future commercial activities that would take place upon the ground. During this period, Martin Tohrner, a Franklin youth and son of a Polish immigrant, took advantage of the existing market for battlefield relics. He noted, "The breastworks of the Battle of Franklin remained near the Carter House. It was a popular tourist attraction. I often gathered minie balls, grape shot, parts of shells, there. When I would see visitors there, I would take my collection and sell them as souvenirs." An enterprising young man, Tohrner recalled, "At first I was afraid that they were yankees and was afraid to approach them as I had heard many terrible tales about yankees but the 'lure of riches' overcame my fright and I was soon operating a thriving business."²

Clyde Redford also engaged in relic hunting on the Franklin battlefield. In 1928, John F. Lodge of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania wrote Redford, thanking him for the relics he had shipped to Lodge, which included a sword and minie balls. Lodge told Redford, "Tonight it will hang on

¹NPS, Franklin Special Resource Study; *Five Tragic Hours*, 82-83.

²"Martin Tohrner Relates His "Recollections of 78 Years," *The Review Appeal*, February-March, 1968, In 3 installments.

my library wall where with pride, I can show and tell my friends of your greatness to me. The bullets, along with a few that Dr. Carter gave me, when I was in your good and hospitable town, go into my nice case . . .” Lodge also asked Redford to allow him to pay the cost of shipping the relics to him.³

Relic hunting may have changed the battlefield but development threatened to obliterate it altogether. Within a decade of the battle’s aftermath, residential construction began soon on key areas of the battlefield. As early as the 1870s, new homes appeared near the position of the Federal earthworks along Fair and West Main Streets. Moscow Carter sold the area north of the Carter House for residential development in the 1890s and during the same period, local businessman John B. McEwen began selling lots for development between the Lewisburg Pike and Adams Street near the Federal earthworks, which were obliterated by the 1920s.⁴

More development followed in the early 1900s, with the establishment of Battle Ground Academy along Columbia Pike in 1902 after the original building on Cleburne Street and Columbia Pike burned down. Also during that decade, several new subdivisions appeared between Cleburne Street and Battle Avenue along the Columbia Pike. Many of these new subdivisions contained streets bearing the names of Confederate generals killed in the battle or other names reminiscent of the fighting showing that some people in Franklin remembered the battle. Development held priority over anything resembling preservation, however, and this memory of the battle, however, did nothing to slow the destruction of the battlefield. By the 1940s, new residential areas were built on both sides of the Columbia Pike and extended as far south as Fairground Street. Indeed, by the turn of the century, many areas of the battle that had

³ John Friend Lodge to Clyde Redford, September 28, 1928. Collection of James Redford, Franklin TN.

⁴ Philip Walker, Philip Thomason, and Peggy Nickell, *Franklin Battlefield Preservation Plan*, (Franklin: Heritage Foundation of Franklin and Williamson County, 2004). 16;18;21.

been scenes of the heaviest fighting were lost. Nevertheless, much of the battlefield south of town remained.⁵

In other ways, some of Franklin's citizens demonstrated disregard for the battle's memory as they pursued new developments. When the Battle Ground Academy moved to a new location, Franklin resident George Matthews began building a house near the site of the original school. To provide stones for his home's foundation, Matthews razed the Cleburne Cenotaph that early BGA students had erected and the battle's only monument. In 1973, long time Franklin resident, George Armistead, remembered the event stating, "I recall my father's commenting at the time about the utter disregard Mr. Matthews had for a sacred spot."⁶

Franklin's population remained stable around the turn of the century and by 1900, the town's population was only 2,000. Ten years later it had increased by a mere 180 people. Although this growth was small, Franklin continued looking to its future rather than to its past and the Battle of Franklin. During this period, Franklin's city fathers took measures to improve the town's water supply, school system, and lack of transportation.⁷ Beginning in 1910, the Franklin-Nashville Interurban railway not only helped improve Franklin's transportation system but also increased the pace of development. Recently built subdivisions filled rapidly with new houses. The Interurban, running from 6:00 A.M. until 11:30 P.M., made it possible for citizens living in Franklin to quickly commute to and from the more industrial and commercial Nashville. With such concerns at hand, few Franklin residents worried about remembering the Battle of

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Rick Warwick, *Wish You Were Here: A Postcard Tour of Franklin and Williamson County*, (Murfreesboro: Panacea Press, 2007); George H. Armistead, "Some Recollections of Franklin," *Williamson County Historical Journal* (Franklin, TN: Williamson County Historical Society, 1974) 40.

⁷ Crutchfield and Holladay, 243.

Franklin.⁸ Here the town's geography worked against the battlefield. Franklin's near encirclement by the Harpeth River meant that the only direction in which the town could grow was to the south, right over the battlefield.⁹

Although some Franklin citizens sought to have the Battle of Franklin remembered in the form of a national battlefield, these efforts had largely played out unsuccessfully by the mid-1920s. Moreover, memory of the battle waned as Civil War veterans passed away in ever-increasing numbers. After this, memory of the battle, for the most part, entered another period of hibernation until the Civil War centennial. From the 1920s until the centennial, memory of the battle practically disappeared with the exception of sporadic attempts at memorialization and a few minor preservation victories. Franklin's citizens mainly focused on diversifying their agricultural economy and other day-to-day concerns.¹⁰

While Franklin's city fathers selectively called upon memory of the battle, they did so in order to promote development, which in turn further destroyed the battlefield. According to authors Crutchfield and Holladay, "The Battle of Franklin was used as a lure for northern business and industry and both responded." At the same time, transportation to and from Franklin continued to increase. Franklin truly became a transportation hub during this period. The town was already well connected with Nashville via roads, the Interurban, and a connection along the Nashville and Decatur Railroad. During the 1920s, a bus line from Centerville to Columbia began operations. This transportation development single-handedly improved the connectivity of the region, with Franklin serving as a major hub. Residents of rural Hickman

⁸ Crutchfield and Holladay, 259; 261.

⁹ Mark H. Voss, "Cataclysm and Memory: The Battle of Franklin," M.A. Thesis, (University of Mississippi, 1997). 91.

¹⁰ Franklin SRS, 76; Crutchfield and Holladay, 295.

County could board a bus at Centerville and ride to Columbia. From there, passengers could take a bus north into Franklin, disembark, and ride the Interurban into Nashville.¹¹

In 1939, George Peaybody College doctoral student Julia Hodgson completed her dissertation, in part a social study of Franklin in the 1930s. Hodgson's work revealed that Franklin, in many ways, had changed little since the battle. Streets largely remained "practically the same" from their appearance on 1878 maps. She noted, "The most pronounced changes have been made in the southern part of the town between the Lewisburg Pike and the Natchez Trace Road, where new streets have been opened up. Some of them were named for the five Confederate generals who were killed during the Battle of Franklin . . ." ¹² Although the Franklin battlefield remained mostly intact during this period, Hodgson's research indicating growth to the south of the town presented a bad omen for one day preserving the battlefield.

Hodgson's dissertation concluded that most land in Franklin was used for residential purposes and that agricultural spaces also accounted for a large portion of Franklin's land. At the time of her writing, practically no commercial enterprise existed on the former battlefield. Hodgson stated, "Except for the development of several small residential areas, which have grown up gradually, though with greater rapidity within the last four or five years since the Federal Housing Administration has been in effect, there is no urban development around Franklin. An occasional country grocery store or filling station may be found, but nowhere is there an agglomeration even suggesting the concept 'suburb,' . . ." She also remarked, "Franklin is predominantly agricultural in its outlook, and its growth is based on the activities of the farm people of the county. It will long continue to play this role in all probability and it is wise that it

¹¹ Crutchfield and Holladay, 300; 292.

¹² Julia Hodgson, "A Comparison of Three Tennessee Urban Centers: Goodlettsville, Franklin, and Clarksville," Ph.D. Diss. (George Peaybody College for Teachers, 1939).

should, for to the extent that the farmers take part in scientific, planned farm programs and prosper, so Franklin will prosper.”¹³

Although Franklin was growing in the 1930s and its connectivity with other places in the region was improving, the town’s economy still remained predominantly agricultural, with tobacco being the largest cash crop in the area.¹⁴ Until the 1960s, memory of the battle largely remained in hibernation as Franklin’s leaders continued focusing on improving and diversifying their town’s economy. The quest to have the Franklin Battlefield preserved as a national park was largely finished, with the exception of one last feeble attempt in 1939, by which time only a handful of Williamson County Civil War veterans were still alive.

New businesses arrived during this decade although Franklin remained a small agricultural town. The newly reestablished chamber of commerce succeeded in bringing O’Bryan Manufacturing Plant, a producer of Duck Head work clothes, to Franklin. Earlier in the decade, the Dortch Stove Factory began operations in Franklin as well. While most nearby cities suffered mightily during the Great Depression, many of the town’s new businesses thrived, allowing Franklin to escape the brunt of the economic downturn.¹⁵ This trend continued throughout the 1940s. Following World War II, new companies began operations in Franklin and the town continued growing. During this period, memory of the battle periodically resurfaced with small preservation victories. In 1948, the local chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy took possession of a portion of Winstead Hill and in 1951, the State of Tennessee purchased the Carter House. Overall, however, little memory of the battle existed and destruction of the battlefield continued. In 1953, the Franklin Housing Authority was formed and began a

¹³ Ibid,

¹⁴ Mary Means and Associates, 4; Add to this footnote for veterans and national park 1939 attempt.

¹⁵ Crutchfield and Holladay, 332; 335;338.

“slum clearance program” in order to receive federal money for public housing. This program ultimately resulted in the 1958 erection of 39 duplexes on 20 of the former battlefield in the area bounded by Granberry, Strahl, and Carter Streets, a most unfortunate irony of the urban renewal program.¹⁶

During the 1960s, the nation celebrated the centennial of the Civil War. Franklin joined in the festivities, with an added emphasis on remembering the bloody 1864 battle. In 1960, five Battle of Franklin sites gained federal recognition as part of the Franklin Battlefield National Historic Landmark. The properties included the Carter House, Winstead Hill, Carnton, the McGavock Confederate Cemetery, and Fort Granger. Citizens of Franklin, however, did not pause long to remember the Battle of Franklin. During this same period, Franklin’s economy expanded significantly, leading to further residential development. Franklin proved to be a highly desirable residential area that promoted the development of new industry.¹⁷

Furthermore, Franklin’s already viable transportation network received even more improvements, quickening the pace of development and bringing more industry to Franklin. Construction began on Interstate 65, which ran a few miles east of town, and public services generally improved. Franklin’s ever expanding economic prosperity soon began overrunning sizable portions of the battlefield. In 1963, Chicago Printed String moved to Franklin and occupied another 62 acres of formerly open battlefield land while employing over 500 workers. Lasko Metal Products also opened a plant on the former battlefield and employed over 100 workers. According to one history of Franklin, in 1960 city officials predicted that the city would soon experience a rapid rise in population resulting from economic and industrial development. Referring to this development, the history noted that Franklin’s officials “knew they had to plan

¹⁶ Ibid, 391; 408-409.

¹⁷ Franklin SRS, 11; 76-77.

for it...But too often that planning took the form of suburban sprawl outside of the downtown area and urban renewal in the central business district.”¹⁸ This sprawl would prove disastrous for preservation of the battlefield.

The exponential growth that Franklin experienced during the 1960s alarmed many of its citizens, leading to the formation of a few traditionally-minded preservation groups in the 1960s and 1970s. The reactionary efforts of these groups eventually provided the basis for future battlefield preservation in Franklin. Unfortunately, it took the destruction of some of Franklin’s historic past to awaken this traditional consciousness, which was too late to save most of the battlefield from the destruction wrought by development.¹⁹

A 1962 article in *The Nashville Tennessean* illustrated the general disregard or apathy many in Franklin felt toward remembering the 1864 battle. The article articulated these feelings, stating, “But times are changing in Franklin. New industries and new people are coming in, and they are less preoccupied with Franklin’s past than with the future. The cemetery and the shrine [the McGavock Confederate Cemetery and the Carter House] are symbols, to some of them, of a dead and tragic past that is best forgotten.” Some in Franklin were non content with simply forgetting the battle. One citizen was “quoted as saying facetiously, we believe, that the cemetery ought to be plowed up and the Carter House put to some other purpose.” Other Franklin residents, however, disagreed with this sentiment and argued against a more commercial and industrial Franklin. “Captain” Tom Henderson, a lifelong Franklin resident took “a dim view” of new industry and argued that Franklin should remain a “residential town.” The paper also quoted the objections of newspaperman and Franklin resident Marshall Morgan, who remarked, “What

¹⁸ Ibid; Mary Means and Associates, 4; Crutchfield and Holladay, P. 436;440.

¹⁹ Franklin SRS, 11-12.

we need . . . is fewer automobiles in town, not more.” Morgan favored more green spaces in Franklin rather than more parking lots.²⁰

As more industry came to Franklin and the population increased, development began even more development and Franklin moved even further towards commercialism. In fact, commercialism and development became watchwords in Franklin. Political fights pitted developers against traditionalists who wanted to preserve Franklin’s heritage. As development continued, memory of the battle reached an all-time low as development continued. Moreover, Franklin’s long march toward development forced a shift in the demographics and dynamics of the region that did not promote a memory of the battle. Crutchfield and Holladay remarked, “City and county officials, then faced with the certainty of millions of dollars and new jobs from new residential or commercial development, as opposed to projections of tourist dollars from a still nascent industry, often found the choice an easy one.” Even those who sympathized with preservationists, such as owners of historic property, “often had no choice because of prohibitive estate taxes or spiraling property assessments but to sell.”²¹

In 1975, construction of a golf course just behind Carnton and the McGavock Confederate Cemetery began, land over which Confederate General W.W. Loring’s division had moved under artillery fire toward the Federal earthworks. With this development, 110 acres of the battlefield disappeared. Also during this period, Interstate 65 approached Franklin from the south, dramatically increasing the price of land and encouraging land speculation. Nashville’s

²⁰ “Franklin: Go-Getters Prod Quiet Town Into Future,” *The Nashville Tennessean*, ..September, 1962.

²¹ Crutchfield and Holladay, Pg. 446.

growth, meanwhile, spread to Franklin as country music sites grew in popularity and tourism to the area increased.²²

The 1970 census revealed a population explosion in Franklin. The town had increased by 35 percent over the past decade, with 9,404 people now calling Franklin home. This affected the pace of development greatly as Crutchfield and Holladay noted in *Tennessee's Handsomest Town*. They remarked, "Many of the developers were the sons and grandsons of longtime property owners in town, who, as property values increased dramatically, found themselves unable to pay the huge property tax bill or the estate taxes that resulted from inheritance. The only solution was to sell the land and develop." With each transfer of land, more development came, further fracturing any memory of the battle.²³

This development and obliteration of memory did not occur without dissent. In 1987, Franklin mayor Jeff Bethurum, an unsuccessful advocate of controlled growth, chose not to run for reelection and Franklin citizens, many of whom were concerned about the exponential changes Franklin had experienced over the past seven years, elected Lillian Stewart. Upon taking office, Stewart implemented several measures to slow Franklin's growth. These actions soon ignited a powder keg and brought her significant opposition to her administration from the development community.²⁴

A sign of this opposition appeared in August 1988. Despite Stewart's attempts to curtail the city's growth, development in Franklin continued. Some of this development directly affected the battlefield. The Franklin Board of Mayor and Aldermen voted to rezone the area in

²² Franklin SRS, 77; Crutchfield and Holladay, 452;459-460; Voss, 103-104.

²³ Crutchfield and Holladay, 452; 458.

²⁴ Ibid, 484-485.

front of Winstead Hill for industrial use, the same area in which General Hood's Confederate soldiers had formed for their assault and began moving toward the Federal positions to the north. Reflective of the growing opposition to Stewart, only one alderman voted against the rezoning. Eventually, this rezoning led to a tractor dealership at the foot of Winstead Hill.²⁵

Although development did not stop in Franklin and the battlefield continued experiencing destruction, some citizens began demonstrating a collective memory of the battle. Franklin newspaper author, Bob Bent, joked about the state of commercialism on the Franklin battlefield, just two years after the rezoning of the property in front of Winstead Hill. He asked, "Can you imagine what it would be like for Hood to run that battle today? . . . Ya'll to the left of the TPS store, advance to the quarry, spread out and form a line behind the Franklin Flower and Gift Shop. Ya'll on the right flank, skirt CPS and Walker Cullum and form a line just past the Wishy Washy and the Pizza Hut. The D&T Pub and the Bunganut Pig are off limits until after the battle!" Bent continued, joking "Union Gen. John McAllister Schofield would be busy building his redoubts while his scouts were out scrounging for supplies at Foodtown or Hills . . . His field commanders would be going nuts trying to get their men out of the One Stop, where they would be lined up to rent videos or buy a supper of barbeque, white beans and lite bread."²⁶

Adopting a more serious tone, Bent argued the importance keeping the battle's memory alive. He stated, "Anyone who has learned the family tales of their ancestors can appreciate what the battlefield and those who fought on it means to the heritage of this area and its natives." Bent called for preservation of the area around Winstead Hill, the only undeveloped part of the

²⁵ Ginny Whitehouse, "Historians lose fight over hill; City rezones site" *The Review Appeal*. August 12, 1988.

²⁶ Bob Bent, "Modern Franklin battle revolves around Winstead Hill" *The Review Appeal*. November 7, 1990.

battlefield remaining. Alluding to the loss of most of the battlefield already, he added, “the community should work together to preserve what is left of it.”²⁷

The problems of a dwindling memory of the battle and continued development of the battlefield, unfortunately, did not end with the coming of the 1990s. In fact, the problems only magnified. During this decade, Franklin’s population doubled and development continued.²⁸ In July 1990, the General Motors’ Saturn Plant recently constructed in Spring Hill, 15 miles south of Franklin, completed its first car. The plant employed 4,000 workers, most of whom had been brought in from Michigan under an agreement with the United Auto Workers Union. This rapid increase in population stretched public services to the limit. Additionally, Saturn expended millions of dollars to fund public buildings, local charities, and to construct a road to the plant from Interstate 65 in order to curb local criticism. The plant’s arrival, once again, led to land speculation and inflated property prices in the area. The following year, this happened again with the completion of Cool Springs Galleria, a large shopping mall along Interstate 65. At nearly the same time, Franklin formally reopened its “revamped” Main Street, the result of the city’s revitalizing StreetScape project. Both of these initiatives drastically increased the amount of commercialism in the city and contributed to more development and the city’s rapidly changing demographics.²⁹

Development continued into the new millennium, further eroding memory of the Battle of Franklin. In July 2003, city officials in Franklin approved a request to rezone 48 acres at the base of Winstead Hill, where Confederate soldiers assembled for their assault in 1864. This rezoning allowed construction to begin on a large shopping center featuring a Target and Kroger

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Franklin SRS, 78.

²⁹ Crutchfield and Holladay, 496.

among other commercial enterprises. That same year, crews completed construction of a plan approved by the Williamson County Commission that destroyed one of the core areas of the Franklin Battlefield. The former site of the Battleground Academy, which had again moved to a new location in 1998, became the new home of the Williamson County Public Library. Later in the decade, the Williamson County Commission approved even more construction and development of the old BGA campus, further destroying the dreams of preservationists of reclaiming the area for a battlefield park..³⁰

A 2005 study of the Franklin Battlefield succinctly stated the continued problem with development in Franklin. It noted, “Once considered a bedroom community to Nashville, the area has established an economic presence of its own by attracting a number of commercial and industrial employers, including the headquarters or regional offices of several national and international corporations.” The study was quick to point out a silver lining to this development. It related, “Based on the success of the Franklin Main Street Program and a notable increase in tourists visiting Carnton and Carter House, local government leaders were quick to embrace the benefits of marketing local historic resources as tourist destinations.” Significantly, memory of the battle increased to new heights once local politicians grasped the economic potential of heritage tourism. With the exception of a few existing sites, perpetuating memory of the battle now necessitated reclamation efforts rather than preservation.³¹

Perhaps the road signs advertising the battlefield along Interstate 65 best exhibit the Battle of Franklin’s fractured nature of memory concerning the battle. Herbert Harper, Executive

³⁰ “Rezoning approved for Target/Kroger,” *The Tennessean*, Williamson A.M., July 10, 2003; “Be afraid, Franklin officials looking at Battlefield Land Again,” *Authentic Campaigner*, December 16, 2003; STFB Newsletter, July 2010; “County Proposes Project on Portion of Franklin, Tenn. Battleground Land,” *Civil War News*, October 2010.

³¹ *Ibid*; Franklin SRS, 10.

Director of the Tennessee Historical Commission explained, “We used to have a brown cultural sign on I-65 advertising the ‘Franklin Battlefield,’ but we got so many complaints from tourists who were disappointed to find no battlefield that we had to change it to ‘Battle of Franklin.’” Though many in Franklin were content with destroying and forgetting the battlefield, tourists were now pushing to keep memory of the battle alive. The demands of tourists, and the potential influx of tourism revenue, finally forced Franklin’s leaders to recognize how seriously development had affected the battlefield.³²

Nevertheless, preservation failures still occurred. In January 2007, *The Tennessean* announced that the only remaining green space on the battlefield, the Werthan property, would likely succumb to development that had consumed the rest of the Franklin Battlefield. During the battle, Confederate soldiers first began receiving fire from the Federal lines located north of this property. In April, the newspaper reported that Franklin officials unanimously voted to approve development on 53 of the site’s 70 acres.³³

Despite many setbacks that still continued, by the dawn of the new millennium, memory of the Battle of Franklin had improved drastically. Though the battlefield had largely been swallowed up by development in Franklin’s transformation from the small farming town of 1864, many in Franklin were now finally acknowledging their “lost battlefield.” The picturesque view of the battlefield taken in 1983 from Winstead Hill that had changed so little from a century before no longer existed. The same photograph today shows a parking lot, Tractor Supply Company, a mammoth Target shopping complex, and various marks of other industrial and commercial sprawl. Unlike the 1983 photograph, a contemporary photograph reveals virtually no

³² Franklin Battlefield Preservation Plan, 3.

³³“70 acres of battlefield eyed for development,” *The Tennessean*, *Williamson A.M.*, January 9, 2007; “Commercial spaces likely for Werthan property.” *The Tennessean*, April 29, 2007.

visible green space between downtown Franklin and Winstead Hill. While historical memory of the battle existed and began a resurgence in the first decade of the new millennium, development's destruction of the battlefield throughout the twentieth century represented a largely incurable fracture of memory of the Battle of Franklin.

The same growth and development that largely destroyed the Franklin battlefield, likewise hindered the formation of a cohesive memory of the Battle of Nashville and led to the destruction of the landscapes on which it was fought. In the decades following the Civil War, Nashville's population exploded. In 1860, Nashville was home to 16,988 people. By 1900, the city's population had grown to 80,865. This massive increase in population expanded the city far beyond its traditional borders, where it eventually overtook the battlefield. As this occurred, memory of the battle waned. Moreover, changes wrought by the Civil War altered Nashville's political, social, and economic landscape. Like residents of Franklin, Nashvillians largely focused more effort toward shaping their future than remembering their past, which contributed to the fractured memory of the battle.

As in Franklin, most of the Nashville battlefield lay on farmland south of the city. Development did not immediately consume the core areas of the battlefield, although agriculture did lead to some destruction. Nevertheless, some citizens early on understood the importance of preserving and marking the battlefield to perpetuating its memory. Just 21 years after the battle, John J. Tigert of Vanderbilt University recorded the experiences of three Vanderbilt professors who had recently explored the Nashville Battlefield. "In possession of an excellent map, upon which all the works, lines, and positions of the two-days' fighting were accurately indicated by a military engineer," the professors tramped across the battlefield "to examine and identify all the points of interest." They talked to local residents as they searched for the various locations of the

battlefield. Tigert noted that even in the relatively short period since the battle, locating exact positions on the battlefield proved impossible. He also remarked, “The changes effected in a few years are surprising. New dwellings are erected, old ones destroyed, fences are changed, woods cleared, pikes and roads opened, ditches and hedges are run, and the topography altered in many ways.” He added, “Old houses receive new occupants, and these, upon inquiry, are often found in possession of erroneous and impossible traditions concerning the events which took place on the historic ground they occupy.”³⁴

Realizing the importance of preserving physical spaces to perpetuate memory, Tigert advocated for Federal intervention. He stated, “This experience has led me to think that the Federal Government while participants and eyewitnesses are still living, might devise some simple and inexpensive, but still effective system of laying off and marking the important battlefields of the Civil War, so as to permanently aid intelligent investigation by military students and visitors.” Tigert prophetically argued, “Unless steps are speedily taken, on the part of our General Government, to mark the places of the special movements and events of our great battles, the limits and outlines of the fields will soon be lost beyond recovery.”³⁵

Unfortunately, the Federal government took no such steps at Nashville. In 1909, the Nashville Battlefield Association, an organization of local citizens created to help mark and preserve the Nashville battlefield found that, “The plow and the harrow have obliterated much of the earthworks which once stretched across the fields, woods, and hills just south of the city. At some points where the land is broken the intrenchments [sic] are still quite distinct; but in open

³⁴ Jno. J. Tigert, Dec. 21, 1885., *Century Magazine*, Vol. 31., No. 6, April 1886, 935-936.

³⁵ *Ibid*

fields, yards, and gardens they are rarely noticed.”³⁶ The NBA later succeeded in marking some places on the battlefield but never accomplished anything resembling preservation.

Nashville experienced substantial changes in the post-Civil War period, leading to significant implications for memory of the Battle of Nashville. These implications contributed to the battle’s fractured nature as Nashville and Tennessee moved toward the ideal of the New South. Started by business men, this ideal sought to reinvigorate the economy of the South by luring northern industry and capital. As part of the movement, New South promoters assured Northerners that the “Old South,” including slavery, was gone, that natural resources were abundant for exploitation, and that a hard working free labor force was available for low wages. Nashville became not only a major center but a major leader of the New South movement. By the late nineteenth century, “in the expansion of railroads, the rise of new merchants, industrialists, and financiers, and in educational endeavors, Nashville was setting trends for the region.”³⁷ As Nashville moved toward the ideal of the New South, it sadly turned its back on remembering the Battle of Nashville.

One of the first manifestations of this New South spirit in Nashville came with the centennial of Nashville’s founding in 1880. Originally envisioned as a commemoration of the historic milestone, the Nashville Centennial celebration morphed into a larger event. Planning began with the Tennessee Historical Society but soon expanded to a larger group of men that included businessmen, merchants, financiers, and entrepreneurs in addition to the historically-minded citizens. These men hoped to showcase Nashville’s potential to host large-scale industry

³⁶ “Nashville Battlefield Association,” *Confederate Veteran*, February 1909.

³⁷ Bergeron, Ash, Keith, *Tennesseans and Their History*, 182-183; Don Doyle, *Nashville in the New South*, (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1985). xiv.

and commerce by holding an “industrial exposition” that “would display technological progress” and “be a testimonial to Nashville’s eagerness to embrace the New South creed.”³⁸

If these men were to realize their dream for a new and prosperous South under the current economic conditions, they needed Northern capital. What resulted did not bode well for memory of the Battle of Nashville. At the Centennial, the Nashville organizers embraced the past with the exception of Nashville’s Civil War experience, which they almost completely ignored.³⁹ The Centennial planners did embrace the Lost Cause but “in such a way as to repress all traces of the ideological furor that led to massive violence two decades earlier.”⁴⁰ In short, as Nashvillians looked more to the future, they looked less to the painful memory of the battle that had been fought just south of the city. For the economic benefit of Nashville, the city’s New South leaders attempted to bury Southern memory of the battle that could do little to help their cause.

The view toward future technological progress and the New South continued with the Tennessee Centennial Exposition that began in 1897, celebrating the 100th anniversary of Tennessee’s entry into the Federal union. This exposition, like others, took inspiration from the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition in 1876. Similar to the Nashville Centennial, the Tennessee Centennial Exposition received most of its support from Nashville’s businessmen who still hoped to lure Northern money to the South. John W. Thomas, a railroad president, became president of the Tennessee Centennial Exposition Company.⁴¹

³⁸ Doyle, *Nashville in the New South*, 4.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 12.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 15.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 144-145.

The exposition featured a number of exhibits highlighting progressive causes, including the roles of women, blacks, and children in the New South. It also showcased new technological developments, including new cotton presses, telephones, looms, and engines, as well as the roles of art, education, and history in the New South. Unlike the Nashville Centennial, the Tennessee Centennial Exposition gave a prominent place to the Civil War, albeit a carefully crafted one. The Exposition's planners recognized the importance of history in the New South, "But here the homage to the southern past had to be carefully subordinated to the exposition's overriding purpose of furthering the reconciliation of North and South." The goal of the Tennessee Centennial Exposition, like other industrial expositions in the New South, was "to display to Northerners the South's eagerness to catch up to northern standards of progress and to reassure capitalists that their investments would never again be threatened by secession or civil strife." As a testament to this reconciliation, the Exposition's history building featured exhibits by both the Confederate Memorial Association as well as the Grand Army of the Republic.⁴²

Although the Tennessee Centennial Exposition provided the perfect opportunity to remember the Battle of Nashville, this idea did not fit within the Exposition's greater plan. Still, the Tennessee Centennial Exposition gave more than a passing nod to the Lost Cause. During these festivities Confederate veterans held a reunion in the Union Gospel Tabernacle in Nashville. Afterward, the veterans, along with members of Confederate lineage organizations paraded to the Exposition's grounds. Organizers carefully crafted the message that extolled Southern virtues but placed them well within the context of the New South movement.⁴³

⁴²Ibid, 144; 152;154.

⁴³ Ibid, 154-155.

Although Nashville fully embraced and promoted the New South idea, large-scale industry never came to the city. The forward looking vision of Nashville's leaders, combined with its favorable geographic position propelled the city to a major commercial and distribution center specializing in the distribution and manufacturing of items such as hardware, liquor, groceries, grain, and other agricultural goods. Moreover, astute businessmen modernized Nashville and made it a southern center of banking and insurance. These aggressive businessmen frequently combined with Nashville's old elite through intermarriage, social clubs, and business arrangements to establish a new elite that amassed great fortunes.⁴⁴

The success that Nashville experienced as a commercial and distribution center forced the city to expand between 1880 and 1915. Commercial space slowly squeezed residential sections from the city center. Those with means vacated this traditional residential area for newly emerging suburbs north and west of Nashville. In this endeavor, according to historian Don Doyle, they received assistance from several factors that coalesced around 1890, including improvements in street car technology, real estate promotion, and the city's annexation of large suburban districts. Also, the disintegration and sale of many old estates just outside of Nashville made large amounts of land available for new suburbs.⁴⁵

Although this expansion of suburban Nashville did not immediately affect the core areas of the Nashville battlefield, it proved only a matter of time. As suburban sprawl continued, companies owning streetcar lines began developing parks at the end of their lines to increase traffic during weekends. The owners of these streetcar lines were also real estate developers and

⁴⁴ Doyle, *Nashville in the New South*, 20; 42; 63-64.

⁴⁵ Doyle, *Nashville in the New South*, 63; 69; 87.

having open space proved valuable in promoting the sale of land near the trolley parks. The Waverly Land Development Company and Overland Railway established one such park in 1887 on part of the Nashville battlefield. Glendale Park included an amusement park and, after 1912, a zoo. It remained open until 1932 when its land was subdivided into additional residential areas.⁴⁶ The development and expansion of Nashville's suburbs, aided by real estate promotions, streetcar lines, and the rise of the automobile, spelled disaster for the Nashville battlefield.

To be sure, Nashville citizens occasionally exhibited some memory of the battle fought on the outskirts of their city, however disjointed it appeared. On more than one occasion, they attempted to obtain a national military park commemorating the battle. Moreover, the women of Nashville took the lead in erecting the Battle of Nashville Peace Monument in 1926. As these attempts at memorialization moved forward, however, Nashvillians continued their exodus to the suburbs that increasingly came closer and closer to the core battlefield. For many of Nashville's citizens, the quest for an affluent lifestyle outside of Nashville's city center took precedence over the preservation of the battlefield and its memory.

Topographic maps of Nashville from various periods reveal the extent of the city's suburban development. The 1901 map, for instance, shows the battlefield largely intact and open, although some sporadic development, had occurred along the pikes, passing through core areas of the battlefield. By 1929, the southern limits of Nashville were rapidly approaching the battlefield. New roads, structures, and clusters of structures, including those of David Lipscomb, a Nashville college, now appeared on portions of the battlefield. Prominent areas on the eastern

⁴⁶Leland R. Johnson, *The Parks of Nashville: A History of the Board of Parks and Recreation*, (Nashville: Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County Board of Parks and Recreation, 1986), 241-242; Christine Kreyling, *Nashville Past and Present*, Nashville Civic Design Center, Undated. 11.

flank of the first day's battle had succumbed to various development and railroad facilities. A 1932 map likewise revealed new roads and structures springing up across the battlefield.⁴⁷

Although many of the core areas of the Nashville battlefield still existed, this largely changed after World War II when the need to house returning GIs led to continued suburbanization of Nashville on a massive scale. During this period, memory of the battle appeared non-existent, as evidenced by the large-scale destruction of the battlefield. While Nashville's population increased only marginally during the decade of the 1940s, the population of Davidson County rose by a startling 25 percent.⁴⁸ Many of these people settled in growing suburbs on the old battlefield, outside of the Nashville city limits. A 1953 topographic map of Nashville reveals the shocking extent of development that overtook the battlefield. Not only had the city limits reached parts of the battlefield, but virtually no large open space or areas of the core Nashville battlefield remained.⁴⁹

Moreover, other signs emerged that indicated a low regard for memory of the Battle of Nashville. New cities such as Oak Hill and Green Hills now appeared on the map. The largely residential tracts comprising these areas included some of the most significant areas of the battlefield. As these new suburbs sprang up, so too did the infrastructure and amenities that supported them. New schools and roads were built. In 1955, construction ended on a large open air shopping mall along the Hillsboro Pike in Green Hills on part of the Nashville battlefield. In

⁴⁷USGS Maps. 1901, 1929, 1932.

⁴⁸Doyle, *Nashville Since the 1920s*, 273.

⁴⁹USGS Map, 1953.

the 1950s and 1960s, Interstates 24, 40, and 65 finally opened, some of them cutting across and destroying significant portions of the battlefield.⁵⁰

While most of the battlefield disappeared during this period, memory of the battle continued to fracture, but it was not destroyed. Some memory of the battle still existed even as development increasingly destroyed the its physical reminders. One such reminder remained high atop Saint Cloud Hill: Fort Negley. To a large degree, memory of the Battle of Nashville had always centered around Fort Negley even though it was not part of the core battlefield. Part of a series of fortifications guarding Nashville, Federal gunners from Fort Negley fired the opening shots of the Battle of Nashville. Fort Negley came to dominate memory of the Battle of Nashville in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, even as large portions of the core battlefield still existed south of the city. Why, then, did the fort become the mnemonic focal point for the battle? As noted earlier, and demonstrated by the 1885 visit of the three Vanderbilt professors, many of the battlefield's prominent features and significant sites disappeared early on. As this occurred, Fort Negley became the surrogate physical reminder of the Battle of Nashville.

Appropriated as a physical device for remembering the battle, many subsequent writers discussed Fort Negley's prominence during the engagement, often confusing it with actions that took place on the core battlefield. Demonstrating the power of memory, the *Nashville Globe*, an African-American newspaper, recorded the death of Mr. P.J. Crenshaw. Remarking that he was one of the United States Colored soldiers at Nashville, the article confused the facts about Fort Negley. Recalling one of Crenshaw's visits to Nashville, the paper stated, "it was the delight of Mr. Crenshaw to describe vividly the attack, the charge and the final capture of this fort by the federal soldiers." No such attack, however, occurred against Fort Negley as it was a fort in

⁵⁰ Find citations for this paragraph

possession of the Federals at Nashville and was never directly attacked. *The Nashville Globe* most likely confused Crenshaw's story with the assault that USCT made against Peach Orchard Hill on December 16, 1864. Another measure of Fort Negley's surrogate status in memory of the Battle of Nashville occurred in 1928 with the second attempt to establish a national military park at Nashville. Significantly, this attempt centered on securing land around Fort Negley. Failing in that attempt, some concerned citizens banded together, leading to the city of Nashville's purchase of the fort for use as a park.⁵¹

In addition to the mnemonic function that Fort Negley served for the Battle of Nashville, the fort's tortured history provides unique insights into the ebb and flow of the battle's fractured memory. After citizens of Nashville convinced the city to purchase the obscure fort, it sat practically untouched for the next decade. During the 1930s, the Tennessee Emergency Relief Agency, a state predecessor of the Works Progress Administration, began restoring Fort Negley. Workers unearthed artifacts indicative of Nashville's Civil War past, such as cannon balls, canteens, and horse shoes. Much interest existed in the project. In an interview with J.D. Tyner, one of the project's engineers, the *Nashville Tennessean* noted, "it is a rare day that does not find some school leader and group of children toiling up the steep slope to inspect the work and ask questions. And as for Sundays, the hillside is black with visitors." Workers, using original blueprints of the fort recovered from the War Department, sought to create a replica of the fort by reconstructing the original earth and stone works. They also discussed mounting Civil War cannon donated by the War Department inside Fort Negley. While TERA workers restored the fort, thus perpetuating memory of the Battle of Nashville, they also repaired damage done to Fort

⁵¹ *The Nashville Globe*, December 6, 1912; Krista Castillo, "Fort Negley: Past, Present and Future" *The Tennessee Conservationist*, January/February, 2013.

Negley during periods when memory of the battle proved less resilient. Among these repairs, workers replaced much of the stone taken from the site when the city reservoir was built on a neighboring hill.⁵²

Not all of TERA's work perpetuated memory of Fort Negley and the Battle of Nashville. Project planners also envisioned a recreation facility just below the fort with tennis courts and football fields. Near the end of the 1930s, the National Youth Administration began building baseball diamonds at the site.⁵³ These non-historic activities established a precedent that proved disastrous to Fort Negley's surrogate role in perpetuating memory of the battle. They not only occurred to the detriment of the fort as an historic site in its own right but also further fractured the Battle of Nashville's already perilous memory, reducing its importance in aiding memory of the battle.

During the Second World War, Fort Negley once again faded into obscurity. By the 1950s, the fort's deteriorating condition led park officials to close it. A 1968 article in *The Nashville Banner* remarked, "The old fort has been a reminder of a chapter in the city's past that generations of citizens have been trying to forget—the Union occupation of the city during the Civil War." Over the ensuing years, memory of Fort Negley, and hence the Battle of Nashville, continued fracturing as numerous proposals surfaced to use the fort in ahistorical capacities. In 1955, the American Legion attempted to have the city restore the fort, while others discussed placing a national guard armory on the site. In October 1959, the Board of Park Commissioners

⁵² Castillo, "Fort Negley: Past, Present and Future"; John Thompson, "Fort Negley—From Invaders' Citadel to Peacetime Park: Civil War Cannon for Rebuilt Fortress, Legend of Tunnel to City Cemetery, Relics of Federal Soldiers Who Built Original Keep Interest In TERA Project at Peak." *The Nashville Tennessean*, May 26, 1935.

⁵³ *Ibid*

considered a contract allowing “Fort Negley Hill To Be Leveled With Fill Dirt And Unmerchantable Rock To Be Hauled To The Meridian Hill Quarry Site.” Moreover, Nashville city officials entertained using Fort Negley as a temporary zoo in 1963-1964, during the Civil War Centennial celebration.⁵⁴ Though all of these proposals failed, they revealed the fort’s tenuous future and the general disregard many Nashvillians felt toward remembering the Battle of Nashville.

Several Nashville citizens showed their concern for perpetuating memory of the Battle of Nashville when, for various reasons, they voiced their opposition to a zoo at Fort Negley. This opposition only highlighted the fractures that had come to dominate memory of the battle. In *The Nashville Banner*, Dick Battle and Sam McPherson reported that the Metropolitan Board of Parks and Recreation offered Fort Negley as a temporary zoo but could not provide funds to operate or maintain it. Nevertheless, the members of the Board of Parks unanimously agreed to temporarily house animals at Fort Negley, saying the fort “was a rocky hill which had fallen into disuse and was something of an eyesore.”⁵⁵ Nashville also considered Centennial Park as a place for the zoo. One citizen, L.M. Hamilton, opposed the zoo at Centennial Park, remarking, “Centennial is a place of beauty, the home of our Parthenon, a place of rest, and comfort, and a place of play for many. . . There are too many slums and undeveloped areas in Nashville to destroy a place that has already been made beautiful and useful.” Hamilton added, “I know that it is a historic spot, but who of those that died on that hill but would be happy to know that it was being used as a zoo for the pleasure of both children and adults, instead of being a battlefield.”

⁵⁴ Castillo, “Fort Negley: Past, Present and Future”; Frances Meeker, “St. Cloud Hill To Brush Off Scars of 104 Years To Flourish Again With New Children’s Museum.” *The Nashville Banner*, 20 November 20, 1968; Board of Park Commissioners, Minutes of Meeting, 30 October, 1959. Fort Negley Archives.

⁵⁵ Dick Battle and Sam McPherson, “Briley: No Zoo Funds Available” *The Nashville Banner*, ca. 1963. Fort Negley Archives.

Simultaneously exhibiting a fractured and confused memory of the Battle of Nashville while dismissing the battle's significance, Hamilton then juxtaposed the beauty of Centennial Park with the dilapidated condition of Fort Negley to argue for the zoo's placement in the fort.⁵⁶

Other citizens, who opposed the zoo expressed a different memory of the Battle of Nashville. Donald A. Ramsay, General in Chief of the Confederate High Command and member of the Advisory Council for the United States Civil War Centennial Commission, wrote to the Board of Parks and asked them to reconsider placing the zoo at Fort Negley. Ramsay and the Confederate High Command believed that Fort Negley could still be repaired and that the site could become "a monument to our nation's most trying period." He added, "Our organization is Confederate and the fort was Union however our principles involve preserving artifacts of the War Between the States."⁵⁷ Nashville citizen Douglas Mansfield, III opposed the zoo for other reasons. He angrily wrote the board saying, "Your interest in locating a zoo at Ft. Negley far exceeds your concern for the completion of much needed community facilities for which funds are already available for the area. The residents of this area would like for Nashville to have a zoo but to propose a zoo for any residential community reflects poor judgment." Mansfield added, "We shall resist it on account of its aroma," expressing no memory of the battle whatsoever.⁵⁸ Ramsay, Mansfield, and other opponents of the zoo were ultimately successful in their effort to keep it out of Fort Negley.

⁵⁶ L.M. Hamilton, "Centennial Park is No Place For Metro Zoo," *The Nashville Banner*, Forum of the People, ca. 1963. Fort Negley Archives.

⁵⁷ Donald A. Ramsay to Department of Parks and Recreation, May 4, 1964. Fort Negley Archives.

⁵⁸ Douglas Mansfield, III to Metro Board of Park Commissioners, April 20, 1964, Western Union Telegam, Fort Negley Archives.

Though the fort overcame this latest challenge to its survival, other challenges soon arose in the following decades. In the 1970s, the city leased part of Fort Negley Park to the Nashville Sounds baseball team who erected Herschel Greer Stadium a short distance from the fort. Only a few years later in 1974, the Cumberland Science Museum was built adjacent to the fort. Clearly Fort Negley's days looked numbered as did any memory of the Battle of Nashville.⁵⁹

One of the most significant developments to Nashville's forward city focus occurred when the city began branding itself as "Music City, U.S.A." This effort revealed another way in which Nashville chose to emphasize its future over its past. Although country music had long been a part of Nashville's history, with attractions such as the Grand Ole Opry and a series of Honky Tonk bars on lower Broadway, Nashville seriously began promoting music tourism in the late 1960s and 1970s. During this period, the County Music Hall of Fame opened on Nashville's noted Music Row. The Grand Ole Opry, meanwhile, moved to a new location surrounded by the Opryland theme park and the Opryland Hotel, all of which catered to music tourists.⁶⁰

As Nashville approached its third century of existence, the city continued its forward looking vision, much to the detriment of memory of the Battle of Nashville. In 1975, Nashville Mayor Richard Fulton began planning for the anniversary festivities by appointing the Century III Commission. The commission, however, adopted "Celebrating the Past While Looking to the Future" as its catchphrase. This catchphrase proved to be one-sided. Although Nashville briefly looked to the past, its celebrations of Nashville history were limited to Nashville's founders and first settlers. Little mention was given to the city's dramatic Civil War battle. Instead, Century III planners, consisting mainly of Nashville business leaders, dedicated the majority of their

⁵⁹ Castillo, *Fort Negley: Past, Present and Future*

⁶⁰ Doyle, *Nashville Since the 1920s*, 156-157.

attention to the city's future. According to historian Don Doyle, Nashville's music stars and television personalities were the celebration's primary attractions. While the city did experience a revival of historical consciousness during the Century III celebration, it did nothing to perpetuate memory of the Battle of Nashville.⁶¹

As Nashville moved into the new millennium, the Battle of Nashville's fractured memory persisted. To be sure, development and the obliteration of the battlefield meant that precious little remained to use in commemorative activity that promoted remembering. Tim Ghianni articulated the difficulty of remembering and promoting the battle in a 2011 article in *The Nashville Ledger*. Ghianni acknowledged that at the Nashville Convention and Visitors Bureau headquarters in the Bridgestone Arena the Battle of Nashville was not ignored. He added, however, ". . . other than a map of a driving tour through Nashville neighborhoods and info about the old mansions and cemeteries, there's not much information available." Nashville's lack of Civil War tourism promotion largely stemmed from the fact that there is no large open battlefield to explore as there is at Stones River National Battlefield near Murfreesboro, a half-hour drive from Nashville.⁶²

Ghianni's article also called attention to the Battle of Nashville Peace Monument, one of the most important sites for memory of the battle. The monument had been isolated by construction of an interstate interchange and ignored until it was relocated to a more accessible and highly visible site along the Granny White Pike. Appropriately, the new site was part of the first day's battle. Ghianni also quoted local experts who spoke about the state of the battlefield and its memory. Brian Allison told Ghianni of the struggle for Peach Orchard Hill. Today the hill is the site of Franklin Road Academy and overlooks the Radnor Yards, Cracker Barrel, and

⁶¹ Doyle, *Nashville Since the 1920s*, 264-272.

⁶² Tim Ghianni, "Capitalizing on the Past: Nashville remains outflanked in Civil War tourism efforts" *The Nashville Ledger*, Vol. 35. No. 29, July 22, 2011.

Interstate 65, “. . .one of the bloodiest, least-acknowledged sites” of the Battle of Nashville. Allison related, “Hundreds of people drive over there every day and have no idea of what happened on that hill 150 years ago.” Krista Castillo, Museum Coordinator at Fort Negley, lamented that most Nashvillians had no idea the fort even existed and did not know much about Nashville’s Civil War heritage in general. Philip Duer, president of the Battle of Nashville Preservation Society, echoed Castillo’s assessments. Though the city “sits on the battlefield,” Duer recognized that most Nashvillians knew next to nothing about the battle.⁶³

Indicative of the fractured memory that still characterizes the Battle of Nashville, a 2014 Tennessee Tourism Guide proved especially revealing. In the attractions listed in the Nashville area, only four, including Fort Negley, held any connection whatsoever with the battle. On the other hand, more than 16 attractions, in one way or another, promoted the music industry in Nashville such as the Grand Ole Opry, the Opryland Hotel, and the Ryman Auditorium. Moreover, advertisements promoting country music tourism dominated the guide’s middle Tennessee section, while none specifically referenced the Battle of Nashville. This despite the guide’s introduction to the region specifically mentioning “MUSIC, NATURE AND A RICH MILITARY HERITAGE make Middle Tennessee a popular travel destination and a cherished place to call home.” Nashville’s focus clearly remains on promoting country music tourism rather than perpetuating any memory of the city’s famous battle.⁶⁴

In a century and a half since the Civil War, memory of the Battles of Franklin and Nashville fractured under the weight of residential, commercial, and industrial development. Progressive, forward-looking plans that demonstrated little or no concern for history or tradition

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ 2014 *Official Vacation Guide*, Tennessee, Tennessee Department of Tourist Development, 2014.

doomed many opportunities to preserve the battlefields. As portions of these sites disappeared, memory of Franklin and Nashville became even less cohesive. Nevertheless, opposition soon arose to challenge this disregard and fought to perpetuate memory of the Battles of Franklin and Nashville.

Chapter 6 - The Politics of Remembering: Battlefield Preservation and Perpetuation of the Memory of Franklin -1939-2014

“I think, at Franklin, you can create a park, sort of like a ring type park like you have in a lot of cities and urban areas, which is what Franklin has really become, that basically follows the line of where the earthworks were, some of the areas of the heaviest fighting; a connection of open space, where Cleburne fell and so forth and reclaim them. It’s gonna take a lot of money. Some people won’t understand it to save their lives. . . . ‘What are they putting in there? What are they building now?’ Well, they’re not building anything. It’s gonna be an open space with a memorial or an interpretive sign. It’s gonna be a place where people can sit down on a park bench or something. It’s not gonna be built on. It’s going to be the opposite. It’s going to be reclaimed.” Brian Pohanka, August 28, 2004.¹

By 1939, when the last attempt for a Franklin National Battlefield failed, the situation looked bleak that the battlefield would ever receive any official recognition or be preserved. After generation of fighting on both the national and local level, preservationists had nothing to show for their efforts. Development continued to encroach on the battlefield and, nearly a century after either battle, a unified memory of the battle had yet to be formed. The tide, however, slowly began turning in the last decade of the twentieth century. Led by preservation groups, portions of the battlefield began to be reclaimed. These organizations played a critical role in shaping and perpetuating the memories of Franklin. Though a unified memory proved difficult to establish and maintain, these efforts nevertheless ensured that the Battle of Franklin was not completely forgotten in the collective memory.

Preservation Organizations

The Heritage Foundation of Franklin and Williamson County became the first of several organizations that looked to preserve the town’s heritage, including the battlefield. Founded in

¹ <http://www.civilwar.org/video/brian-pohanka-on-preservation.html> . August 28, 2004.

1967, the Heritage Foundation represented a direct response to the ongoing development occurring throughout Franklin. After generations of failed attempts, efforts to save the battlefield were practically nonexistent and many felt that the city's unique historical charm was rapidly disappearing. The Heritage Foundation sought to change this and began surveying historic properties and fundraising to preserve historic sites. Most importantly, in an environment that struggled with massive growth and inadequate infrastructure, the Heritage Foundation became a voice for the preservation, rather than the destruction of Franklin's historic past. Since the bloody 1864 battle was an important part of this past, saving sites associated with it eventually became one focus of the organization.²

Another organization dedicated to saving the Franklin battlefield, as well as other Civil War sites in Williamson County, Tennessee, was the aptly named Save the Franklin Battlefield. Organized in 1989, STFB specifically promoted a coherent public memory of the Battle of Franklin by executing its mission to educate, raise awareness, build support, and raise funds for battlefield preservation. The group accomplished these objectives with the purchase of a significant parcel of the battlefield, the publication of a successful newsletter, the erection of historical markers, and by compiling a list of Civil War sites in Franklin and Williamson County that could still be saved. Moreover, STFB's membership provided a base from which to raise substantial funds that assisted their efforts at battlefield preservation.³

Franklin's Charge also contributed to perpetuating memory of the Battle of Franklin. Organized in 2005 at the height of the effort to reclaim a portion of the Franklin battlefield, this organization formed a coalition of existing historical and preservation groups that focused on

² Crutchfield and Holiday, *Franklin: Tennessee's Handsomest Town*, 443; 446-447.

³ www.franklin-stfb.org; see also the various STFB newsletters.

preserving and reclaiming portions of the battlefield. Among the many activities it undertook to promote its efforts, Franklin's Charge received grants that funded archaeological excavations of significant battlefield sites and other battlefield studies, organized the purchase of these important sites, and educated the public about the Battle of Franklin by establishing a website that detailed preservation of the battlefield and holding an annual Civil War symposium. Franklin's Charge became an instrumental leader in the acquisition of a 112-acre golf course that had been part of the battlefield. The group also established a vision for open space battlefield parks at significant battlefield sites in Franklin, a crucial step in the perpetuation of the battle's memory.⁴

A sign of the battle's growing significance in the public memory came with the establishment of the Battlefield Subcommittee of the Central Franklin Area Plan Steering Committee, also known as the Battlefield Task Force, in 2003. This group emerged at the height of the fight to raise money for the golf course. Consisting of local residents, downtown business owners, city officials, and developers, its original goals included exploring funding options for battlefield sites, identifying local Civil War sites, and encouraging city officials to commission a study of the battlefield. The commission later morphed into the Franklin Battlefield Preservation Commission, an 18-member organization representing various stakeholders in Franklin's quest for battlefield preservation and reclamation. Among their many missions, the BPC provided the city's Board of Mayor and Alderman with advice concerning battlefield preservation and

⁴ www.franklin'scharge.com.

facilitated “forums for promoting Franklin’s Civil War heritage and for educating the public about said heritage.”⁵

Preservation of Franklin’s Battlefield Sites

One of the most substantial ways of remembering the Battle of Franklin involved preserving the physical spaces on which it was fought and later commemorated. Especially in earlier years, the narratives and commemoration at these sites hinged almost exclusively on a Lost Cause, Confederate memory of the battle. In succeeding years, however, the interpretation of recently preserved battle sites in Franklin embraced a more balanced memory of the battle, even stressing a Union cause and reconciliationist memory. Perhaps revealing the fractured nature of memory about the battle, with the exception of the McGavock Confederate Cemetery, no preservation of the sites occurred until the mid-twentieth century at Franklin.

The first property preserved from the Battle of Franklin was Winstead Hill, the site of Confederate General John Bell Hood’s headquarters during the battle. The Franklin Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy purchased 9.75 acres of the property from Walter A. Roberts on May 7, 1948 for \$1.00. Shortly afterward, the Tennessee Historical Commission and others erected a relief map at the crest of the hill. Overlooking the vista where the battle occurred, the three dimensional relief map clearly showed the terrain of the battlefield and marked troop locations.⁶

⁵ “Completed battlefield plan guides city preservation,” *The Tennessean*, *Williamson A.M.*, August 29, 2003; “Battlefield preservation front and center again” *The Review Appeal*, December 30, 2003; www.franklin-gov.com/government/planning-and-sustainability/historic-preservation .

⁶ Property Deeds for Winstead Hill, Vertical File, “Civil War: Winstead Hill Park” folder, Williamson County Archives.

In 1980, Franklin Chapter 14, UDC, citing the rising cost of maintaining the property, their inability to care properly for it, and repeated vandalism, transferred the property to the Sam Davis Camp Number 1293 of the Sons of Confederate Veterans based in Brentwood, Tennessee. At their 1985 National Reunion in Raleigh, North Carolina, the Sons of Confederate Veterans, with headquarters in Jackson, Mississippi, voted to move their national headquarters to Winstead Hill. Immediately after his election as Commander-In-Chief of the Sons of Confederate Veterans in 1986, Ralph Green appointed members to the Permanent Headquarters Committee. The following year, the Sam Davis Camp officially conveyed the property to the national headquarters of the Sons of Confederate Veterans.⁷

Officials from the Sons of Confederate Veterans intended to promote a staunchly Confederate memory with the former site of General Hood's headquarters. In their monthly magazine, *Confederate Veteran*, Permanent Headquarters Committee Chairman, Tulane Gordon, III, informed members of the organization that, "Since this is a Shrine to our ancestors, visibility from Franklin is important. With this in mind, we have added a basement, thus giving additional height to the columns in the front elevation. This also gives the building a much more imposing view from the road." In his fundraising efforts, Gordon appealed to the Confederate heritage of his members: "This Shrine will be for all of our ancestors and it is doubtful this large sum of money may be raised from outside the organization. It MUST COME FROM US!" Such an imposing building necessitated a large amount of funds from the organization's membership.⁸

The building's design resembled Thomas Jefferson's Monticello with its large columns and domed roof. Plans called for the building to be flanked by a US flag on one end and a

⁷ See Deed from UDC to Camp 1293, Ibid.

⁸ *Confederate Veteran*, March/April, 1987, 37; *Confederate Veteran*, June/July, 1987, 8 and Insert.

Confederate Battle Flag on the other. Using religious terminology to tie the building's mission to its design, a central component of the SCV plan included a "museum/shrine." Hoping to raise more money, Permanent Headquarters Committee Fundraising Chairman H.B. "Herb" Stanfield canvassed member opinions with a questionnaire asking how much members would contribute, if they wanted the building to include a research center, office space, storage, and a "Confederate Hall of Heroes." Stanfield asserted a strong Confederate memory when he asked the members "Will you stand up for Dixie?" The project, however, failed miserably. Though \$3 million was required for the project, The Permanent Headquarters Committee only managed to raise \$26,780.44, some of which was expended for architect's fees and artistic renderings.⁹

The project having failed, the Sons of Confederate Veterans returned the property to the Sam Davis Camp in August 1988. Subsequently, the Sam Davis Camp began vigorously promoting a Confederate memory on Winstead Hill and transformed the property into a site fully embracing the Myth of the Lost Cause. The camp erected and supervised several monuments and memorials to Confederate soldiers at the crest of the hill, including memorials to the six Confederate generals killed as a result of the Battle of Franklin. Those memorialized on Brigadiers Walk include John Adams, Otho Strahl, John C. Carter, States Rights Gist, and Hiram Granbury. Giving the site a reverential, church-like atmosphere characteristic of the Lost Cause, a plaque at the walkway entrance asks visitors to "pause for a moment of respect to their memory!" The plaque, including other central elements of the Lost Cause, also carefully notes, "The sense of pride, honor, and integrity of the everyday fighting man of the Army of Tennessee made the brilliant careers of these five Brigadier Generals possible. Largely non-slave owning, these brave men of the Army of Tennessee followed Adams, Carter, Strahl, Gist, and Granbury

⁹ Ibid.

across the fields to your right into certain death that November afternoon.” A separate marker farther up the hill, sponsored by Dr. and Mrs. David Watts honors Confederate Major General Patrick Cleburne, also killed during the battle.¹⁰

The promoting of a strictly Confederate memory continued in the following years. In November 1991, on the anniversary of the battle, members of the Sam Davis Camp dedicated a flag pole in memory of their Confederate ancestors “who marched with the Army of Tennessee.” They also erected a sign marking the spot of Hood’s headquarters. Other SCV camps placed similar monuments on Winstead Hill. Murfreesboro Camp #33 honored “the courage and dedication of the private Confederate soldier.” Missourians of the Sons of Confederate Veterans erected a monument to Cockrell’s Confederate Missouri Brigade who suffered greatly during the battle, while a large stone tablet to the Confederate soldiers of Tennessee who fought in the Battle of Franklin was dedicated by SCV Camp #1293 and the Tennessee Division of the Sons of Confederate Veterans.

In 1994, the city of Franklin joined the preservation fray on Winstead Hill. Purchasing 62 acres located below the portion owned by the Sam Davis Camp, this land was bought for \$900,000 as part of “an aggressive plan to increase the number of park facilities.” Unlike the portion of the hill owned by the Sam Davis Camp, the city’s acres did not promote a distinctly Confederate memory of the battle. City officials instead built a largely “passive” park that included interpretive markers and walking trails.¹¹

¹⁰ Deed from SCV to Camp 1293, Williamson County Archives, Vertical File, “Civil War: Winstead Hill Park” folder.

¹¹ Carly Irion, “Franklin parks addition plan progressing” *The Review Appeal*, August 26, 1998; Crutchfield and Holiday, 497.

Another early but key preservation victory occurred in 1951 when the State of Tennessee purchased the Carter House and opened it as a museum and interpretive center two years later. Located near the center of the battlefield and serving as a Federal headquarters, many recognized the Carter House property as the Battle of Franklin's focal point. For many years, the Carter House was the only battle site that was preserved and interpreted. The Carter Cotton Gin, the earthworks, and other notable landmarks of the battle had been gone for many years. In its early years as a public history site, the Carter House promoted a distinctly Confederate memory of the battle, steeped in the Lost Cause tradition, although it had been a Federal headquarters. Operated as a state shrine under the management of the Carter House Association it became part of the Franklin Battlefield National Historic Landmark in 1960.¹²

The Carter House held an important place in memory for those wanting to commemorate the Battle of Franklin throughout the twentieth century. In December 1993, an advertisement in *Historical News* noted, "Ever since the tragic events which gave this house and the surrounding fields their claim on history, visitors have come in a never-ending stream to the Carter House. Until their ranks grew thinner, Veterans, who had worn the Blue or the Gray, came back to visit the scene and to walk again over the battlefield. Civil War Round Tables make pilgrimages to the Carter House, and the Civil War Centennial celebration has focused even greater interest upon it and visitors come in increasing numbers."¹³

After repeated failures to acquire the property and preserve it as part of a national park, historian Stanley F. Horn, a member of the Tennessee Historical Commission, finally succeeded.

¹² Rosalie Carter, "Visit the Carter House, A shrine owned by the State of Tennessee, commemorating the Battle of Franklin" *Historical News*, December 1993, Rosalie Carter Collection, Vertical File, Williamson County Archives.

¹³ "A shrine owned by the State of Tennessee, commemorating the Battle of Franklin," in *Historical News*, December 1993, Rosalie Carter Collection, Vertical File, Williamson County Archives.

In 1951 he secured a purchase option for the State of Tennessee and the Tennessee General Assembly funded the \$20,000. It also appropriated additional funds for its restoration and encouraged the formation of the Carter House Association.¹⁴

One of the guiding hands that helped perpetuate memory of the Battle of Franklin throughout much of the twentieth century was Franklin dentist Dr. Rosalie Carter. A descendant of Fountain Branch Carter (owner of the Carter House during the Battle of Franklin), a one-time president of the local United Daughters of the Confederacy Chapter, a member of the Tennessee Historical Society, and a poet, painter, and author, Dr. Carter appeared as a “renaissance woman” to many in Franklin. Born in the home, she took a leading role in writing and developing the interpretation conveyed at the Carter House and throughout the community. Not surprisingly, much of her work stressed the heroics of her ancestor Captain Tod Carter, the young Confederate officer killed during the assault toward his home. Like other literature about the Battle of Franklin from this period, Dr. Carter’s writings stressed Lost Cause themes, which romanticized Confederate soldiers of Franklin like Tod Carter.¹⁵

This romanticization appeared very evident in *A Visit to the Carter House* (1972). The short booklet provides a narrative of the battle interspersed with photographs and poems written by Dr. Carter highlighting her great grand uncle, the features of the home, and the Battle of Franklin. Discussing the heartbreaking story of her ancestor, Captain Tod Carter, Rosalie Carter wrote, “The story of the death of young Capt. ‘Tod’ Carter is known wherever the story of the

¹⁴ Williamson County Civil War Centennial Committee, *Battle of Franklin, Civil War Centennial, November 28- 29-30, 1964: Official Guide Book and Program*, 1964.

¹⁵ Mary Hance, “A poet, artist, historian and dentist: Dr. Carter keep in practice,” *Nashville Banner*, June 10, 1983, Rosalie Carter Collection, Williamson County Archives; Rick Warwick, “Dr. Rosalie Carter, D.D.S.,” *Battlefield Dispatch*, Vol. 1. No. 1. Spring, 2013; Rosalie Carter, *A Visit to the Carter House, Franklin, Tennessee in Photographs, Poems, and Paragraphs*, Rosalie Carter Collection, Williamson County Archives.

Battle of Franklin is known. Probably unparalleled in the heart-breaking annals of war is the story of this soldier who fell mortally wounded, while leading a charge at sunset, not over 175 yards southwest of his home, which he longed to visit once more . . . He was found on the battlefield at daybreak by members of his own family who had emerged from their cellar refuge, and, carrying lanterns, had gone in search of him. He was carried into his father's house, and given medical aid, but died on December 2, at the age of twenty-four, in the house in which he was born, surrounded by his loved ones." With this, Rosalie Carter set the tone for the Confederate memory that long dominated interpretation at the Carter House despite the fact that it had served as a Federal headquarters during the battle.¹⁶

Dr. Carter further perpetuated memory of the Carter House, Tod Carter, and the Battle of Franklin with her 1976 play, *Tragedy at the Carter House at Franklin, Tennessee*. Setting the scene by describing how and why the armies arrived in Franklin in November 1864, the play concentrates not on the clashing armies, but on the ordeal of the Carter Family taking shelter from the battle in the family cellar. The tale also highlights the tragic story of Tod Carter. Using much of the same language from *A Visit to the Carter House*, Dr. Carter intended this script to use at meeting of Civil War roundtables, lineage organizations such as the United Daughters of the Confederacy, historical societies, and history classes. The program included many of Carter's poems, set to music and used between sections of narrative.¹⁷

In November 2006, the Carter House Association expanded and added to the tally of preserved battlefield spaces. The acquisition of this site resulted from momentum gained in earlier preservation victories around Franklin and the new Carter House garden site added one

¹⁶ Rosalie Carter, *A Visit to the Carter House*.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

half acre to the battlefield. Although a scene of some of the most violent and bitter fighting during the Battle of Franklin, modern features built between the Carter House and the garden site, such as a tall board privacy fence surrounding the property and other structures, obstructed the view of the garden from the original Carter House property. This made it impossible for the Carter House staff to interpret the garden site although it was only a short distance away. Officials immediately sought to restore this site to its 1864 appearance. Plans called for restoring the terrain, reconstructing outbuildings known to have existed, demolishing newer structures, and rebuilding earthworks that had existed on the property during the battle, as confirmed by an archaeological excavation of the newly acquired property.¹⁸

The Battle of Franklin Trust (an organization that came into existence in ... after the Carter House Association acquired the property merged the Carter House and Carnton into one site although each property retained its own board of directors) placed another brick in reconstructing memory of the Battle of Franklin on April 17, 2010 when the Carter House Garden property formally opened to the public. Marianne Schroer, Battle of Franklin Trust Board Chairwoman, noted, “Our city has worked hard to recapture as much of the battlefield as we can to preserve and interpret its history.” Recognizing the significance of the site to memory of the battle, she remarked, “Opening the Carter House Gardens is a significant step to the Trust’s commitment to preserve this hallowed ground.”¹⁹

Franklin preservationists gained another victory and perpetuated memory of the battle when the Battle of Franklin Trust and Franklin’s Charge purchased more than two acres on Columbia Avenue adjacent to the Carter House in May 2013. Like the addition of the Carter

¹⁸ “Carter House acquires 1864 garden site,” STFB Newsletter, December 2006; *Battlefield Dispatch*, March 2010.

¹⁹ “Carter House to dedicate site” *The Tennessean*. Williamson A.M., April 12, 2010.

Garden property, the acquisition added substantial open space to the Franklin Battlefield at one of the focal points of the engagement, greatly enhancing the ability of the Carter House and the Battle of Franklin Trust to interpret the events of November 30, 1864. The site of a long-time Franklin flower shop, the reclamation of this space came with a price tag of \$2.8 million. Despite the exorbitant cost, Civil War Trust President Jim Lighthizer told a Franklin's Charge officer, "There is no question that the acquisition of this tract will greatly enhance the battlefield park along Columbia Avenue."²⁰

Remembering the Battle of Franklin through preservation of its sites also occurred with the purchase of Fort Granger in 1971. High atop Figuers Bluff, the fort enclosed Federal artillery that inflicted substantial damage on advancing Confederates during the battle. Franklin Mayor Ed Woodward guided the city's purchase of the forgotten and overgrown property and the Jaycees began preservation work that lasted nearly twenty years. That work included clearing the property, and eventually erecting interpretive markers on the site. Significantly, Fort Granger became the first site from the Battle of Franklin that did not perpetuate a Confederate memory of the battle and its acquisition by the city of Franklin sparked some controversy.²¹

Demonstrating the battle's fractured collective memory, talk of preserving Fort Granger was not completely new. During the Great Depression, the WPA showed interest in restoring the fort as one of its New Deal projects. Politicizing the battle's memory, Franklin Mayor Park Marshall told WPA officials, "Franklin didn't want it when it was built and Franklin doesn't want it now." It took many more years before Franklin would preserve the site.²²

²⁰Carole Robinson, "Two more acres added to Franklin Battlefield" *Williamson Herald*, May 28, 2014.

²¹Crutchfield and Holiday, 456 .

²² *Review Appeal*, As quoted in Crutchfield and Holiday, 456.

Further preservation efforts and attempts to solidify memory of the Battle of Franklin emerged in 1977 when Dr. W.D. Sugg sold the poorly maintained Carnton Mansion and ten surrounding acres to the Carnton Association, an organization formed to preserve the antebellum home. Although in poor condition after experiencing both residential and agricultural use, the home had been listed as a National Historic Landmark in 1973. Over the course of several years, proceeds from fundraisers, tours, and donations allowed the Carnton Association to begin restoring the home and property to its nineteenth century appearance.²³

Owned by John McGavock in 1864, the Carnton Mansion saw use as a Confederate field hospital immediately following the battle. Most notably, however, many veterans remembered it as the place where four of the six Confederate Generals killed during the Battle of Franklin lay on the veranda before their burial elsewhere. In 1866, John and Caroline McGavock set aside two acres adjacent to their family cemetery for the Confederate soldiers killed during the battle. The McGavocks cared for these graves until their deaths. In 1911, members of the family sold the property. Carnton's location during the battle, as well as subsequent reunions and commemorations occurring on or near the property, ensured that it perpetuated a distinctly Confederate memory of the battle.²⁴

Preserving memory without any physical, tangible reminders is extremely difficult. At Franklin, the battlefield itself was the most important tangible reminder of the events of November 30, 1864. Some of the battle's most horrific fighting took place near the Carter Cotton Gin and veterans made special mention of it in their accounts of the battle and frequently visited the site during their post-war visits to Franklin. In 1996, the Heritage Foundation of Franklin and

²³ *Battlefield Dispatch*, Vol. 2, No. 2.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

Williamson County secured the site and, under the direction of the foundation's director, Mary Pearce, planned to eventually clear and restore the area to its 1864 appearance. She remarked that the Heritage Foundation was purchasing the property because the organization had "made it a priority to purchase key Civil War sites along the Columbia Avenue corridor." However, she also gave a more practical and immediate reason for perpetuating the battle's memory by purchasing the site: tourism. She stated, "Franklin's strength as a heritage tourism stop is based on Highway 31 South [Columbia Avenue], which runs past the Carter House and into historic downtown Franklin . . . The corridor becomes more attractive the more it looks the way heritage tourists expect." As Pearce showed, by 1996, preservationists in Franklin looked toward increased tourism, and that hope drove their efforts to reclaim battlefield spaces.²⁵

Preservation and memory of the Battle of Franklin took another giant leap forward in 2001 with the purchase of the Hyssop Hill property by Save the Franklin Battlefield, an organization specifically dedicated to preserving the battlefield. The property had once housed the overseer of the McGavock family's Carnton Plantation and had played a central role in the battle. Over this parcel, Confederate General W.W. Loring's division moved toward the Federal left flank near the Decatur and Alabama Railroad embankment that bordered the property. Shortly afterward, these men joined other Confederates entangled within the Osage Orange abatis near the railroad, an obstacle that resulted in terrible carnage within the Confederate ranks. During and after the battle, the property also became the site of a Confederate field hospital.²⁶

In November 2000, the STFB Newsletter reported that the 3.3 acre Hyssop Hill tract was available for an asking price of \$300,000. The organization also noted that the property was

²⁵ *Nashville Banner*, June 12, 1997, Williamson County Archives, Vertical File, "Civil War" folder.

²⁶ "Late Breaking News!!!," STFB Newsletter, May 2001.

zoned “Light Industrial,” meaning it was substantially at risk of being lost. STFB pleaded with its membership to contribute toward the property’s purchase and to help find other donors. The group’s president, Joe Smyth, showed that the battle’s memory was fragile but far from extinguished when he told its members, “If we cannot take advantage of this window of opportunity right now, this precious remaining parcel of the battlefield will be added to the long list of ground altered and lost forever.”²⁷

Smyth’s pleas for assistance were heard. On June 15, 2001, the organization signed a contract and closed the sale of the property. Hyssop Hill became the first property STFB purchased, helping permanently cement memory of the battle and beginning a trend that continued through the Battle of Franklin Sesquicentennial. In August, the organization began referring to the property as the Collin’s Farm. This name change was meant to further strengthen the ties between past and present by remembering the property as it existed at the time of the battle. STFB immediately began organizing fundraising events, including reenactors’ marches to help retire the note on the property.²⁸

The dawn of the new millennium, combined with renewed efforts at battlefield preservation, brought increased attention to Franklin. Much of this new attention focused specifically on the battlefield and perpetuated memory of the battle. In June 2001, Thomas Cartwright, director of the Carter House and a vocal advocate of battlefield preservation, appeared on an episode of the History Channel’s *Save Our History* where he addressed the significance of both the Carter House and Fort Negley and the need for their preservation.

²⁷ STFB Newsletter, November 2000.

²⁸ STFB Newsletters, June, 2001; August, 2001; September, 2001.

Cartwright's appearance took the Franklin battlefield's plight to a national audience.²⁹ In March 2001, the Civil War Preservation Trust published a pamphlet, *America's Most Endangered Battlefields: A Guide to the Ten Most Endangered Civil War Sites in the United States*. The pamphlet included a section on "Other Sites at Risk" that included the Franklin Battlefield. Though seemingly insignificant, this was an important step forward. As STFB acknowledged, many instead placed Franklin in the category of "lost" or "unsavable" battlefields. The following year, CWPT named Franklin fifth on its list of the ten most endangered Civil War sites. The report noted, "Today, the Franklin battlefield is all but gone . . . A few opportunities remain to save portions of the battlefield but most involve reclamation rather than preservation." The Franklin battlefield's appearance on the list underscored that the battle had not completely faded from collective memory. The list gave Franklin substantial recognition and exposure, enabling further preservation efforts.³⁰

On March 5, 2002, CWPT President Jim Lighthizer came to Franklin and held a press conference to raise awareness of Franklin's perilous situation. Lighthizer stated, "Franklin is a poster child for how not to save a battlefield. . . We're here because the Battle of Franklin was an enormously significant battle in American history. It's also on our list because of the tremendous amount of desecration here." Lighthizer's presence in Franklin was not just to raise awareness among Franklin's citizens. He also remarked, "We're here to remind your elected officials of their duty to help with the preservation of what is left of this important moment in American history."³¹

²⁹STFB Newsletter, March 2001.

³⁰Ibid.; STFB, March 2002; "America's Most Endangered Civil War Battlefields: Franklin, Tennessee." *Hallowed Ground*, Civil War Preservation Trust, Vol. 3, No. 1, Spring, 2002.

³¹STFB Newsletter, March 2002.

Thomas Cartwright followed Lighthizer's remarks. He argued the Franklin Battlefield is "not only a Franklin treasure, a Williamson County treasure and a state treasure, it is a national treasure." Drawing upon the past to perpetuate Franklin's memory, Cartwright quoted Washington Gardner, a member of the 2nd Michigan Cavalry and post-war congressman.

According to Gardner:

To me, that field is holy ground. When I visit it I feel like taking the shoes from off my feet and yet there is not a thing to mark it except the Carter House. One hundred years from now, intelligent young men and women who visit there will ask 'where is the field on which the battle of Franklin was fought?' Our children's children for generations to come will go to these places where their ancestors fought and many died, and they will be disappointed and grieved that the government has made absolutely no recognition of the field where they struggled and died for one cause or the other.³²

A few weeks later, the Franklin battlefield received another high-profile endorsement, this time from author, professor, and actor, Ben Stein, famous for his role in *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*. During his visit to the battlefield, Stein received a private tour of the Carter House and also visited the Carter House Gin site, the Collins Farm, Winstead Hill, and the McGavock Confederate Cemetery. After his tour, the self-described "Civil War buff" announced his \$2000 donation to the Civil War Preservation Trust, earmarked solely for the Franklin battlefield. Receiving substantial media coverage, Stein remarked, "This site is sacred. . . It is a symbol of great American courage. The bravery of so many men, North and South, black and white, is overwhelming. When one contemplates their heroism, the idea [is] that as much of it as can be preserved . . . should be preserved."³³

³² Ibid.

³³ "Ben Stein lends name to preservation cause" *The Tennessean*, Williamson A.M., March 19, 2002; STFB Newsletter, March 2002.

In November 2003, Washington, D.C. attorney and direct descendant of John and Caroline McGavock of Carnton, J. Roderick Heller III, purchased the 112 acre Country Club of Franklin that bordered Carnton, an area through which Confederate soldiers moved toward the Federal earthworks under artillery fire during the battle. This purchase, to some in Franklin, represented the “largest battlefield reclamation in history.” Acquisition of the country club not only rekindled passions over the Battle of Franklin’s memory but also ignited a fight over the battle’s memory and legacy. Heller’s precedent-setting purchase filled another mnemonic function. It provided momentum for massive efforts to reclaim and preserve portions of the Franklin battlefield that continued through the battle’s sesquicentennial in 2014. The sheer size of the purchase gave inspiration to many who once thought the battlefield was forever lost. From this point forward, battlefield preservation became and remained a priority for many groups and individuals in Franklin, assuring the continued perpetuation of the battle’s memory.³⁴

Heller’s purchase was only temporary. He agreed to buy the property to prevent it from being sold to developers and would own it until a preservation group could raise the \$5 million asking price. In an open letter to the Williamson County Coalition for the Preservation of Historic Open Space, an independent group seeking to preserve historic spaces, Heller optimistically noted, “Franklin still has unusual potential, even after so much has been lost.” He argued that keeping the land undeveloped would not damage the city’s future. He said, “People move to Franklin today because of its beauty and downtown charm – not because its subdivisions are better than elsewhere.” Heller imposed a deadline of July 5, 2005, for a preservation group or government entity to purchase the land before he would sell it to someone

³⁴ *Columns: Historic Carnton Plantation Newsletter*, Fall 2004; Adam Goodheart, “Civil War Battlefields: Saving the Landscapes of America’s Deadliest War,” *National Geographic*, April, 2005.

else. Although he stressed his interest in battlefield preservation, he also made it clear he was a “businessman” and not interested in losing money. Heller’s intervention was meant “to give the community a reasonable opportunity to decide whether it wished to purchase the site and preserve its open space.”³⁵

Heller’s call for the public to purchase the Country Club of Franklin as a battlefield park ignited a firestorm that often represented a fight to determine the memory of the Battle of Franklin. Members of the Franklin Country Club argued that Heller’s offer was not about the Battle of Franklin or preservation and that such a plan should not hinge on public funding. Speaking to a group of Franklin city leaders, the spokesman for the country club members professed, “We don’t think the real interest is preservation of the battlefield . . . We think it’s the preservation of land in front of Carnton.” Country Club members went even further in their efforts to stop Heller’s proposal, even questioning that the golf course composed actual battlefield land. Using an 1864 map of the battle, the spokesman argued that it did not take place close enough to Carnton to justify a battlefield park there.³⁶

Robert Hicks, author of the bestselling novel *Widow of the South*, disagreed with the country club members. He noted, “The ground embraced by the Country Club of Franklin played a crucial role in the Battle of Franklin.” Hicks then attempted to renew a public memory of the battle stating, “It [the country club] is one of the very few large pieces of the battlefield . . . that retains the integrity of the time and place of that moment in American history.” He also read a

³⁵Mindy Tate, “Couple explains motive for purchasing country club” STFB Newsletter, June 2004.

³⁶“Country Club Members Oppose Battlefield Restoration.” STFB Newsletter, May 2004.

statement from Chief Historian Emeritus of the National Park Service, Ed Bearss, about the significance of preserving the golf course property.³⁷

Even the noted Civil War artist, Don Troiani, became involved in the fight over the golf course. In a letter to the *Review Appeal*, Troiani stated, “Franklin now faces its very last opportunity to save and preserve as public open space, the largest remaining undeveloped fragment of the battlefield.” He challenged the contentions of the country club members and pointed out their unreasonable demands. Though the owners of the country club had willfully sold their own property, its members now insisted the city bail them out rather than they themselves “absorb the costs for clubhouse and course improvements.” Troiani also contended, “Far from the claim that it was ‘an inconsequential battle fought after the outcome of the war was determined,’ the Battle of Franklin remains that turning point in the war in the West that sealed the fate of the Southern Confederacy forever, and out of which, our country was reborn.” He added, “If Franklin’s leadership turns its back on this last opportunity for our nation to have a field in the battlefield at Franklin, they will have lost far more than all the tax dollars that every legitimate study says come with preserved battlefield park tourism. For they will have placed the interests of a segment of a small, private country club membership before the greater interests of the community as a whole and before our nation’s patrimony.” Troiani disparaged the efforts of country club supporters and called for the establishment of a public memory of the Battle of Franklin. In closing, he remarked, “It is my sincerest hope that the city and its leadership will transcend those who would rewrite history, bully officials and use whatever means possible to

³⁷ Ibid.

preserve for themselves what they freely sold and will have a greater vision for their community and our higher angels of history.”³⁸

Exhibiting the varying degrees of opinion over what constituted preservation, the significance of the land, and what composed memory of the battle, country club member Bob Buelterman countered Troiani’s letter in the *Review Appeal*. Among other things, he asked, “Why turn a piece of land that is already preserved in a pristine manner, and is contributing to the community in many ways, into a battlefield? Why not keep the golf course and use it to honor the heroes who died down the road on the Franklin Battlefield? The preservationists can better spend their money on property that was actually part of the battlefield.”³⁹

The fight to reclaim the golf course reawakened another movement for a National Park at Franklin. After calling for the establishment of a city battlefield commission, Franklin Mayor Tom Miller remarked, “The battlefield is lost . . . We’ll never be able to restore the battlefield in the fashion of Bull Run, Shiloh, or Gettysburg, but there’s an opportunity with the country club.” In August 2004, Miller challenged preservation organizations to raise half the money required to purchase the country club and vowed to push the city to match those funds for the purchase. Miller then advocated donating the newly acquired battlefield properties to the federal government for a National Battlefield Park.⁴⁰

On November 30, 2005, after successfully raising the funds, the city of Franklin purchased the Country Club of Franklin from Heller. This transaction assured the continued perpetuation of the battle’s memory. The City of Franklin contributed approximately \$2.5

³⁸Letter to the Editor, *Review Appeal*, August 20, 2004.

³⁹Letter to the Editor, *Review Appeal*, August 26, 2004.

⁴⁰“Battlefield preservation front and center again,” *The Review Appeal*, December 30, 2003; “Mayor’s National Battlefield Park Proposal,” STFB Newsletter, August 2004.

million toward the purchase. Other contributors included the National Park Service’s American Battlefield Protection Program, the Civil War Trust, the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area, and the State of Tennessee.⁴¹

City officials immediately began planning for the creation of a battlefield park. The golf course and other country club property became commonly known as the Eastern Flank Battlefield Park. Plans included restoring the topography to its 1864 appearance, replanting known orchards and wooded areas, reconstructing a period road, and the placement of interpretive signage. Original estimates noted the park could cost as much as \$11.8 million. The city parks director planned to construct the park in phases and predicted that the “transformation” could take as much as fifteen years.⁴²

During construction of the park, memory of the Battle of Franklin was never far away. While surveying potential locations for roadside pull offs and interpretive signage about the battle, volunteers and archaeologist discovered artillery projectiles fired during the battle. Local historians contended that these were fired from nearby Federal cannon. STFB used this as evidence to challenge the assertion made by the country club members that the area encompassing their golf course was not part of the battlefield.⁴³

Years of planning and dreaming about a park replacing the country club came to fruition on November 7, 2013, when state and city officials gathered to dedicate the new access road. The Eastern Flank Battlefield Park was dedicated five months later on April 3, 2014. Many

⁴¹ “But More Good News,” STFB Newsletter, December 2005.

⁴² “We Need Your Help Contact Your Franklin Aldermen,” STFB Newsletter, February 2010; “Franklin’s Eastern Flank Park Moves Forward” STFB Newsletter, February 2007; “Plans presented for changing club into battlefield park,” *The Tennessean*, Williamson A.M., 28 August, 2008; “Battlefield park could cost up to \$11M,” *The Tennessean*, Williamson A.M., July 24, 2007.

⁴³ “Eastern Flank Battlefield Park Road Under Construction,” STFB Newsletter, April 2013.

historians, preservation organizations, and local officials touted the renewed battlefield preservation taking place in Franklin. Prior to the ceremony Tennessee State Historian, Carroll Van West, remarked, “The preservation effort in Franklin has attracted so much state and national support because it’s very rare to see a community come together to save its history.”⁴⁴

Unlike any time in its past, in November 2005, Franklin became fully engaged in battlefield preservation measures. On the same day that the city of Franklin signed a contract with J. Roderick Heller to purchase the Country Club of Franklin, the city also reclaimed another part of the battlefield with the destruction of an infamous and embarrassing eyesore to memory of the Battle of Franklin. Located on one of the battle’s bloodiest locations, Pizza Hut sat on the southeast corner of Columbia Avenue and Cleburne Street. The city had only recently purchased the historic lot for \$300,000. Across Columbia Avenue and near the Carter House, an estimated 200 people gathered to watch the building’s destruction.⁴⁵ After remarks by dignitaries including Franklin Mayor Tom Miller, National Park Service Historian Emeritus Ed Bearss, Civil War Trust President Jim Lighthizer, Tennessee Congressman Lincoln Davis, and Carter House Executive Director Thomas Cartwright, demolition began in a rather creative way that exhibited the recent fervor for battlefield preservation in Franklin. Mayor Miller grabbed a sledgehammer and drove it against the bricks of the Pizza Hut wall. After others had taken swings at the wall the sledgehammer was passed to Cartwright. Long an outspoken advocate for battlefield preservation and locally known for his vociferous feelings against the Pizza Hut, Cartwright slammed the sledgehammer into the wall with such force that he succeeded in punching a hole through the bricks. The assembled crowd cheered in approval. Mayor Miller finished the job

⁴⁴ “Officials Dedicate New Access Road,” STFB Newsletter, November 2013; “Eastern Flank Battlefield Park dedication set for April 3,” www.franklinhomepage.com, March 27, 2014; Kevin Walters, “Franklin Civil War park ready for visitors” *The Tennessean*, March 28, 2014.

⁴⁵ STFB Newsletter, December 2005.

when he climbed into the driver's seat of a backhoe and, according to a STFB Newsletter, "made several destructive swipes that began the actual demolition of the building." The newsletter also recorded, "By sunset, the building was essentially down and removed."⁴⁶

In 2007, J. Roderick Heller made preservation news again when he purchased even more land that had once belonged to his ancestors, the McGavock family of Carnton. Built in 1887 by John and Caroline McGavock's daughter Hattie and her husband George Cowan, Windermere stood a short distance from Carnton and the McGavock Confederate Cemetery. Although the home did not exist at the time of the battle, the Confederate attack at Franklin surged passed this area, making it valuable historic battlefield space. Heller's purchase of Windermere perpetuated memory of the battle by saving 40 acres of this battlefield land. Heller also insured that memory, as well as Windermere, would be preserved forever in December 2011 when he placed a conservation easement on the property, forever prohibiting its development.⁴⁷

On June 19, 2008, Franklin's Charge announced its intention to purchase the one acre Holt House property for \$950,000. The property, across Columbia Avenue from the Carter House and the scene of very heavy fighting during the battle, formerly belonged to the Kenneth Holt Construction Company. The American Battlefield Protection Program of the National Park Service made a substantial contribution to its purchase with a grant of \$492,000 from the Land Water Conservation Fund. The purchase of the Holt House property represented the reclamation of a memory in addition to the reclamation of a battle site. In 1902, George Matthews tore down the nearby Cleburne Cenotaph, perhaps the only monument on the battlefield, and used the stones in the foundation of the house he constructed on this property. With the purchase of the

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷ Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area, *Windermere: Tennessee Historic Structure Assessment*, www.scrbd.com/doc/138569335/Windermere-HSR, December 2012.

site, Franklin's Charge returned the location to a site that perpetuated memory of the battle rather than one representing the loss of and indifference to Franklin's bloody past.⁴⁸

Preservationists in Franklin won many victories in their effort to reclaim battlefield space and perpetuate memory of the battle in 2010. That year, *The Tennessean* announced that Franklin's Charge had moved closer toward purchasing the lot located at 111 Cleburne Street. This property sat adjacent to the site of the former Carter Cotton Gin, which the Heritage Foundation had bought in 1996. In less than two decades, preservationists had made remarkable strides toward reclaiming battlefield spaces, especially in the area of the cotton gin. All of this ensured that public memory of the Battle of Franklin survived.⁴⁹

Another major opportunity to purchase part of the battlefield emerged in 2010. In May, STFB leaders entered into discussions with local landowners to buy a five-acre parcel "near the eastern end of the trench line and in the vicinity of the Collin's Farm." The group's newsletter enthusiastically noted, "We believe this is a truly unique opportunity to purchase an undeveloped parcel of this size so near the Federal line. Additionally, we believe the site contains significant terrain features that will add to the interpretation and understanding of this portion of the battlefield."⁵⁰ Another six acres of open battlefield land adjacent to the five-acre tract had also just become available. The STFB newsletter remarked, "These are exciting times as the sesquicentennial years approach. We look forward to working with all of you to bring these two parcels into the 'saved' column before the 150th anniversary of the battle." STFB described the

⁴⁸ "\$492,000 will pay down debt for land on Columbia Avenue," *The Tennessean*, Williamson A.M., August 20, 2010; "NPS Awards \$3 Million to Preserve 5 Battlefields" *Civil War News*, November 2010; "Property Acquisition Brings Franklin's Charge One Step Closer to Civil War Battlefield Park, *Franklin Life*, July 2008.

⁴⁹ "Battlefield group zeroes in on next targets," *The Tennessean*, Williamson A.M., June 27, 2010.

⁵⁰ "STFB Board Plans Land Acquisition," STFB Newsletter, May 2010.

plot as “pure Franklin battlefield land,” as neither tract contained buildings or other structures. While the organization worked on buying the two plots, it sought to justify the purchase. Reestablishing public memory of this portion of the battlefield, the article stated, “Both parcels are ground that Loring’s division traversed under heavy canister and musket fire as they assaulted the eastern end of the Federal line, and where Adam’s brigade shifted to the west before charging into the enemy’s trenches.” By engaging in such descriptions of the land and what had occurred on it, STFB helped cement the ties in memory between the past and the present.⁵¹

The following month, STFB updated its members on the project’s most recent development. In addition to the eleven acres for sale, another five-acre parcel near the Collin’s Farm became available. The organization hoped to include this tract in its plan to buy the other land “for a total 16 acre purchase of open Franklin Battlefield.” *The Tennessean* reported that a group of neighbors living on nearby Adams Street had banded together to buy the property to prevent its development and the resulting increase in traffic in their neighborhood. STFB hoped to buy the property from these owners and make it part of a reclaimed battlefield.⁵² As with the other parcels, the Loring’s Advance parcel, as it was now known, contained several trees but was free of buildings and other structures. To help pay for such an expensive acquisition, in July 2010, STFB received news that it had been awarded a grant from the American Battlefield Protection Program, part of the National Park Service.⁵³

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² STFB Newsletter, June 2011; “Desire for tranquility saved battlefield land,” *The Tennessean*, April 14, 2011.

⁵³ STFB Newsletter, June 2010; STFB Newsletter, July 2010.

While preservation organizations made progress toward funding the preservation of the five acre Loring's Advance parcel, things collapsed with the other eleven acres, now being called the Willow Plunge property. In August 2011, STFB reported, "We had many conversations with the owner and the Civil War Trust to formulate a plan to buy this important acreage. The property went into foreclosure in March and we then had talks with Green Bank who said they would notify us when it went up for auction." STFB, however, never received notification before the property sold for \$100,000. It seemed that, temporarily, Franklin's preservation movement had relapsed to the days when there was little public memory of the battle. Fortunately, this attitude was no longer pervasive among most of Franklin's citizens and after this setback, preservation continued.⁵⁴

Despite the temporary setback, memory of the Battle of Franklin took another step forward in November 2011. Near the 147th anniversary of the battle, Civil War Trust officials, officers from STFB, and others involved in fundraising gathered to close the purchase of the Loring's Advance property. STFB wasted no time in cementing the public memory of this site and the battle. On November 5, 60 people gathered for a tour of the property sponsored by the organization and led by Battle of Franklin experts Thomas Cartwright and Eric Jacobson. As if to challenge any opposing memory holding that this parcel was not part of the battlefield, Cartwright and Jacobson emphasized the significance of the property during the battle as well as the troop positions and the artillery fire that rained down on the Confederate formations at this site.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ "The Willow Plunge Property Has Been Sold," STFB Newsletter, August 2011.

⁵⁵ "Civil War Trust Signs Purchase Deal on Loring's Advance Parcel," STFB Newsletter, November 2011.

In December 2012, the Civil War Trust added yet another parcel to the reclaimed property near the one-time Carter Cotton Gin. Just south of the Holt House parcel, the CWT purchased a plot containing a Domino's Pizza and a strip mall. Made possible by a partnership with Franklin's Charge and private donors, the fundraising efforts received "a much-needed shot in the arm" when Franklin businessman Calvin LeHew contributed \$200,000 toward purchasing the property. This donation proved that not all business interests in Franklin sought to make their fortunes at the expense of battlefield preservation.⁵⁶

Taking advantage of momentum created by preservation victories mostly in the previous decade, Franklin's Charge led an effort to merge several battlefield acquisitions into a Cotton Gin Park. These properties included the former Pizza Hut site, the Cotton Gin site purchased by the Heritage Foundation of Franklin and Williamson County in 1996, an adjacent property purchased by the Civil War Trust, the Domino's Pizza strip mall, and the former Holt House parcel.⁵⁷

In their June 2012 newsletter, STFB detailed the plans for the projected \$3 million Cotton Gin Park. Speaking to the radical transformation that had taken place in public memory of the Battle of Franklin, Julian Bibb, a Franklin attorney and Franklin's Charge officer remarked, "We've gone from being known as one of America's most threatened battlefields to a national model for battlefield preservation in less than a decade . . . This project will be the centerpiece of a greatly enhanced Civil War offering when we commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Battle

⁵⁶"The Domino's Deal Has Closed," STFB Newsletter, January 2013; "\$200,000 given for Domino's purchase," *The Tennessean*, Williamson A.M., May 4, 2012.

⁵⁷"\$200,000 given for Domino's purchase," *The Tennessean*, Williamson A.M., 4 May 2012.

of Franklin in 2014.” Plans for the site included the construction of a replica cotton gin and a reconstructed version of the Federal earthworks that ran through the site during the battle.⁵⁸

Tourism and Memory

In the 20th century, Williamson County, the city of Franklin, and the various preservation groups and historic sites also promoted memory of the battle through tourism. Much of this memory stressed the Confederate memory of the battle. As Crutchfield and Holiday noted in their bicentennial history of Franklin, people had always come to Franklin to see its unusually large cluster of antebellum homes and to see remaining portions of the battlefield that became smaller every year. Despite this continued loss of the battlefield, there were several points at which Franklin tried to perpetuate a certain public memory of the Battle of Franklin to capitalize on tourism dollars.⁵⁹

Although efforts in the years preceding the Civil War Centennial were mostly unorganized and met with uneven results, the Battle of Franklin Centennial in 1964 largely changed this as many in Franklin used memory of the battle to enhance tourism. Later in the century and into the new millennium, tourism throughout the city and county exploded. Much of this growth resulted from the carefully crafted public memory of the battle promoted by city and county officials. Although the narrative they used to promote that memory was far from new, interested parties used these old memory tropes to great effect. In doing so, they helped solidify the place of the battle in the national memory of the Civil War. This represented a stark contrast with previous attempts to make the Battle of Franklin significant in national memory.

⁵⁸ “Carter Cotton Gin Goal Met,” STFB Newsletter, June 2012.

⁵⁹ Crutchfield and Holiday, 472-473.

The most commonly perpetuated memory of the battle harkened back to an old and familiar quote repeated in Isaac Sherwood's 1923 book that declared, "The Battle of Franklin was. . .the most destructive of human life, in proportion to the number engaged, of any battle in the four years' war." Used in an attempt to cement memory of the battle and have the battlefield preserved as a national park, it failed to resonate. Later in the century, however, promoters of battlefield tourism used the same elements of Sherwood's statement to great effect. Noting the short length of the battle, the number of casualties, and the terrible carnage of the battle, . . .constructed the "5 Tragic Hours" memory of the Battle of Franklin. Tourist literature of the 20th and 21st centuries effectively incorporated this narrative into their promotion of heritage tourism.

Just as the "Five Tragic Hours" memory of Franklin hinged on the old argument of casualties to make the battle significant and thus promote tourism, more recent historians copied a narrative common with veterans of the battle, by comparing Franklin with more iconic engagements of the Civil War. As Wiley Sword noted in *The Confederacy's Last Hurrah*, "At Gettysburg and Franklin the attacking columns of 'Pickett's Charge' and 'Hood's Assault' (in the Central Columbia Pike region) were roughly the same, nearly 11,000 infantry. Both assaults occurred over open ground. Yet, as the veterans of Franklin were fond of pointing out, they had approximately two miles to advance, against about one mile for Pickett's men at Gettysburg." According to Sword, Confederate veterans of Franklin also argued, "There was little artillery support at Franklin while at Gettysburg a heavy bombardment of nearly two hours had occurred prior to the attack. Further, there were no strong earthworks at Gettysburg to contend with, only a low stone wall and barricades of fence rails." Sword also compared casualties between the two battles, remarking, "At Gettysburg the attack had been repulsed with an estimated loss of 6,500

total Confederate casualties, about 500 less than had been sustained at Franklin . . . Thus some concluded that Franklin was not only a more severe ordeal but a greater testament of the worthy fiber of the Southern fighting man.”⁶⁰

As part of its mission to preserve Civil War battlefields and promote a public memory of them, the Civil War Trust repeated this comparison on their website under the headline “Ten Facts About the Battle of Franklin.” In an article addressing the coming battle’s sesquicentennial, *The Washington Times* discussed the Battle of Franklin, its significance, and remaining battlefield and tourist attractions. About the battle, the article remarked, “Historians called it the ‘Antietam of the West.’ Some more cynical called it ‘Pickett’s Charge of the Western Front.’”⁶¹

Another standard memory of Franklin revolved around the Confederate generals killed during the battle. Once again, this memory was not new but one readily picked up by tourist literature. In fact, memory of the dead Confederate generals had always been a standard way of remembering the Battle of Franklin. Between 1913 and 1928, streets appeared on parts of the old battlefield bearing the names of Gist, Carter, Granbury, Strahl, Adams, and Cleburne. Moreover, Battle Avenue came into existence during the same period and before 1940, Battlefield Drive appeared on maps of Franklin.⁶²

In addition to being memorialized in street names, the memory of Franklin’s Confederate generals was also perpetuated in tourist guides. For example, *The Complete Civil War Road Trip Guide* listed Carnton among the handful of sites tourists should visit in Franklin. Like other guides, this one informed visitors that four of the dead Confederate generals lay on Carnton’s

⁶⁰ Wiley Sword, *The Confederacy’s Last Hurrah*, 270.

⁶¹ www.civilwar.org/battlefields/franklin/ten-facts/ten-facts-about-the-battle-of.html ; Judson Phillips, “Revisit the Civil War’s Battle of Franklin,” *The Washington Times*, October 10, 2014.

⁶² Sanborn Map Company, Franklin Maps, 1928/1940; 1913.

back porch after the battle. The guide not only advertised the blood stains remaining on Carnton's floors from its use as a Confederate field hospital, but the blood statistics of the battle. It related, "After five hours of fighting, the Federals had held, taking a total of 2,633 casualties; they again marched throughout the night, and reached the safety of the Nashville defenses early the next morning. But of the 20,000 Confederate soldiers in action, approximately 7,300 were lost as casualties, including an unbelievable twelve generals, six of them being mortally wounded."⁶³

Confederate General John Bell Hood also became a central part of the memory of Franklin promoted by tourist literature. This narrative, long incorporated into the story of what happened at Franklin, stressed Hood's rash decision to attack the Federal works at Franklin, portraying it as a hasty and reckless sacrificing of his men. In fact, Hood's personality dominated memory of the battle in many ways, much as it dominated the battle's historiography. In a handbook discussing the Tennessee Civil War Heritage Trail, the Tennessee War's Commission wrote of Hood at Franklin, "Despite facing unfavorable conditions for a frontal assault and lacking artillery for support, Hood ordered an attack. He sent 23,000 stalwart veterans across two miles of open country in one of the most magnificent charges of the war. It proved to be a suicidal effort."⁶⁴

The Battle of Franklin Centennial

The Centennial of the battle provided another opportunity to remember the Battle of Franklin. This effort hinged entirely on tourism, which contrasted with simultaneous efforts to

⁶³ Michael Weeks, *The Complete Civil War Road Trip Guide: Ten Weekend Tours and More Than 400 Civil War Sites, from Antietam to Zagonyi's Charge*, (Woodstock, Vermont: The Countryman Press, 2009). 128-131.

⁶⁴ The Tennessee Wars Commission, *A Path Divided: Tennessee's Civil War Heritage Trail*, Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, 2013. 37-38.

develop the battlefield and continued urbanization. This celebration, however, was only part of a national, state, and local commemoration of the Civil War Centennial. Although a tumultuous affair from the beginning, those members composing the National Civil War Centennial Commission hoped their festivities “would celebrate America.” According to historian James B. Williams, “At the height of Cold War tensions and in the aftermath of the Joseph McCarthy investigations of Communists in America, [Ulysses S., III] Grant, [Karl] Betts, and their Congressional sponsors all hoped that this celebration of America would fortify the American population against the perceived threat of the ‘red’ invasion. As a consequence, Betts and Grant wanted the centennial to penetrate local communities.”⁶⁵ That is exactly what happened in Tennessee.

In March 1959, the state of Tennessee formed the Tennessee Civil War Centennial Commission, with Stanley F. Horn as its chairman. Under Horn’s direction, the commission sponsored reenactments, erected 85 Civil War historical markers in conjunction with the Tennessee Historical Commission, and assisted in forming and funding the activities of the state’s county Civil War committees, including Williamson County. Not surprisingly, the Williamson County committee devoted a substantial portion of its effort to the 1864 Battle of Franklin, thereby influencing and shaping the battles’ memory. The chair of the Williamson County Centennial Committee was none other than Campbell Brown, also Executive Director of the Tennessee Civil War Centennial Commission. The Commission also published works about the Civil War in the state. These publications included *Guide to the Civil War in Tennessee* and *Tennesseans in the Civil War*, a two-volume work with one volume composed of histories of the

⁶⁵James B. Williams, “The Tennessee Civil War Centennial Commission: Looking to the Past as Tennessee Plans for the Future.” *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*. Winter 2008, Vol. 67 No. 4, 275.

Union and Confederate units formed in the state and another volume that was a roster of soldiers from Tennessee who fought in the Civil War. Moreover, Chairman Horn, whose 1956 *The Decisive Battle of Nashville* became the definitive history of the Battle of Nashville, joined with Campbell Brown, Paul Beasley, Hugh Walker, C. Bufford Gotto, and Thomas Wigginton to author a series of articles for a special edition on the Battle of Nashville. Published in *Civil War Times Illustrated* on the 100th anniversary of the battle, the articles broadly discussed the campaign and provided a sketch of the Battle of Franklin.⁶⁶

Planning to commemorate the Battle of Franklin during the Centennial began early and was clearly aimed at drawing tourists. Frequently that meant capitalizing on other Civil War Centennial celebrations. On November 30 1961, the *Review Appeal* reported that the Williamson County committee had held a discussion “in regard to something Franklin might do to attract tourists here during the Battle of Shiloh next spring.” The Franklin Centennial committee recognized that tourism would be the key part of the festivities.⁶⁷

The Battle of Franklin Centennial was held on November 28-November 30, 1964. Using the Carter House as its headquarters, the Centennial festivities and commemorative activities were completely geared toward tourists. They included a tour of Franklin historic sites that stressed the town’s Civil War heritage, and sites critical to the battle, including Winstead Hill, General Schofield’s headquarters, the Cotton Gin, the McGavock Confederate Cemetery, and young Tod Carter’s grave in Rest Haven Cemetery. Significantly, the tour also stopped at the Confederate Monument in Franklin’s downtown square. Boy Scouts took advantage of a battlefield tour across the still largely open landscape across which the Confederates advanced

⁶⁶ Williams, 281-282; 296; “Hood’s Nashville Campaign: Special Nashville Campaign Edition,” *Civil War Times*, December 1964.

⁶⁷ “War Centennial Committee Meets,” *The Review Appeal*, November 30, 1961.

toward the Federal works. This tour sought to cement a particular memory of the battle by emphasizing the battle's brutality. An advertisement in the Centennial Committee's program noted, "The Battle of Franklin has been called the 'Gettysburg of the West.' It was characterized by gallantry on both sides, and by the viciousness and number of hand to hand combats. This Battlefield Hike is laid out so that you may relive that battle."⁶⁸ Those promoting Centennial activities clearly wished to perpetuate a memory of the battle that revolved around suffering, death, and bravery.

Plans included having reenactors stand guard at the Confederate monument throughout the event, periodically mounting "colorful changes of the guard." Reenactors also participated in "vignette pageants" that took place several times at the Carter House and depicted "noteworthy events which took place during the battle." A reenactment of the battle served as the highlight of the Centennial activities. Taking place on the Claiborne Kinnard farm near Carnton, the main reenactment drew a disappointing crowd of 5,000 people and represented a less than authentic event with outlandish uniforms and personnel communicating on the field with walkie-talkies.⁶⁹

The Williamson County Centennial Committee's effort to commemorate the Battle of Franklin drew the ire of those who questioned the value of remembering the battle. In a local paper, Bill Peach expressed consternation at the fact that the Battle of Franklin was being "celebrated" and that "The long hard march from the first skirmish of 1861 to the eventful dream of a lasting truce in the courthouse in Appomattox... will never end... if it has to come through Franklin every hundred years." Peach also remarked "We celebrate this November the craving in human nature for admiration through being superior to another, and the maleficent effects of this

⁶⁸ Williamson County Civil War Centennial Committee, *Battle of Franklin Official Guide and Program*.

⁶⁹ Ibid; Confederate High Command to Williamson County Civil War Centennial Committee, 15 June 1964, Williamson County Archives, FOLDER; Crutchfield and Holiday, 447.

craving.”⁷⁰ Peach exhibited an opinion of one who believed memory of the battle should remain buried.

Campbell Brown, in a letter to the editor, defended the use of the word “celebration,” indicating that it was not a jubilant celebration but was used in the spirit of commemorating a solemn event. Defending Centennial planners in Franklin, he remarked that they had “worked hard to make them meaningful commemorations of the deeds of bravery and self-sacrifice done by so many men in so short a time on those bloody fields a hundred years ago.” He contended that they had produced “something with which the present generation may understand history. . .” Aggressively defending those who fought at Franklin and those wishing to perpetuate the memory of the battle, Brown added that “no such cynical motive impels the man who stands up and gets himself shot at; what does actuate him is love of country.” He then remarked that the “long hard march” did not come through Franklin every one hundred years but argued, “. . .the problem is with us every day.” He urged people to rededicate themselves “to the solid principles for which men of honor have died, and to a better understanding of the future through an intelligent contemplation of the past.”⁷¹

Mrs. Joe Bowman, expressing a Lost Cause memory of the battle, also took issue with Peach’s words saying, “The centennial of the Battle of Franklin is in no sense a celebration of war and its horrors but rather a commemoration of the gallant defense of our Southland by her sons in her hour of need. The rededication of our monuments is but an act of remembering with

⁷⁰ Letters to the Editor, Unidentified newspaper clipping. Williamson County Archives, Vertical File, Civil War folder. November 26, 1964.

⁷¹ Letter to the Editor, Unidentified newspaper clipping. Williamson County Archives, Vertical File, Civil War folder. 26 November, 1964.

love and gratitude the sacrifices of our grandfathers and kinsmen.” Bowman asked, “Would it not be a blame for us if their memory part from our land and hearts?”⁷²

Bowman also remarked, “To all who would cry Forget, I say Remember! If we are to forget our Southern dead and remove memorials to them from our midst then take down the tomb of the Unknown Soldier and then mow down the acres of tombstones in Arlington Cemetery. Also destroy the markers of Iwo Jima, Normandy and Anzio and don’t stop there—get those in Bellau [sic] Wood, the Marne, San Juan Hill, the Alamo and Valley Forge. Although Bowman only spoke of the “Southern dead,” she clearly connected the memory of the battle to valor and sacrifice, typical of the Lost Cause. To her, however, remembering the Confederate veterans of Franklin at the battle’s Centennial and perpetuating their memory was no different than remembering the sacrifice made by American veterans in more recent conflicts.”⁷³

Memory and the Growth of Heritage Tourism

Several factors explain why tourism to Franklin surged in the last decade of the 20th century and first part of the new millennium. In part, this coincided with a national explosion of interest in the Civil War following the 1990 debut of Ken Burns’s landmark television documentary, *The Civil War*. According to historian Robert B. Toplin, the series stirred “the public’s hunger for knowledge about the war. In the weeks and months after broadcast, attendance at Civil War battle sites rose significantly, and books about the subject sold briskly.”⁷⁴

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Robert Brent Toplin, Ed. *Ken Burns’s The Civil War: Historians Respond*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996). xv-xvi.

The growth of heritage tourism also explained this renewed surge of tourism to Franklin. Franklin had much to delight these heritage tourists including scores of antebellum homes and a charming downtown shopping district but chief among them was the battlefield. In 2005, the Civil War Preservation Trust developed *Blue, Gray, and Green*, a publication oriented toward community leaders, preservationists, and other groups and individuals. Based on its own research, *Blue, Gray and Green* touted the benefits of heritage tourism to Civil War battlefields, including the amount of money tourists brought to the local economy, how much money tourism at Civil War battlefields saved in taxes levied on local citizens, and the number of jobs they supported. In its 2007 report, the study focused on 13 battlefields, including Franklin. The study concluded that battlefield tourism in Franklin supported 32 jobs and that retail expenditures by tourists totaled \$1,425,000. The CWPT also found that tourists at Civil War battlefields were “likely to be in their late 40s or early 50s, well educated and affluent, and having household incomes between \$63,700 and \$78, 500.” In their call for the preservation of these battlefields, the CWPT clearly connected tourism with memory of the battlefields and encouraged community leaders to contribute to their preservation for their own benefit.⁷⁵

STFB likewise promoted their preservation agenda by perpetuating memory of the battle for tourists. In 2003, they released “A Compendium of Civil War Sites in Williamson County for Possible Battlefield Parks.” This document identified Civil War sites in Franklin and Williamson County that held the potential to be saved and reclaimed as Civil War battlefield parks. Like the CWPT, STFB connected memory of the Battle of Franklin with tourism. The report stated, “The idea is to establish a series of parks, some large, some small, at our important Civil War sites that

⁷⁵ Civil War Preservation Trust, *Blue, Gray and Green, A Battlefield Benefits Guide For Community Leaders: How Saving Civil War Battlefields Makes \$\$\$ and Sense*, (Washington, D.C., 2005).

together with sites currently maintained by other historical groups, can collectively tell the history of Williamson County and Middle Tennessee.” Most importantly, however, the report noted, “We still have many open parcels of Civil War Battlefields here in Williamson County. . . . These could be a series of interpretive parks throughout the county to attract and educate today’s visitors, and to educate the children of coming generations. It’s our American history—we are responsible for making sure it is kept.” Among the many sites included, the report mentioned the Carter House, the site of the Carter Cotton Gin, and the Battleground Academy campus along Columbia Avenue. It also identified the Loring’s Advance property, the Willow Plunge parcel, and the Collins Farm.⁷⁶

Ironically, the same development that contributed so much to the destruction of the Franklin battlefield and the battle’s memory also became its savior. Construction of new homes and businesses had consumed much of the battlefield’s physical spaces, thereby erasing much of the public memory of what had occurred. At the same time, however, it brought increased infrastructure that later facilitated massive growth in heritage tourism that enabled perpetuation of the battle’s memory. In the early 1970s, Interstate 65 reached the outskirts of Franklin, giving tourists easy access to downtown and sites associated with the battle. Also, the completion of the Cool Springs Galleria ensured a steady stream of tourists to downtown Franklin and the battle sites. Historians Crutchfield and Holiday state, “When shoppers went to the Galleria, they were reminded to visit Historic Downtown Franklin and vice versa.” They added, “. . . during the Christmas season, the city began renting trolleys and buses to carry shoppers on a route that

⁷⁶ Sam Huffman, Ed., Compiled by Save The Franklin Battlefield, “A Compendium of Civil War Sites in Williamson County for Possible Battlefield Parks,” www.franklin-stfb.org/parkplan.pdf. August 27, 2003.

included both commercial areas.” Those who came from their shopping at Cool Springs could also come to downtown Franklin and visit some of the battlefield sites a short distance away.⁷⁷

Increased infrastructure meant an increase in heritage tourism for Franklin, much of it focused on the Battle of Franklin. This heritage tourism relied on a certain memories of the battle that had been promoted by preservation groups, Franklin’s historic sites, and city and county government entities. These memories included the tragic casualty figures of the battle, the dead Confederate generals, the sad story of Captain Tod Carter, and Hood’s perceived blunder during the battle. In March 2007, the Williamson County Convention and Visitors Bureau reported that tourism revenue in Franklin had increased 111% over the previous ten year, to \$1.6 billion.⁷⁸

In 2008, the Williamson County Convention and Visitors Bureau reported that tourists placed more than \$233 million into the local economy each year. This money, according to the organization, saved local citizens \$329 each year in taxes for services provided by Franklin and Williamson County. Tourism was Tennessee’s second largest industry and Williamson County was the sixth most popular spot for tourists. Much of this success resulted from the effort to perpetuate memory of the battle and entice tourists to visit battle-related sites. *The Tennessean* reported, “New development, increased infrastructure, and historic preservation have been Franklin’s biggest focal points during the past decade during the city’s rise as one of Tennessee’s fastest growing cities.” Heritage tourism had led the way for this fast paced growth in Franklin.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Crutchfield and Holiday, 39.

⁷⁸ “Williamson County Tourism Task Force Makes Recommendations,” *Franklin Life*, March 2007.

⁷⁹ “Visitors bureau thirst for more travelers” *The Tennessean*, Williamson A.M., August 21, 2008; “Visitor spending reaches new levels Williamson County holds securely to No. 6 spot in state,” *Williamson Herald*, 10 October, 2012; “Big projects coming along” *The Tennessean*, February 27, 2013.

In 2007, Kellye Murphy, a Williamson County Convention and Visitors Bureau official noted, “Heritage tourism is the hot niche market these days.” This niche directly reflected the new status the memory of the Battle of Franklin enjoyed. Among the top factors making heritage tourism a “hot niche market,” Murphy listed Carnton, the recent publication of Robert Hicks best-selling book *Widow of the South*, the Carter House, and a future Franklin Battlefield Park as major contributors. Significantly, each of these factors held major importance to the battle and perpetuating its memory.⁸⁰

Historic Preservation Plans

Historic preservation plans revealed another way in which people both remembered and forgot the Battle of Franklin. In November 2001, STFB announced that Williamson County officials retained the services of Joseph Brent of Versailles, Kentucky to design a Civil War park in Franklin. His plan designed an interpretive park, largely centered on the now vacant campus of Battle Ground Academy. It also included establishing a battlefield visitor’s center in the old Franklin High School gymnasium, near the Carter House. Brent’s design, however, was all for naught as Williamson County officials decided to build the new public library on the site.⁸¹

In November 2001, Mary Means and Associates, a community planning firm, published a historic preservation plan for the city that was sponsored by the city of Franklin and the Tennessee Historical Commission. Although the plan addressed many issues affecting historic

⁸⁰ “Tourism: Franklin battlefield park should bring in more” *The Tennessean*, *Williamson A.M.*, July 22, 2007.

⁸¹ STFB Newsletter, November 2001; Joseph E. Brent and Maria Campbell Brent, *Phase I of an Interpretive Plan for the Battle of Franklin, Tennessee*. (Versailles, KY: Mudpuppy and Waterdog Inc., 2003).

preservation in Franklin and identified several preservation goals, it only made passing references to the battlefield. Not a single preservation goal specifically treated saving, remembering, or reclaiming the battlefield. While the plan claimed that the Battle of Franklin was a significant part of Franklin's past, its failure to incorporate any substantial measures to preserve, protect, or reclaim major portions of the battlefield cast doubts on its sincerity to help the public remember the Battle of Franklin.⁸² At a meeting to discuss the plan, Mary Means was challenged by Carter House officials and Battle of Franklin historians to defend her decision not to treat the battlefield as a top preservation priority and capture the "significance of this incredible battle." She replied that "It's not just about the battlefield." Admitting her preservation plan did not give the battle "front-row treatment" and that her charge did not include developing a battlefield preservation plan, Means acknowledged, "The battle was . . . probably the most important day in history here, but it wasn't the only day."⁸³

In 2004, the Heritage Foundation and Williamson County, through a \$20,000 grant provided by the American Battlefield Protection Program of the National Park Service, hired Phil Walker and Phil Thomason to develop a preservation plan specifically designed for the battlefield. Unlike previous proposals, Walker and Thomason stressed the significance of the battle in Franklin's history and took active steps to perpetuate a public memory of the battle. Among other goals, the authors intended to develop a plan that "identifies and prioritizes the most significant properties and resources associated with the battle." In addition to summarizing the battle and its aftermath, Walker and Thomason identified several themes and narratives that could be used to interpret the battlefield. Not surprisingly, they included age old narratives of the

⁸²Mary Means and Associates, Inc., *Historic Preservation Plan: Franklin, Tennessee*, November 2001.

⁸³"Retailing, battlefield concerns aired over city preservation plan" *The Review Appeal*, February 13, 2002.

battle such as “The Level of Carnage,” “The Loss of Confederate Generals,” and “Hood’s Recklessness.” The authors, however, also included new themes that expanded public memory of the Battle of Franklin such as the “Effectiveness of the Union Army,” “Community As Hospital,” and “Reconstruction.” Moreover, Walker and Thomason made specific recommendations about properties to reclaim, how to interpret them, and how to fund their purchase.⁸⁴

Memory and the Infrastructure of Heritage Tourism

In addition to the growth of heritage tourism, a corresponding growth in the infrastructure that supported it also served to perpetuate the battle’s memory. This infrastructure included the erection of historical markers, the development of driving tours, cell phone applications, and Federally-designated heritage areas. Although some historical markers were erected in the early part of the 20th century, this did not become a common way of promoting the battle and its memory until during and after the Civil War Centennial. These historical markers, like the tourist literature that guided people to them, perpetuated memory of the battle using the Five Tragic House, the dead Confederate generals, and Hood’s reckless attack narratives.

Beginning with the Centennial, the establishment of historical markers indicating significant battle sites and corresponding narratives of events became a major way of remembering the Battle of Franklin. Throughout the remainder of the 20th century, numerous historical organizations, both individually and collectively, erected historical plaques around the battlefield. The Tennessee Civil War Centennial Commission, in conjunction with the Tennessee

⁸⁴ STFB Newsletter, April 2004; “Preservation planners emphasize many aspects of battle,” *The Tennessean*, Williamson A.M., March 24, 2004; Philip Walker and Phil Thomason, *Franklin Battlefield Preservation Plan*, Heritage Foundation of Franklin and Williamson County, 2004.

Historical Commission and the Williamson County Centennial Commission wrote and dedicated several of these historical markers between 1961 and 1965. Under the influence of Tennessee Centennial Commission Chair Stanley Horn, these markers largely advanced the Lost Cause narrative of the battle. STFB dedicated markers at the Collins Farm and where a section of the Federal breastworks once existed. In 1998 STFB marked the location of the Federal forward line during the battle in conjunction with the Salt Creek Civil War Roundtable. The organization also erected a marker at the Carter Gin House site with the Williamson County Historical Society in 1998. The Williamson County Historical Society placed markers at Fort Granger in 1989 and at the McGavock Confederate Cemetery and Carnton in 1994.⁸⁵

Local citizen unaffiliated with preservation organization also helped mark and memorialize the Franklin battlefield. In September 2009, Margie Thessin, owner of *Franklin on Foot* (a local tour company) and Pam Lewis, a former Franklin alderwoman, funded the erection of eight new signs that stated “Entering the Battlefield of Franklin.” The *Review Appeal* noted that the signs would indicate the size and scope of the battlefield and would “capitalize on public interest in Franklin’s history.”⁸⁶

Memory of the Battle of Franklin climbed to new and unprecedented levels in 2011 when designer Sam Billingsley created the battlefield’s first free and downloadable cell phone application. This application, using “augmented reality” gave users more information about the battlefield when they visited Franklin, allowing a new generation to be educated about the battle at the touch of a button. The application used “augmented reality” and it compiled images taken from the user’s cell phone camera and added “layers of historic information over the information

⁸⁵ Williams, *The Tennessee Civil War Centennial Commission*, 296; Rick Warwick, *Historical Markers of Williamson County*.

⁸⁶ “Signs show bloody battle’s lines,” *The Review Appeal*, September 23, 2009.

captured.” In February 2011, *The Tennessean* reported that the city of Franklin and the Williamson County Convention and Visitors Bureau were pursuing a \$72,500 grant to fund and create a self-guided cell phone tour of the battlefield. The tour became operational in July 2012 and it included eleven stops at eight Franklin city parks. Among the prominent battlefield stops, were the Collins Farm, Winstead Hill, the new battlefield park (then being called Assault on the Cotton Gin), the new Eastern Flank Park, and Fort Granger. Franklin city officials saw the potential of the new tool to reach area youth. Director of Parks Lisa Clayton stated that the new technology “provides an opportunity for another generation to engage in such a great story in our history.” Franklin’s Vice Mayor remarked, “These are exciting times in Franklin,” and he hoped that Franklin’s youth would take advantage of the new technology to learn about the battle. Ken Moore, Franklin’s mayor, explained that one of the challenges confronting park visitors was “What does it mean?” Moore boasted that with the new cell phone tour, visitors would not need to ask that question and search for an answer. Using their cell phones, visitors to the city’s Winstead Hill park could immediately obtain the answer. With such a tool, its designers and promoters harnessed technology and enabled it to perpetuate memory of the battle.⁸⁷

Reenactments

During the 20th century, reenactments became a major way of remembering and commemorating Civil War battles. Franklin proved no exception. The first major reenactment of the Battle of Franklin occurred during the centennial festivities commemorating the engagement,

⁸⁷ STFB Newsletter, January 2011; “Franklin seeks grant for cell phone tour of Civil War sites,” *The Tennessean*, February 16, 2011 ; City of Franklin Parks and Battlefield Preservation Commission, “Franklin Historic Parks Audio Cell Phone Tour,” www.franklin-gov.com/government/parks/historic-parks-audio-tour ; “Audio Tour of Franklin Historic Parks Now Available,” STFB Newsletter, July 2012; “Franklin Historic parks audio cell phone tour,” www.youtube.com/watch?v=jNNgfM8hDM&list=UUaDJdA9NLVQOuXVbx1JV0cw&index=81.

although it lacked in authenticity and enthusiasm. The next major reenactment of the battle took place during the 125th anniversary celebration in 1989. On a frigid day in the first weekend of December, 30,000 spectators gathered to watch reenactors recreate the battle on open property just north of Franklin. Unlike the Centennial reenactment, this one proved more authentic; there were no walkie talkies on the field. The town helped the reenactment perpetuate the battle's memory by screening a special showing of *Gone With the Wind* at the Franklin theater. Carnton and the Carter House also held special exhibits, including the coat that Confederate General Patrick Cleburne wore when he died at Franklin.⁸⁸

The biggest reenactment commemorating the battle took place October 1-3, 2004 in Spring Hill, Tennessee, fifteen miles south of Franklin near the 140th anniversary of the battle. In addition to the Battle of Franklin, this event also recreated the Battles of Spring Hill and Nashville. It included approximately 8,700 reenactors, 900 horses, and 30 cannon. STFB estimated that between 70,000 and 80,000 spectators gathered to watch the event and Rob Hodge of *Wide Awake Films*, who recorded the event, called it the "reenactment of the decade."⁸⁹

Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area

After 57 years of inactivity, since the last proposal for a national battlefield at Franklin failed, Congress finally acted again on behalf of battlefield preservation. In 1996, Congress passed legislation creating the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area. A new type of development in historic preservation and conservation, the TCWNHA created a partnership between the Federal government, the State of Tennessee, and local communities and historic sites that promoted, educated, and interpreted the Civil War heritage of Tennessee across the

⁸⁸ Crutchfield and Holiday, 487.

⁸⁹ STFB Newsletter, September 2003; October 2004.

state. Once established, the TCWNHA greatly improved the public memory of the Civil War in Tennessee. The TCWNHA provided a comprehensive interpretation of the Civil War in Tennessee, sponsored exhibits (including exhibits at interstate rest areas throughout the state) and teacher workshops, published works on the state's Civil War history, and developed a website that interpreted the conflict throughout the state. It also helped provide funds through grants to preserve many facets of Tennessee Civil War history. The heritage area's master plan spoke to the significance of memory and the need for such an organization. It noted,

As soon as the fighting was over, the Civil War landscape became a powerful source of memory and identity to generations of Tennesseans because that landscape was more than battlefields, where gallant soldiers consecrated the soil with their blood and sacrifice. The landscape extended to many places that citizens associated with the war and Reconstruction efforts, and the memories became powerful because people saw, interacted with, and remembered these places on a daily constant basis.”

The master plan for the TCWNHA continued,

The churches where soldiers billeted, the house hallways where the doctors amputated, the farmsteads where soldiers stole and plundered, the roads they traveled in masses of thousands at a time, the places where people no longer enslaved could finally gather and begin to grasp the reality of new opportunity, and the cemeteries where loved ones could be buried but never forgotten—these too were significant places of conflict, memory, and identity for generations of Tennesseans.⁹⁰

Public memory of the Battle of Franklin substantially improved as a result of the TCWNHA.

The Heritage Area's master plan, developed by the Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University, established several geographic corridors for interpreting the Civil War in Tennessee. The plan also addressed five interpretive themes mandated by the same legislation that had created the TCWNHA. These themes were War Clouds on the Horizon, 1850-1861; Battles and Leaders, 1861-1865; Occupation and Homefront, 1861-1865;

⁹⁰ Center for Historic Preservation, “Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area: A Master Plan for the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area.” *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, Vol. LXI, No. 2., Summer, 2002.

Reconstruction, 1865-1875; and Legacies, 1870-1930. Some of the corridors loosely followed key railroads in the state. The Louisville and Nashville Corridor as well as the Nashville and Decatur Corridor began in north central Tennessee and stretched south to St. Joseph, in south central Tennessee. These corridors interpreted Hood's Tennessee Campaign and encompassed Civil War sites associated with both Franklin and Nashville. The master plan identified several Battle of Franklin sites that were included in the TCWNHA. These sites were the Franklin Battlefield National Historic Landmark (Winstead Hill, Roper's Knob, the Carter House, Carnton, Lotz House, Harrison House, and Fort Granger) properties, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, which had been used as a hospital after the battle, the Confederate monument on Franklin's town square, and the McGavock Confederate Cemetery.⁹¹

Tennessee Civil War Trails

Memory of the Battle of Franklin also benefitted when the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area partnered with the Tennessee Department of Tourism Development in 2007 and created the Tennessee Civil War Trails program. This program became part of a five-state Civil War Trails program that erected historical markers with graphics at both major and minor Civil War sites throughout the state. More markers were added in subsequent years. Franklin's memory benefitted from the erection of several markers on prominent battlefield sites, including the Lotz House, Carter House, the Carter Cotton Gin, Carnton, McGavock's Grove, and the McGavock Confederate Cemetery. The brochure accompanying the markers also helped improve memory of Hood's 1864 Campaign with its narrative. Noting that the campaign, "effectively end[ed] his campaign as the remnants of the Army of Tennessee fled to Tupelo,

⁹¹ Ibid.

Mississippi, the brochure made Hood's campaign a major interpretive event of the Civil War in Tennessee and thus improved public memory of the Battles of Franklin and Nashville.⁹²

Commemorating of the Battle of Franklin

Much as they had throughout the late 19th and early 20th century, commemorations of the Battle of Franklin took many forms and stressed various memories of the battle. Often, these anniversary events included candlelight tours of the McGavock Confederate Cemetery, guided tours of the battlefield with noted Franklin historians, and the erection and rededication of various battle-related monuments. Later commemorations corresponded with the renewed interest in battlefield preservation, and a new way of remembering the Battle of Franklin emerged.⁹³

On the battle's 142nd anniversary in 2006, a coalition of historic organizations arranged a ceremony in Franklin's city square that included the now annual lighting of luminaries. Franklin Mayor Tom Miller welcomed the crowd and explained that, "These luminaries represent 10,000 husbands, brothers, and sons." In case anyone doubted the purpose of the event, Miller unequivocally explained, "The real message was reconciliation." The ceremony also included reenactors and two military bands, a Federal band that entered the square from the north and the Confederate band entered from the south. STFB reported that the bands alternated "playing songs popular with their respective army before joining together to play songs dear to the men of both sides."⁹⁴

⁹² Tennessee Office of Tourist Development, *Tennessee Civil War Trails*, 2012.

⁹³ STFB Newsletter, September 1999.

⁹⁴ STFB Newsletter, October 2006; November 2006; Kevin Walters, "Franklin remembers its defining battle" *The Tennessean*, 1 December, 2006.

Ceremonies were not the only events commemorating the Battle of Franklin that stressed reconciliation. Reenactors also pushed the agenda. In 1999, Confederate reenactors led a march from Winstead Hill to the Carter House, following the same path marched by Confederate soldiers in 1864. In later years, a group of Federal reenactors began marching to the Carter House from Fort Granger. As *The Tennessean* noted, when the two sides met at the Carter House, “Contrary to their ancestors, they shook hands and embraced one another upon that meeting.” These events almost exclusively perpetuated a reconciliationist memory of the Battle of Franklin.⁹⁵

Commemoration of the battle continued in numerous ways throughout the first decade of the new millennium. Though efforts had continuously faltered between 1900 and 1939 to remember the Battle of Franklin by establishing a national park the issue was once again resurrected in 2005. The effort gained momentum and national attention as Senators Lamar Alexander and Bill Frist introduced Senate Bill S955 directing the National Park Service to conduct a feasibility and suitability study for the inclusion of several Battle of Franklin sites into the National Park system.⁹⁶

At a Senate hearing before the Subcommittee on National Parks on June 28, 2005, Sen. Alexander explained that the Civil War Preservation Trust had named Franklin one of the ten most endangered Civil War battlefields. He further related that “Efforts to protect this vital piece of our history have gained momentum in recent years, particularly as the City of Franklin has wrestled with the challenges of rapid development and economic growth.” Alexander’s attempts

⁹⁵ Battle of Franklin Trust Collection, “Anniversary of the Battle of Franklin (1999); “Sad anniversary celebrates reconciliation,” *The Tennessean*, Williamson A.M., December 6, 2010.

⁹⁶ U.S. Senate. Senate Hearing 109-101, “Hearing before the Subcommittee on National Parks of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.” June 28, 2005.

to perpetuate a memory of the battle overstated its significance when he remarked, “The Battle of Franklin was truly a turning point in the War Between the States.” He also called Franklin “One of the most important battles of the war.” To support his testimony, Alexander summoned old memory tropes of the battle, telling the subcommittee that “. . . the battle resulted in more than 9,000 casualties and decimated the Army of Tennessee, including six Confederate generals.”⁹⁷

Franklin Mayor Tom Miller also testified before the subcommittee. Miller fought to further establish Franklin’s memory by expanding the national park vision he had articulated on the battle’s 140th anniversary. He argued that the Battle of Franklin “forever [changed]our community’s history and that of our nation.” Like Alexander, Miller overstated Franklin’s importance in his attempts to perpetuate the battle’s memory. While calling Franklin one of the war’s “principal battles,” Miller acknowledged that its story is “lesser known than many others that it matches in significance, such as Gettysburg and Manassas.” In addition to informing the committee about the interpretive narratives of the battle established by the city of Franklin’s battlefield preservation plan, Miller’s testimony repeatedly imposed a narrative of reconciliation on the Battle of Franklin. He stated, “Since this battle was the last major conflict of the war, in a very real sense, the reconciliation of our great Nation began in Franklin, Tennessee—North and South, blacks and whites, brothers and brothers.”⁹⁸

The Special Resource Study mandated by Senate Bill S955 concluded that the Battle of Franklin sites it analyzed met the established criteria for national significance. The study’s authors, however, concluded that including these sites under National Park Service management was neither suitable nor feasible. One of the NPS’s primary reasons for not recommending

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

Franklin's inclusion into the park system, was the compromised historical integrity of the battlefield. Less than five percent of Franklin's battlefield was preserved and open to the public visitation. The remaining landscape possessed little historical integrity and the study concluded that no additional agricultural property that was part of the core battlefield would meaningfully contribute to understanding its historic setting. Moreover, it found that a majority of current owners of historic battlefield properties remained disinclined to transfer them to the National Park Service. Also problematic was Franklin's very fragmented and non-contiguous battlefield sites, which would make management and administration very difficult and prohibitively expensive. Summarizing the reasons for not recommending the Franklin battlefield as another unit of the park service, the report concluded, ". . . the fundamental visitor use opportunities found in Franklin, while worthy of continued historic preservation action, duplicate those found in existing units managed by the national park system." While memory of the Battle of Franklin had improved, it was too late to save enough of the core battlefield to interest the United States government in making Franklin a unit of the National Park Service.⁹⁹

Remembering the Battle of Franklin also took place outside of preservation activities, heritage tourism, and traditional commemorative realms. During World War II, the U.S. Navy commissioned one of its aircraft carriers, the USS *Franklin* (CV-13). The ship served in the Pacific Theater, where, on March 19, 1945, it was severely damaged by two Japanese bombs. 724 men died in the attack and only the valorous, superhuman efforts of its crew saved the vessel from sinking. The *Franklin* never returned to active service and was decommissioned in February 1947 and sold for scrap in 1964.

⁹⁹ National Park Service. "Battle of Franklin Sites, Williamson County, Tennessee, Special Resource Study," <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm?parkID=468&projectID=18664&documentID=35881>, 39-59.

Some controversy exists over the naming of the USS Franklin. In *The Franklin Comes Home*, author A.A. Hoehling claimed that the Franklin was named after the Battle of Franklin rather than founding father Benjamin Franklin. In 2002, while answering a question posed during a tour of the newly purchased Collins Farm property, STFB cited Hoehling's book, claiming, "CV-13 was named for the Civil War Battle of Franklin." According to the Naval Historical Center, however, the USS *Franklin* and its four predecessors received their name from Benjamin Franklin rather than the battle. Moreover, former crew members affectionately refer to the *Franklin* as "Big Ben." Nevertheless, the mere existence of this controversy suggests the power of memory concerning the Battle of Franklin.¹⁰⁰

On July 30, 2014, the United States Postal Service dedicated its collection of 1864 commemorative Forever stamps marking the sesquicentennial of the Civil War's third year. The stamps in the 1864 collection depicted the Battles of Mobile Bay and Petersburg. Previous stamps in the series commemorated the Battles of Fort Sumter, Bull Run, New Orleans, Antietam, Vicksburg, and Gettysburg in various scenes. Noticeably missing among these depicted battles was the Battle of Franklin. This stamp series represented one more way in which American remembered the Civil War during the sesquicentennial years—and which battles of the conflict remained most entrenched in American memory. This way of remembering the Civil War, however, was not completely new. The USPS released a similar series of stamps during the

¹⁰⁰ STFB Newsletter, September 2002; A.A. Hoehling, *The Franklin Comes Home*, (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1974); Naval History and Heritage Command, *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, "Franklin V (CV-13)," www.history.navy.mil/research/histories/ship-histories/danfs/f/franklin-v.html

Centennial that commemorated the anniversaries of the Battles of Fort Sumter, Shiloh, Gettysburg, the Wilderness, and Appomattox.¹⁰¹

Believing a stamp commemorating the Battle of Franklin would promote tourism, preservation, and celebrate the battle's place in public memory, many within Franklin lobbied the Citizen's Stamp Advisory Committee to issue such a stamp. Franklin's Charge, along with the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area, and STFB led the effort, encouraging their members to sign a petition urging the CSAC to issue one or more Battle of Franklin stamps. STFB hoped to collect 10,000 signatures on the petition to the Committee. Supporters argued that a stamp dedicated to the Battle of Franklin would be beneficial for a number of reasons. According to Franklin's Charge President Julian Bibb, it would present an "opportunity for education, to remember the battle, and the ongoing opportunity for economic development, tourism and bringing more and more attention to the Civil War in Franklin." Indicative of the battle's memory, the CSAC took no action and never issued a Battle of Franklin commemorative stamp.¹⁰²

In many ways, the failure to obtain a commemorative stamp for the Battle of Franklin characterized memory of the battle and highlighted the many successes and failures. In 1900, the year Nicolas Cox unsuccessfully introduced legislation for a Franklin National Battlefield, and for the next three decades, memory of the battle remained strong and deeply entrenched within the minds of those whose lives had forever changed because of it. As those individuals faded,

¹⁰¹ "Battles of Mobile Bay, Petersburg Memorialized on Civil War Forever Stamps Today," July 30, 2014, www.about.usps.com/news/national-releases/2014/pr14_041.htm ; www.uspsstamps.com/stamps/series/civil-war-centennial

¹⁰² STFB Newsletter, July 2012; www.archive.tennessean.com/VideoNetwork/1724150807001/The-Battle-of-Franklin-Stamp.

however, so did the memory of the battle. Due to this lacking memory, more development consumed the battlefield.

Over the course of the 20th century collective memory of the battle underwent significant transformations. Although it remained obscure for most of the century, this memory surfaced periodically, primarily near the battle's centennial in 1964. Beginning in the 1990s and continuing to the sesquicentennial celebration in 2014, the growth of heritage tourism, as well as massive reclamation efforts, brought memory of the battle back from near extinction. Despite this resurrection, memory of the battle still experienced setbacks. The NPS failed to see the potential of a national battlefield at Franklin, the battle never received recognition on a stamp, and preservationist could not reclaim part of the core battlefield on the old Battleground Academy campus. Nevertheless, the heroic efforts of groups such as STFB, Franklin's Charge, the Heritage Foundation and others helped rekindle memory of the battle through their reclamation victories. On the other hand, memory of the Battle of Nashville did not experience the same level of success.

Chapter 7 - Remembering the Battle of Nashville

Just as it had in Franklin, development worked against the perpetuation of a unified and coherent memory of the Battle of Nashville. Despite the considerable efforts of preservation groups to solidify memory their attempts to remember the Battle of Nashville were unable to gain the necessary backing to halt the pace of development, which slowly obliterated what remained of the battlefield. Memory of the Battle of Franklin similarly lagged throughout the 19th and most of the 20th centuries due to its fractured nature. By the end of the millennium, however, Franklin had largely reclaimed memory of its battle as well as many of its significant sites. Unfortunately, the same success never occurred with memory of the Battle of Nashville. Although memory of the battle spiked during certain periods and some battle sites were indeed saved, most of the battlefield succumbed to busy residential areas, making it impossible to reclaim them. Moreover, Nashville's forward thinking vision failed to incorporate a sufficient appreciation of its past, ensuring that Nashville's memory never obtained the same status that the Battle of Franklin achieved. This resulted in less commemoration of the Battle of Nashville and a memory that remained fragmented.

Organizations

As in Franklin, a number of organizations formed in Nashville that attempted to solidify memory of the battle in various ways. When possible, they worked to preserve parts of the battlefield and educated others about the battle, often by publishing literature. The Nashville Battlefield Association became the first organization that worked to preserve a central portion of the battlefield and induced the federal government to map and mark its significant locations. Organized in 1909, the NBA realized that "an extended park" was impractical due to the value of

the land. Including both Federal and Confederate veterans of the battle they lobbied for support from many officials and notable personalities including Union General Grenville Dodge, Major General Frederick D. Grant, son of Federal commander Ulysses S. Grant, and Congressman Joseph W. Byrns of Tennessee.¹

Under the leadership of May Winston Caldwell, spouse of a prominent Nashville businessman, the Ladies Battlefield Association helped memorialize the battle. Their major contribution was the acquisition, funding, and erection of the Battle of Nashville Peace Monument. Organized in 1913, the LBA's efforts were interrupted by the outbreak of the First World War, which caused the project to lay idle for nearly a decade. The LBA resumed its labors in 1921, culminating with the dedication of the monument in 1926. In 1927, the ladies lent their support to a project started by state librarian John Trotwood Moore. This project sought to restore Fort Negley and extend Capitol Boulevard through south Nashville, connecting the fort with other Nashville historic sites including the Nashville City Cemetery and Reservoir Park, the location of Blockhouse Casino during the Civil War.²

Founded in 1966, Nashville's Metropolitan Historical Commission helped the public remember the Battle of Nashville. In addition to erecting historical markers at various battlefield sites, the commission regularly engaged in the publication of historical brochures, tour guides, and other materials that discussed the Battle of Nashville as well as the city's Civil War history. Moreover, the Metro Historical Commission engaged in preserving sites, including a Nashville

¹ Park Marshall, "Nashville Battlefield Merits Attention" *Confederate Veteran*, Vol. XVII, February 1909, 221; "Nashville Battlefield Association" *Confederate Veteran*, 1909, 53; "Nashville Battlefield Association Movement to Establish Boulevards and Markers" *Confederate Veteran*, Vol. XVIII, 1910, 14.

² "Battlefield Monument to be dedicated this month," *Nashville Tennessean*. 3 October, 1926; Letter to the Editor, May Winston Caldwell, *Nashville Tennessean*, June 11, 1927.

mansion that served as a field hospital during and after the battle. The organization also joined into partnerships with other groups, helping to ensure that some memory of the battle remained.

The Battle of Nashville Preservation Society formed in 1992. Founded by a group of local citizens who were watching the last vestiges of the battlefield disappear before their eyes, BONPS sought to remedy the situation. The organization not only worked to save the few remaining battle sites, but also sponsored and published numerous articles, brochures, and books about the battle, and hosted symposiums where both experts and amateur enthusiasts gathered to discuss the battle, attend lectures, and deliver papers. Moreover, the BONPS established coalitions with other preservation-minded groups and government agencies to achieve their goals.³

Preservation of Sites Promoting Battle of Nashville Memory

Just as it had at Franklin, a major way of remembering the Battle of Nashville involved efforts to preserve battlefield land. In this endeavor, however, Nashvillians never enjoyed the same success with battlefield preservation as their counterparts in Franklin. Unlike at Franklin, affluent residential areas, rather than commercial developments, largely consumed the Nashville battlefield during the mid-20th century. These upscale residential developments dotting the Nashville battlefield rarely became available for reclamation. Nevertheless, those working to protect and reclaim the battlefield experienced some success in preserving spaces that helped perpetuate memory of the Battle of Nashville.

³ <http://www.bonps.org/about-us/>

Fort Negley

Fort Negley did not experience another preservation surge until 1980, when Nashville's Metropolitan Historical Commission authorized a study that advocated using the fort as a tourist site, noting that no other attraction focused on Nashville's Civil War story. To help ensure a high number of visitors to the site, the plan recommended the construction of recreation facilities at Fort Negley, such as picnic tables, restrooms, and parking lots. It also recommended interpretive programs incorporating various living histories and ceremonies to be monitored by the MHC. The study estimated the project would cost approximately \$183,000. Significant to perpetuating memory of the Battle of Nashville, this study also advocated relocating the Battle of Nashville Peace Monument to Fort Negley. The plan, however, never became a reality due to insufficient funds. Meanwhile, Fort Negley continued deteriorating atop Saint Cloud Hill, as did the battle's memory.⁴

In the early 1990s, Nashville Mayor Phil Bredesen appointed a commission to recommend options for Fort Negley. The committee's final report in 1994 took substantial steps toward perpetuating and promoting memory of the Battle of Nashville. It recommended measures focused on the long-term stability and preservation of the fort. Other goals included telling Nashville's Civil War story "in a comprehensive way" and it also sought to "recapture for Nashvillians and . . . visitors this tangible, many faceted symbol." The report concluded, "The lesson to be learned from the Civil War story can best be taught on the site of Nashville's most dramatic remaining relic of the time." The commission's desired to use Fort Negley as a site of memory for the Battle of Nashville. Much like the 1980 study of Fort Negley, the commission

⁴ Miller, Wihry, and Lee Inc., "Fort Negley Park: a study for the Metropolitan Historical Commission," August, 1980. Fort Negley Archives; Charlie Appleton, "Battle still rages over Fort Negley" *The Nashville Banner*, July 4, 1984.)

recommended a \$400,000 stabilization project, the development of a master plan for future site action, and interpretation of several themes at Fort Negley, including the Battle of Nashville.⁵

In keeping with the Fort Negley Advisory Committee's report to Mayor Bredesen, an outside organization hired by the city submitted the Fort Negley Master Plan in 1996. The plan took significant steps toward making Fort Negley Park a major site promoting Nashville's Civil War history and perpetuating memory of the Battle of Nashville. Using goals established by the committee, the plan's authors proposed making the fort ". . . a world-class historical resource and destination point for tourism and Civil War research." Phased development guidelines for accomplishing these goals were established. Early phases called for stabilizing the fort and repairing much of its stone structure, making it safe for visitors. They also included conducting preliminary site research and archaeology, followed by cosmetic improvements to the fort, and the development of interpretive themes and signs emphasizing the Battle of Nashville. The master plan's initial phase culminated with improved public access and an enhanced visitors' experience, primarily through construction of an interpretive center. Later phases included establishing a Civil War center at Fort Negley. Memory of the Battle of Nashville took a giant step forward when the fort opened to the public in 2004 and for the first time in decades, visitors could walk among the "interpretive ruin." The Fort Negley Visitor's Center opened three years later.⁶

⁵ Fort Negley Advisory Committee, "Report to Mayor Philip Bredesen from the Fort Negley Advisory Committee" June, 1994. Fort Negley Archives.

⁶ "Fort Negley Master Plan," Hickerson-Fowlkes, Inc.,; Michael Emrick,; Hawkins Partners, Inc.; and Zada L. Law, 1996.; Krista Castillo, "Fort Negley: Past, Present and Future," *The Tennessee Conservationist*, (January-February, 2013), 24-27.

In 2007, Nashville's Metro Parks Department gathered a team of experts to update the 1996 Master Plan in response to recent changes at Fort Negley. These changes included the anticipated departure of the Nashville Sounds baseball team and the planned demolition of Greer Stadium. Among its recommendations, the team advised moving forward with the creation of the Nashville Civil War Center at Fort Negley. According to their revised plan, the center would include a museum of 60,000-80,000 square feet and an archaeological lab. The supplement also called for increased parking, additional walking paths, and "restored physical and programmatic connection[s] with the nearby railroad and Nashville City Cemetery."⁷

Disagreement existed over Fort Negley's memory and preservation. While some Nashville citizens preferred to see the fort preserved and established as a museum promoting the city's Civil War history and the Battle of Nashville, others wanted the site demolished. Moreover, some Nashvillians called for Fort Negley's redevelopment as a green space and wildlife preserve. In a letter to the editor of *The Tennessean*, Battle of Nashville Preservation Society member Ross Massey spoke in favor of preserving Fort Negley, responding to those opposing the site's preservation. Massey argued, "One criticism is that Nashville doesn't need a Yankee fort to remind it of the war. We obviously feel this huge stone fort is more than a damn Yankee fort." Massey added, "It could serve as an educational instrument capable of increasing and diversifying Nashville's tourist base," commenting on Fort Negley's potential usefulness as an historic site. In another letter to *The Tennessean*, Catherine Hill also defended Fort Negley's preservation as an historic site. Hill lambasted one proposal for the demolition of the fort as a "slap in the face to the memory of the black Tennesseans who patiently built the fort and to the

⁷ "Nashville Civil War Center at Fort Negley: 2007 Supplement to the 1996 *Fort Negley Master Plan*." Fort Negley Archives.

thousands of black and white Tennesseans who fought whole heartedly for the Union.” Hill also remarked, “Most people prefer to forget that among the ‘Yankee enemy foreign aggressors’ were many white Tennessee regiments.” She proposed commemorating those regiments, in addition to black soldiers who fought for the Union, “by inscribing their names on a wall in the renewed fort,” thereby invoking an African-American memory of the Battle of Nashville.⁸

In their objections to Fort Negley’s restoration, some individuals exhibited a Lost Cause memory of the Battle of Nashville. Responding to a call to incorporate the African-American experience during the battle, one citizen complained that a proposal to include an African-American “workers camp” at the fort would be “historically irrelevant and boring.” He instead proposed a Lost Cause interpretation, arguing, “A more important exhibit would explore the gallant service rendered by African-American regiments in their bloody repulse at Peach Orchard Hill.” The writer further opined, “Perhaps the mayor and his task force have found it politically incorrect to question the motives of Gen. Thomas and his so-called liberating Yankee army.” James Hoobler, curator of art and architecture at the Tennessee State Museum responded to “neo-Confederates” and asserted that Fort Negley’s restoration was not a new idea. Lamenting “How soon we forget,” Hoobler reminded readers that the idea to rebuild Fort Negley originated with the United Daughters of the Confederacy.⁹

The preservation of Fort Negley seemingly provided the impetus for the preservation of more Battle of Nashville sites. In the late 1990s and into the new millennium, a few different

⁸ Charlie Appleton, “Battle still rages over Fort Negley” *The Nashville Banner*, July 4, 1984; Renee Elder, “City divided over the future of Fort Negley” *The Tennessean*, February 18, 1994; Ross Massey, “Rebuilding fort will take cooperation,” *The Tennessean*, May 18, 1992; Catherine F. Hill, “Fort part of state’s history, rebuild it” *The Tennessean*, May 20, 1992.

⁹ Joe Foxall, “Negley should salute gallant black soldiers” *The Nashville Banner*, August 3, 1994; James A. Hoobler, “Rebuild Fort Negley is an old battle cry” *The Nashville Banner*, July 27, 1994.

organizations managed to save some important, albeit small sections of the Nashville battlefield. Although they comprised only a fraction of the battlefield and were mostly positions held by Confederates during the battle, these acquisitions made substantial contributions toward promoting memory of the battle, particularly in an era when development had almost totally destroyed the once vast landscapes of the engagement. In 1998, the Nashville-based Joseph E. Johnston Camp of the Sons of Confederate Veterans purchased what remained of Granbury's Lunette and, after preparing the site for visitors, officially dedicated it as a Confederate park and memorial on December 15, 2001. In this earthen fortification, the battered remains of Granbury's Confederate brigade (that still carried his name although Granbury fell at the Battle of Franklin) defended the extreme eastern flank of Hood's line during the Federal assault against the position on December 15, 1864.¹⁰

Preservationists also experienced some success in saving portions of three redoubts that guarded the Confederate left flank on December 15, 1864. The Calvary United Methodist Church painstakingly protected remnants of Redoubt Number Three, located a few feet behind the church. The Battle of Nashville Preservation Society acquired Redoubt Number One and eventually placed interpretive markers and a cannon at the site. Meanwhile the Tennessee Historical Society successfully marked and preserved some of the earthworks from Redoubt Number Four, by then surrounded by a gated community in a south Nashville subdivision.¹¹

The BONPS saved another important Battle of Nashville site in April 2006 when it purchased a small parcel near the top of Shy's Hill, the site that Federal forces successfully overran on December 16, 1864, leading to the collapse of the entire Confederate line. Moreover,

¹⁰ Dick Knight, "Granbury's Lunette Confederate Park and Memorial Nashville, Tennessee," <http://tennessee-scv.org/camp28/Granbury.html>)

¹¹ www.bonps.org

BONPS leased another parcel at the crest of Shy's Hill, that the Tennessee Historical Commission had acquired in 1954. The organization added interpretive signage and constructed a trail leading to the summit. A Minnesota flag flew at the top of the hill, in recognition of the fact that soldiers from that state suffered the highest casualties taking the position.¹²

In addition to battle-related spaces, the establishment and preservation of other historic sites helped perpetuate memory of the Battle of Nashville. These sites included homes existing at the time of the battle as well as cemeteries, monuments, and memorials commemorating various aspects of the battle and Nashville's Civil War past. Established in 1867, the Nashville National Cemetery became a site of memory for the Battle of Nashville. Originally containing the remains of 16,489 Federal soldiers and army civilians, the cemetery also included the graves of 3,590 unknown soldiers and civilian employees. Along with a large number of graves for Union soldiers and civilians who died across middle Tennessee and southern Kentucky, the cemetery also held the remains of Federal soldiers who fell during the Battle of Nashville and were originally buried across the battlefield. Moreover, the cemetery became the final resting place for soldiers whose remains had been transferred from hospital burial grounds throughout the region. Among the headstones, a monument to the Minnesota soldiers who fell at Nashville stands, erected by the state of Minnesota in 1920.¹³

Mount Olivet Cemetery also became a site of memory for the Battle of Nashville. Originally established as a cemetery in 1856, Mount Olivet became the final resting place of 1,500 Confederate soldiers, who were removed from other Tennessee cemeteries and battlefields,

¹² Ibid

¹³ Mark Zimmerman, *Guide to Civil War Nashville*, (Nashville: Battle of Nashville Preservation Society), 2004; John Allyn, "Nashville Military Burials" www.bonps.org/features/nashville-military-burials/.

including the Nashville battlefield, in 1869. The Ladies Memorial Society of Nashville supervised the reinternment of these remains on the newly established Confederate Circle in Mount Olivet. In addition to these remembrances, Mount Olivet perpetuated Confederate memory of the battle in other ways. Several veterans of the battle, including Confederate Generals Benjamin F. Cheatham, Thomas B. Smith, and William Bate, were laid to rest in the cemetery. In 1998, the Joseph E. Johnston Camp of the Sons of Confederate Veterans opened Confederate Memorial Hall in one of the cemetery's unoccupied mausoleums. Inside the memorial, the camp placed panels providing biographical and military information on many notable Confederates buried in the Mount Olivet.¹⁴

Travellers Rest

One site that helped solidify the memory of the Battle of Nashville was Travellers Rest. The plantation home of Judge John Overton, a political ally and contemporary of Andrew Jackson, held an important connection with the battle. Owned by John Overton, Jr. during the Civil War, Travellers Rest served as Confederate General John Bell Hood's headquarters for thirteen days before the battle commenced. On December 16, 1864, Confederate soldiers tenaciously defended Peach Orchard Hill, part of the Overton property, from gallant attacks made by Federal soldiers. Falling out of family possession in 1946, the property was purchased by the Louisville and Nashville Railroad purchased the property in 1951. Three years later, the railroad donated the property to the National Society of Colonial Dames of America in Tennessee, who opened it the following year as a museum dedicated to the life of John Overton,

¹⁴ Mark Zimmerman, *Guide to Civil War Nashville*, 30; John Allyn, "Nashville Military Burials" www.bonps.org/features/nashville-military-burials/; "Confederate Monument At Nashville" *Confederate Veteran*, Vol. I, February 1893, 62; http://tennessee-scv.org/camp28/Memorial_Hall.html.

as well as the social and political history of 1830s Tennessee. Despite its 1830s interpretation, Travellers Rest did not turn its back on its important connections with the Battle of Nashville. It promoted memory of the battle by giving Civil War-related tours upon request and also published “Civil War Walking Tour on the Grounds of Travellers Rest,” a brochure that stressed the role of the home and family during the Battle of Nashville.¹⁵

Belle Meade

Like Travellers Rest, the acquisition of Belle Meade plantation helped several generations remember the Battle of Nashville. Built in the 1820s by John Harding, his son William Giles Harding inherited the plantation upon his death in 1886. The “Queen of Tennessee Plantations,” had become famous for breeding and racing horses by the 1880s. The house fell out of Harding family hands in 1904 and in 1953 the State of Tennessee purchased the home. Soon thereafter, the Association for the Preservation of Tennessee Antiquities began operating it as a museum focused on life in the 1890s. Belle Meade, however, perpetuated the Battle of Nashville in one important way. On the morning of December 15, 1864, the first day of the battle, a cavalry skirmish occurred on the home’s front lawn. During the engagement, several stray bullets scarred the columns of the stately mansion, providing a physical reminder of the battle for future visitors.¹⁶

Belmont

The preservation of Belmont Mansion, a few miles north of the battlefield, also helped many people remember the Battle of Nashville. Completed in 1853 by Adelia Hayes and her

¹⁵ Fletch Coke, “Civil War Walking Tour on the Grounds of Travellers Rest,” Travellers Rest Archives, Undated.

¹⁶ Zimmerman, *Guide to the Battle of Nashville*, 68.

second husband Joseph Acklen, the Italian villa included a zoo, large gardens, and a 105-foot-tall water tower. During the battle, the home served as the headquarters of Federal General Thomas Wood, while Union soldiers used the water tower as a signal station. In 1890, two Philadelphia women purchased Belmont and began operating a school for girls that eventually became Ward-Belmont, then Belmont University. Entered on the National Register of Historic Places in 1971, the Belmont Mansion Association began restoring the home and operating it as a museum the following year, dedicated to telling the story of Adelia Acklen.¹⁷

Remembering the Battle of Nashville at the Centennial

As it did for other communities between 1961 and 1965, the Civil War Centennial celebration provided an opportunity for Nashvillians to remember the Battle of Nashville. Memory of the battle had only surfaced periodically throughout the 20th century, and by 1964 most of the Nashville battlefield was already lost to modern development. Commemorating the battle at the centennial therefore was one of the few ways still available to remember it. Exhibiting a memory for the battle that had not existed in many years, members of the Davidson County Civil War Centennial Commission eagerly set themselves to the task of planning the festivities.

Memory of the Battle of Nashville combined several traditional mnemonic frameworks. The Centennial gave more than a passing nod to the Lost Cause, but narratives stressing reconciliationist themes, sometimes merged with the Lost Cause interpretation, dominated the celebration. An information bulletin describing activities planned for the Centennial urged its readers, “DON’T MISS THIS CHANCE TO VISIT AN AREA RICH IN THE HISTORY OF

¹⁷ Zimmerman, *Guide to Civil War Nashville*, 46; <http://www.belmontmansion.com/#!/history/ckzu>.

THE WAR BETWEEN THE STATES AND TO WALK OVER THE FIELDS MADE SACRED BY THE BLOOD OF YOUR FOREBEARERS.” Worth noting is the Lost Cause’s misappropriation of the Civil War as the, “War Between the States” as well as the bulletin’s failure to recognize the fact that little of the battlefield remained available to “walk over.” A largely local document, this bulletin catered to those living in Nashville whose ancestors primarily fought for the Confederacy.¹⁸

Centennial organizers exhibited their largely reconciliationist memory of the battle when professing that they were brushing “aside one hundred years to commemorate the devotion, courage, and patriotism of the Americans who fought each other so tenaciously in defense of their convictions in the fields about Nashville.” The festivities, the planners remarked, were meant to inspire Nashvillians “with those attributes that made our forebears the loyal patriots they were. In these days of anxiety we need to rekindle brightly those fires of patriotism to surely light the paths into the future.” Tying memory of the Battle of Nashville to the United States’ Cold War with the Soviet Union and the treat of worldwide communist domination, the organizers concluded, “For unless we move with certainty and confidence, motivated by the magnificent heritage left us by God-loving forefathers, we cannot decisively impress those who would destroy this great and unselfish nation of ours.”¹⁹

In conjunction with the Davidson County Civil War Centennial Commission, *Civil War Times Illustrated* published a special edition that served as the official program of the Battle of Nashville Centennial. The magazine not only highlighted the activities for the Centennial, but

¹⁸ “Centennial of Battle of Nashville, Dec., 11, 12, 13, 1964, Information Bulletin #1.” Nashville Public Library. Special Collections, Nashville Room.

¹⁹ “Battle of Nashville Centennial Commemoration Program” in *Civil War Times Illustrated*, Special Edition, Battle of Nashville. December, 1964.

also exhibited the ways in which Nashville remembered the battle. Stanley Horn, Chairman of the Tennessee Civil War Centennial Commission and author of *The Decisive Battle of Nashville*, wrote an article for the edition that stressed the intricate planning occurring before and during the battle, painting it as unusual among Civil War battles. Horn continued perpetuating a memory of the Battle of Nashville arguing for its place as an extremely decisive engagement of the war. Other articles addressed the reasons for Hood's Tennessee Campaign, and what had happened to Hood's army at Franklin. In other articles, Paul Beasley and Buford Gotto discussed the Federal fortification of Nashville and Thomas Wigginton detailed the operation of cavalry during the Nashville Campaign.²⁰

Substantial commemorative activity took place during the Battle of Nashville Centennial. Planners designed a tour of Nashville's Civil War sites including the Tennessee State Capitol, the Western Military Institute, Belle Meade Mansion, and Travelers Rest. Another tour specifically focused on the Nashville battlefield. Beginning at Fort Negley, the tour proceeded to surviving Confederate redoubts, Shy's Hill, and Peach Orchard Hill. Much of this tour, however, consisted of driving through the residential areas of Nashville that now occupied the battlefield, seeing historical markers, and viewing what precious little of the Nashville battlefield remained.²¹

In addition to the tours, many other festivities marked the Centennial. Displays showcased weapons and other accoutrements used by soldiers of both sides during the battle. The artifacts on display also included books, diaries, letters, maps, and reproductions of Civil War uniforms. A Civil War concert was held featuring the United States Continental Air

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Ibid

Command Band playing popular music of both Federal and Confederate armies. Actors also delivered monologues from speeches of Abraham Lincoln and Robert E. Lee. The theme of reconciliation was heavily emphasized in a parade that included local dignitaries, members of the Davidson County Civil War Centennial Commission, representatives of Confederate heritage organizations, and scores of reenactors portraying Federal and Confederate soldiers of the infantry, cavalry, and artillery.²²

A reenactment of the Battle of Nashville became the main event of the Centennial celebration. Taking place in Nashville's Percy Warner Park near the Steeplechase Arena, reenactors recreated four different phases of the two-day battle in an hour and a half. The surrounding hills became prominent scenes of the battle such as Shy's Hill and Peach Orchard Hill, and also accommodated spectators gathered for the event. Appropriately remembering the Battle of Nashville, the Centennial concluded with memorial services to the soldiers killed in the battle. Nashville Post 5 of the American Legion conducted a memorial service for the Union dead at the Nashville National Cemetery while the Confederate Historical Society of Nashville sponsored a memorial service for the Confederate dead atop Shy's Hill.²³

Those planning the Centennial festivities attempted to provide Nashvillians with a longer lasting way to remember the Battle of Nashville. In August 1963, the Davidson County Civil War Centennial Commission discussed the possibility of restoring Fort Negley for both educational and tourism purposes. The commission also sought to clean up the fort, which had long been neglected and was so overgrown that police officers did not like to patrol the area alone. One of the commission members, Allen Cornelius, Jr., remarked that the fort proper had

²² Ibid

²³ Ibid

“become almost an impenetrable jungle” and was a “refuge for winos and hoboes.” Estimating that the cost of restoration could rise as high as \$250,000, ideas for its use included developing color films on the Battle of Nashville and the city’s occupation by Federal soldiers in 1862 that would be shown at the fort.²⁴ This admirable plan, however, never came to fruition and Fort Negley largely did not play a major role in the Centennial celebration.

Remembering Nashville in Heritage Tourism

Long known as Music City, Nashville continued to cultivate country music tourism late in the 20th century and into the new millennium. Nevertheless, some efforts to promote the Battle of Nashville through heritage tourism did occur. Although dwarfed in both number and space by advertisements promoting country music tourism, Civil War heritage tourism in Nashville was not completely ignored. In the *2014 Tennessee Official Vacation Guide*, advertisements appeared for a Battle of Nashville driving tour available via the Metro Nashville Historical Commission’s website. This guide even referred to Nashville as “the decisive battle of the Civil War.” In the same publication, a very small advertisement for Belle Meade Plantation appeared that took approximately one eighth of the page. Likewise, small listings advertised Fort Negley. Unlike Franklin, however, memory of the Battle of Nashville was not strong enough to allow for the vigorous pursuit of heritage tourism.²⁵

Other publications emerged that likewise sought to promote memory of the Battle of Nashville through heritage tourism. In 2002, the Battle of Nashville Preservation Society, in conjunction with Nashville’s Metro Historical Commission, produced *Driving Tour and Map of*

²⁴ Ed Huddleston, “Fort Negley Restoration: Civil War Committee Eyes Plan” *The Nashville Banner*, August 15, 1963.

²⁵ *2014 Tennessee Official Vacation Guide*

the Battle of Nashville. Adapted from a tour brochure produced in 1983 by the Metro Historical Commission, this brochure also referred to Nashville as “The Decisive Battle of the Civil War.” The brochure contained short narratives, maps, photographs, and directions to Shy’s Hill, Granbury’s Lunette, Fort Negley, Travellers Rest, and Redoubt One, and other Civil War sites around Nashville.²⁶ As part of the Civil War Sesquicentennial, the Metro Historical Commission and the Battle of Nashville Preservation Society produced a very similar driving tour brochure featuring much of the same material. In addition to updated photographs of sites, the brochure also included an assortment of historic photographs and quotes from some of the battle’s participants.²⁷

Erection of Historical Markers

As they had at Franklin, Tennesseans remembered the Battle of Nashville through the erection of historical markers. Though the Nashville Battlefield Association and the Nashville Industrial Bureau had placed some markers on the battlefield in 1912, these markers paled in comparison to those erected later. In preparation for the Tennessee Civil War Centennial, the Tennessee Historical Commission placed markers specifically dedicated to the Battle of Nashville at significant sites on the battlefield. Covering both days of the battle, these markers highlighted its prominent sites and events. In addition to the markers placed by the Tennessee Historical Commission, Nashville’s Metropolitan Historical Commission also erected markers dedicated to the Battle of Nashville. These Nashville battlefield markers held a special mnemonic significance, especially in the decades to come. As development and other

²⁶ “Driving Tour and Map of The Battle of Nashville Dec. 2-16, 1864: The Decisive Battle of the Civil War” Battle Of Nashville Preservation Society and Metropolitan Historical Commission, 2002.

²⁷ Metro Nashville Historical Commission, “Battle of Nashville: A Driving Tour of the 1864 Battlefield” Undated.

infrastructure consumed the battlefield, these markers provided the only physical way of perpetuating memory of the battle.²⁸

Just as in Franklin, the Tennessee Civil War Trails markers also highlighted Battle of Nashville sites. Moreover, these markers provided a continuous interpretive theme allowing tourists and sightseers to learn about and reflect on Hood's entire Tennessee Campaign of 1864. A cooperative venture between the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area and the Tennessee Department of Tourism Development, the program helped further memory of the Battle of Nashville through heritage tourism. The TCWNHA area also formed a coalition among the different historic sites associated with the Civil War in Tennessee, including those sites associated with the Battles of Franklin and Nashville, helping promote and advertise these sites. While the Tennessee Civil War Trails markers allowed viewers to remember the Battle of Nashville, these markers enabled other forms of memory. Many of these markers not only included text but also maps, primary documents, and historical images of their subject matter. Marked sites significant to the Battle of Nashville included Belle Meade, Fort Negley, Shy's Hill, Travellers Rest, Mount Olivet Cemetery, and the Nashville National Cemetery.²⁹

Reenactments

Although a few reenactments of the Battle of Nashville took place between 1964 and 2004, they never helped perpetuate memory of the battle to the same degree that reenactments had promoted memory of the Battle of Franklin. With Nashville, the largest reenactment

²⁸ *Civil War Times Illustrated* Special Edition, The Battle of Nashville; <http://www.nashville.gov/Historical-Commission/Services/Historical-Markers/Military-Sites.aspx>; Williams, "The Tennessee Civil War Centennial Commission."

²⁹ Tennessee Office of Tourist Development, *Tennessee Civil War Trails*; Center for Historic Preservation, "Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area: A Master Plan"

occurred during the Battle of Nashville Centennial festivities. A more modest reenactment comprised part of the 140th Battle of Franklin reenactment, which was staged in Spring Hill, Tennessee in 2004. Occurring the day after the much celebrated Franklin reenactment, a greatly reduced crowd of spectators witnessed cavalry galloping past them. This, and the distribution of a magazine-style program containing articles about the Battle of Nashville, helped its organizers perpetuate memory of the battle.³⁰

Other Ways of Remembering the Battle

From time to time, vestiges of Battle of Nashville memory appeared in various forms. As the city grew throughout the 20th century, new roads began appearing on the old battlefield with names invoking the landscape's bloody past. Among them one could find Battery Lane, Hood's Hill Road, Thomas Benton Smith Road, and Battlefield Drive. All of these roads sprang up around the former killing grounds. The battlefield may have largely been lost, but signs of the former struggle still marked the physical landscape. Nashvillians, however, also experienced other ways of remembering the battle in the 20th and 21st centuries.

A bizarre incident in 1977 temporarily reawakened memory of the Battle of Nashville. In Franklin, local authorities responded to the scene of what they believed was a recent murder. At the location, they found a coffin unearthed from its grave with a hole smashed through its top. A headless corpse lay on top of the coffin. Investigators called Dr. William Bass, head of forensic anthropology at the University of Tennessee. Bass estimated the individual whose body had been discovered had been dead for approximately two to six months. He also determined that the

³⁰ Save the Franklin Battlefield Newsletter, "The 140th Anniversary Battle of Franklin Reenactment" October, 2004; "140th Anniversary Battle of Franklin: Nashville, Spring Hill, Columbia; October 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, 2004" Souvenir program.

“homicide victim” died from a blow to the head, was a white male with brown hair who weighed approximately 175 pounds, and was between 26 and 29 years old. Over nearly a three week period, local newspapers closely followed the story and updated their readers at every turn. Eventually, forensic evidence and historical analysis established that the “homicide victim” was in fact Colonel William Shy who had commanded the 20th Tennessee Infantry and had died atop Compton’s Hill (later known as Shy’s Hill) during the Battle of Nashville. Rather than a recent homicide victim, vandals looking for artifacts had targeted Colonel Shy’s grave, leaving it in such a condition that it looked like a grisly murder scene. Confused by the excellent state of preservation of Colonel Shy’s embalmed body, Bass famously quipped, “I got the age, sex, race, height and weight right but I was off on the time of death by 113 years.” Although an awkward mistake, it succeeded in bringing memory of the battle to the forefront for a short period.³¹

Among other activities attempting to establish a unified collective memory of the Battle of Nashville, the Battle of Nashville Preservation Society, in conjunction with the Tennessee Historical Society, sponsored symposiums dedicated to study of the battle. The organizations held one such symposium for the 140th anniversary of the battle in December 2004. Cosponsors included the Metro Historical Commission, the Nashville Public Library, and the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area. Held at the Nashville Public Library, the two-day symposium included ceremonial festivities invoking memory of the 1864 battle, such as presentation of the colors by the 13th United States Colored Troops Infantry Color Guard and welcoming remarks by Nashville mayor Bill Purcell. Forrest’s Cavalry Corps, CSA Color Guard retired the colors. Topics and panels varried but mainly focused on preservation and development of the Nashville

³¹ John T. Dowd, “The pillaged Grave of a Civil War Hero,” *Nashville Banner*, December 31, 1977; *Nashville Banner*, 4 January, 1978; *Nashville Banner*, 6 January, 1978; *Nashville Banner*, 9 January, 1978.

battlefield, the role of United States Colored Troops during the battle, and the female experience during the battle and occupation of Nashville. Other panels concentrated on the military history of the battle itself.³²

As it had at Franklin, the new millennium brought new attention to the Nashville battlefield. Continuing its mission to save endangered Civil War battlefields, the Civil War Preservation Trust listed Nashville on its ten most endangered battlefields in 2003 alongside Bentonville, Richmond, Petersburg, Champion Hill, and Chancellorsville. In February 2003, the CWPT featured the Nashville battlefield in its publication *America's Most Endangered Battlefields*. The CWPT succinctly remarked, "Little remains of the Nashville battlefield." The publication did, however, tout the noble preservation work of the Battle of Nashville Preservation Society.³³

Over the course of the 20th century, memory of the Battle of Nashville radically shifted and became much more comprehensive and diverse. During this period, those remembering the battle and perpetuating its memory began incorporating the experience of African-Americans that until this point, had largely been ignored. Historians incorporated the experience of the United States Colored Troops into their work and those involved with Fort Negley's preservation recommended including the role of African- Americans into the narrative of the fort and battle. Other ways of remembering the African- American experience during the Battle of Nashville emerged. In April 2006, the African American Cultural Alliance of Nashville dedicated a statue in the Nashville National Cemetery in honor of the United States Colored Troops who fought in the battle. The artist modeled his sculpture on William Radcliffe, a member of the 13th United

³² Tennessee Historical Society, "The Battle of Nashville, December 1864: 140th Anniversary Symposium," Fort Negley Archives.

³³ CWPT, "America's Most Endangered Battlefields" February, 2003.

States Colored Troops reenactment group, which took its name from one of the African-American units that participated in the Battle of Nashville.³⁴ The inclusion of the African-American experience has not only enriched the narrative of the Battle of Nashville, but is a lasting testament to the African-American soldiers who fell on the battlefield.

Conclusion

Much as it had with the Battle of Franklin, memory of the Battle of Nashville changed substantially over the course of the 19th and 20th centuries. At the end of the 19th century, many Federal veterans still remembered the battle and referred to its decisive nature. Much of this feeling still existed during efforts to establish a national park at Nashville and memorialize the battle through the erection of the Battle of Nashville Peace Monument. Following this activity, unfortunately, memory of the battle largely withered. A renewed surge of interest in the battle occurred during the centennial, although it proved only temporary. By the time of the Centennial, most of the battlefield was gone and, hence, few physical reminders of the battle remained. Unlike the recovery of memory in Franklin, Nashville experienced no such revitalization of commemoration or preservation efforts. This recovery could not happen to the same extent that it had in Franklin, due to the almost total destruction of the battlefield by residential development that presented few opportunities for reclamation. In the long run, Franklin won back the ability to remember its battle. The focus of Nashville's leaders on the future coupled with emphasis on continued development, however, meant that the city could not adequately reclaim the memory of its battle, thereby ensuring its continued fractured nature.

³⁴ John Allyn, "Nashville Military Burials"; Gregory Wade, "New Statue at Nashville Cemetery Honors USCT Troops" *Civil War News*, April, 2006.

Epilogue

At the sesquicentennial of the Battles of Franklin and Nashville, the memory of these Civil War engagements finally appeared stronger than ever. Nevertheless, very little of the battlefields remained intact. Problems plaguing the memory and preservation of these battlefields since their conclusion still persisted at the 150th anniversary commemoration. Despite the impressive victories of preservation groups, Franklin and Nashville will never resemble the state of preservation that one sees in Civil War national military parks like Gettysburg, Chickamauga, Antietam, Shiloh, and Vicksburg.

One measure of the battles' mnemonic significance as the sesquicentennial approached. Numerous publications appeared highlighting the Battle of Franklin. The Williamson County Public Library produced a book for children, *Bullets and Bayonets: A Battle of Franklin Primer*. Meanwhile, *The Williamson Herald* as well as *Southern Exposure* and *Your Williamson*, two local society magazines, dedicated special issues to the Battle of Franklin. Other publications, such as *Blue and Gray*, addressed Hood's Tennessee Campaign, which culminated with the Battles of Franklin and Nashville.

Weider History also published a more broadly-focused magazine with the release of *1864*, a special edition commemorating the sesquicentennial of that critical year. The edition's small section on Franklin used the diary of a Confederate soldier to highlight the carnage of the battle and the number of Confederate generals killed during the fighting. An illustration and caption also reminded readers of the tragic fate of Confederate soldier Tod Carter, on who's father's land much of the battle was fought. The Battle of Nashville received only a passing

mention in 1864 when the magazine reprinted Howard Pyle's famous painting with an appropriate caption. Although several advertisements appeared in the back of the magazine for Battle of Franklin sites, Nashville received no other mention. In fact, no large-scale commemorative articles about the Battle of Nashville ever emerged during the sesquicentennial. This was quite shocking as many had promoted a memory of Nashville as a decisive battle of the Civil War. For all of the change occurring in memory of the battles over the years, some things never changed as Franklin and Nashville never received prominent attention on a national scale in Civil War publications.

As the Sesquicentennial of the Battle of Franklin approached, the battle enjoyed a new place in Civil War memory. Reclamation and preservation of battlefield spaces had reached an all-time high. Although many in Franklin's preservation circles also hoped to have a rebuilt Cotton Gin in time for the Sesquicentennial, those dreams had not come to fruition. Nevertheless, Franklin's activities during the Sesquicentennial demonstrated just how far memory of the battle had progressed. By this event, Franklin had reclaimed a few hundred acres of the battlefield.

The Battle of Franklin Sesquicentennial events kicked off on August 2, 2014, with the opening of a special anniversary exhibit designed by the Battle of Franklin Trust and hosted at Carnton. Exhibits displayed artifacts from the battle and its participants, many previously unseen by the public. The festivities continued with the Signature Event on November 14, 2014. Jim Lighthizer, President of the Civil War Trust, spoke, lauding the preservation efforts that had taken place in Franklin over the previous decade. He remarked, "Franklin did not just restore a battlefield, they resurrected a battlefield." Lighthizer's comments also included a major announcement. Calling the Lovell property, occupied by a Franklin flower shop, "arguably the

most important, significant, and certainly the bloodiest piece of the battlefield,” Lighthizer announced that the Civil War Trust had voted to contribute \$200,000 toward the \$2.8 million purchase price of the 2.6 acre parcel, located just south of the Carter House.¹

Perhaps a measure of the battle’s place in American memory lay with the number and variety of merchandise for sale during the Sesquicentennial. One could find patches, baseball caps, t-shirts, coffee mugs, and lapel pins commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Franklin. The Williamson County Convention and Visitors Bureau created a series of banners advertising the Sesquicentennial that appeared across the City of Franklin, in magazines, and on the internet. These banners depicted significant personalities associated with the battle and its legacy, including Caroline McGavock, John Bell Hood, John M. Schofield, Jacob Cox, Patrick Cleburne, Tod Carter, Arthur MacArthur, and Mariah Reddick.

On November 15, 2014, the Sesquicentennial events included a reenactment involving approximately 800 reenactors and nearly 5,000 spectators. Taking place on the newly reclaimed Eastern Flank Battlefield Park, food trucks sold pizza and other snacks, while sutlers and other vendors hawked their wares including firearms, books, clothing, and other trinkets. Visitors also toured the Carnton mansion and walked the grounds as living history interpreters providing various historical demonstrations and some children played catch with their parents before the event commenced. The reenactment itself proved to less than authentic without horses and no structure representing the Carter House. The crowd nevertheless cheered enthusiastically, especially when cartridge waddings discharged from the weapons started two small grass fires.

¹ Battle of Franklin Trust, *Battle Scarred*. Exhibit Brochure (Franklin: Battle of Franklin Trust) 2014. Collin Czarniecki, “Franklin battlefield preservation gets another \$200,000,” *The Tennessean*, November 14, 2014.

Reminiscent of young Hardin Figures during the 1864 battle, children climbed trees along the spectator lines to obtain a better view. The reenactment showcased another way of remembering the Battle of Franklin; the crowd used digital cameras and iPhones to photograph and record the battle as a drone hovered over head filming the event. Organizers had scheduled the reenactment of another Battle of Franklin scenario the following day, but cancelled due to inclement weather and cold temperatures.²

The Battle of Nashville Sesquicentennial, meanwhile, stood in stark contrast to the activities that took place at Franklin. Unlike Franklin, no reenactment occurred to commemorate Nashville Centennial events. Nevertheless, a group of Nashville historic sites banded together and formed the Battle of Nashville 150th Anniversary Committee to coordinate city-wide activities and remember the battle. The Metro Historical Commission organized and chaired the committee and also acting as a clearing house for its advertisements. Unfortunately, lack of funding from the City of Nashville hindered the committee's operation and plans and its member sites largely acted independently.³

Despite Nashville's lack of coordination, several events did occur to commemorate the battle's anniversary. On November 16, 2014, The Battle of Nashville Preservation Society, joined by the Minnesota Civil War Commemoration Task Force, dedicated a memorial to Minnesota soldiers on Shy's Hill. The erection of the monument also served as part of Minnesota's sesquicentennial celebration of the Civil War. The memorial, a simple granite

² Joe R. Bailey, *Notes while attending the Battle of Franklin Sesquicentennial Festivities*, November 14-15, 2014.

³ Krista Castillo, *Battle of Nashville Sesquicentennial Committee Notes*, 2014. Fort Negley Archives.

tablet, recognized the role of four Minnesota regiments that led the attack on Shy's Hill during the Battle of Nashville.⁴

The events marking the Battle of Nashville's sesquicentennial took place between December 13 and December 16, 2014. These included many living history demonstrations at the various sites including Fort Negley, Travellers Rest, Shy's Hill, and Redoubt No. One. Reenactors fired cannon and rifles, explained Civil War surgery and medicine, operated a signal station, and portrayed soldiers of the United States Colored Troops for the gathered crowds. In downtown Nashville, the Tennessee State Library and Archives and the Tennessee State Museum hosted special exhibitions focusing on local aspects of the Civil War and the Battle of Nashville. The museum also featured a study of the Battle of Nashville cyclorama by Louis Kindt, completed approximately 20 years after the battle. On December 13, a special cannonade took place at dusk. Many of the Nashville Civil War sites sequentially fired a cannon to mark the battle's anniversary. The firing began with Fort Negley and concluded with a cannon shot at Shy's Hill.⁵ Sesquicentennial planners in Nashville also remembered the battle through the sale of specialized merchandise.. The Friends of Fort Negley sold shirts sporting a Battle of Nashville 150th logo and the Battle of Nashville Preservation Society sold commemorative coins.

In many ways, memory of the Battles of Franklin and Nashville is still alive and well and battlefield preservation efforts continue. At Franklin, the situation remains particularly fluid. Preservationists at Franklin can claim, somewhat legitimately, to have achieved the largest

⁴ Joe Kimball, "Civil War monument to Minnesota soldiers dedicated in Nashville" *MinnPost*, November 17, 2014; BONPS Newsletter, November 2014.

⁵ Castillo, *Battle of Nashville Sesquicentennial Committee Notes*

battlefield reclamation in history. The Civil War Trust, Save the Franklin Battlefield, The city of Franklin, Franklin's Charge, and The Heritage Foundation of Franklin and Williamson County come together and reclaim more battlefield land every year. The site of Confederate General Patrick Cleburne's death is no longer surrounded by pizza establishments and other shopping centers. Shortly, fewer houses will dominate the area of the Federal entrenchments. One day, perhaps, Franklin can reclaim even more of its battlefield spaces. One day perhaps Franklin will recreate the Locust Grove and link the Eastern Flank portion of the battlefield with preserved sites around the Carter House. Unlike the early days of Franklin's battlefield preservation history, now the possibilities of future reclamations are endless.

Unfortunately, one can never recreate these hallowed spaces exactly. Bulldozers and the development they help achieve render any attempt at creating a "pure" battlefield park impossible. After its use as a golf course, preservationists face an uphill battle in accurately reconstructing the topography and landscape of McGavock's Grove, the place through which Loring's Confederate Division moved under fire toward the Federal line and the site of so many post-war reunions. Likewise, residential and commercial development has inextricably transformed the ground upon which the Federal defenses stood, preventing preservationists from ever recreating them with absolute authenticity. The large shopping center complex at the base of Winstead Hill forever mars any attempt to see the battle's plain as Confederate soldiers did before the attack.

Laudable as it is, preservation of the battlefield at Franklin faces monumental challenges. Now, one can only imagine the appearance of a nearly pristine battlefield. Ironically, the same efforts of Franklin to boost its economic viability, which largely destroyed the battlefield in the 20th century, now provide funding that helps reclaim its precious spaces. Once largely lost,

Franklin has re-appropriated memory of the battle to promote and capitalize upon heritage tourism. In doing so, preservationists and Franklin's community leaders have echoed sentiments expressed many years earlier touting the Battle of Franklin as the bloodiest five hours of the Civil War, an assertion not quite accurate. Paradoxically, earlier calls for preserving the battlefield rested solely on the bloodshed spilled and the battle's body count. These arguments, which failed to convince Congress to take action to protect the site in the early 20th century, now help promote current efforts to reclaim Battle of Franklin sites.

At Nashville, preservationists face a much more difficult fight to reclaim their battlefield. A massive southern city, Nashville's battlefield lies among some of the busiest residential and commercial areas with little chance of reclaiming any substantial portion of it. Regrettably, urban sprawl largely prevented any attempt for mass preservation at Nashville. Most of the battle's hallowed spaces disappeared from the landscape many years ago. Interstate 65, a major traffic artery through the city, destroyed a significant portion of the field over which the second day's battle was fought. A shopping mall now dominates the landscape where Federal soldiers drove Confederates from their left flank on the first day of the battle. Large residential areas, streets, and subdivisions dot the landscape of the areas where both Federal attacks and Confederate collapses occurred on the second day. Nevertheless, The Battle of Nashville Preservation Society has proven remarkably successful given the extent of development across the city. Unlike Franklin, the nature of development and fragmentation of the Battle of Nashville's memory make it much more difficult to reclaim meaningful portions of the battlefield.

Glimmers of hope for Nashville's memory, however, still exist. The BONPS sponsors many educational programs and events educating the public on the battle. These events include symposiums, Civil War roundtables, living histories, and lectures. Fort Negley Park hosts these

events, often in concert with the BONPS, and has become the de facto headquarters for interpretation and education regarding the battle. Local organizations such as the Sons of Confederate Veterans camp conduct an annual cemetery tour where reenactors keep memory of the battle alive, albeit a Lost Cause narrative, by portraying many Confederates significant to the Battle of Nashville who are buried in Mount Olivet Cemetery.

The preservation of these spaces is a fragile matter. On the one hand, collective memory of the battles must construct a narrative in which these events become significant within the larger narrative of the American Civil War. Moreover, memory of the events must be coherent and unified and groups must have some universal understanding of their significance. Such a process allows for the creation of sites like Gettysburg and Shiloh. On the other hand, Franklin and Nashville provide an excellent example of what occurs when collective memory fractures on multiple levels. This breakdown leads to weak collective memory that permits destructive development, greed, and apathy, while preventing the preservation of culturally significant sites. In short, collective memory must dictate the cultural significance of historical sites, particularly battlefields. In the end, basing such a memory on bloodshed, victory, and defeat alone fails to accomplish preservation.

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