

BATTLES ON THE HOME FRONT:  
BATTLEFIELD RECLAMATION AND INTERPRETIVE CHALLENGES  
AT CIVIL WAR HISTORIC SITES

by

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## ABSTRACT

### BATTLES ON THE HOME FRONT: BATTLEFIELD RECLAMATION AND INTERPRETIVE CHALLENGES AT CIVIL WAR HISTORIC SITES

This thesis examines the twenty-first-century push for battlefield reclamation in the context of the broader historic preservation movement, discusses new avenues for present and future battlefield reclamation activities, and reviews decision processes and strategies with the central focus placed on interpretive issues at Civil War historic sites. Public and private partnerships, formed between historical and heritage organizations, allow cities and state entities to determine the issues of urban encroachment, funding, interpretation and the scope of the landscape to be preserved. These challenges for the twenty-first century battlefield reclamation may be solved through strong, viable partnerships that serve as the catalyst for local preservation efforts to continue.

Examining the Franklin battlefield landscape, as the primary case study juxtaposed with the Vicksburg National Military Park, will detail how past preservation efforts of these battlefields or lack thereof, leads to a narrow interpretation of the whole story. Instilling the best practices approach will make these sites viable and sustain historic resources for the good of their communities. The challenge remaining for heritage and historical communities and their partners will be to determine who will manage the land and more importantly, what the future holds for continued preservation efforts and the authenticity of shared histories on the battlefield landscape.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The Civil War remains one of the most compelling periods in American history. It was a war of conflicting ideals and divergent dreams. For many years, either side commonly misunderstood and often misrepresented the Civil War. But, 150 years later, it is somewhat easier to accept and access the war's impact. American Civil War battlefields, the bloody stages where this horrific conflict played out, are among our country's most treasured historic landscapes.

By the end of the nineteenth century, battlefields were becoming a dominant presence in the nation's preservation landscape. Civil War veterans, eager to preserve the sites of bravery and carnage, pressured Congress to fund and establish national battlefield parks and place them under the War Department's supervision in hopes of advancing preservation and commemoration. These battlefield parks served the public and recognized the joint efforts of the Blue and Gray. These battlefields remained protected permanently "for historical and professional military study," so students and visitors could learn about "some of the most remarkable maneuvers and most brilliant fighting in the war of the rebellion."<sup>1</sup>

Chickamauga/Chattanooga, Shiloh, Antietam, Gettysburg, and Vicksburg became the first five national battlefield parks, between 1890 and 1899. The battlefield

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<sup>1</sup>Robert K. Sutton, introduction to *Rally On The High Ground: The National Park Service Symposium on the Civil War*, ed. (Washington D.C.: Eastern National, 2001), xi.

preservation movement did not begin with the creation of parks. It originated with the establishment of national cemeteries to commemorate the Union dead. The establishment of the national cemetery system allowed for proper burial and identification, if any existed, of Union soldiers, but left treasonous, Confederate dead unmarked and unrecognized by the federal government. The overt Northern indifference only encouraged the South to establish Confederate only cemeteries.

This thesis will examine the twenty-first-century push for battlefield reclamation in the context of the broader historic preservation movement of the prior century. This thesis will seek to open discussion on new avenues for present and future battlefield reclamation activities, and review decision processes and strategies, while presenting interpretive issues at Civil War historic sites. It will examine how public and private partnerships handle the threats of urban encroachment, funding, and the scope of the landscape to be preserved. This study will also review how these partnerships serve as the catalyst for local preservation efforts to continue when the federal government is not involved.

As the work of historian Timothy Smith and others have recently documented, the beginnings of Civil War battlefield preservation became a preoccupation of many Civil War veterans in the late nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup> From the 1890s to the 1930s, Civil War veterans worked with the federal government and to a lesser extent with state and local governments, to create a network of Civil War parks across the South. As historians and

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<sup>2</sup> Timothy B. Smith, *The Golden Age Of Battlefield Preservation: The Decade of the 1890s and the Establishment of America's First Military Parks*, (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2008).

preservationists entered the twenty-first century a renewed push for Civil War battlefield preservation began. The present effort has some similarities with the Victorian era initiative for battlefield preservation, but there are several differences.

One key element is the role of tourism. Commemoration drove tourism to the parks in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the 1870s-1880s, the South “emerged as a major tourist attraction for the growing middle class of Northerners who could afford to travel. Promoted heavily by magazines and railroads, the South- its climate, its exoticism, and even its history- became less a place of political and social problems and more the object of tourist’s curiosity.” Prior to the war, “It had long been the source of rich travel literature that assisted readers in exploring a slave society. Immediately after the war such literature became a catalyst that revealed the conditions of a conquered land.”<sup>3</sup> Today, heritage tourism encourages the public to not only visit battlefields and its cemeteries, but encourages recreation and a sense of community identity to the landscape.

One key difference is how battlefield preservation is funded. The federal government, often invoking the power of eminent domain, purchased the first parks. Today, the preservation efforts of public and private partnerships purchase battlefield land. These modern land reclamation efforts supported by the National Park Service in evaluating previously unreachable areas inside and outside of the park system’s boundaries. To address the encroachment of the boundaries of Civil War battlefield

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<sup>3</sup> David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War In American Memory*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 154.

landscapes, federal officials work with local and state officials to develop land reclamation strategies.

Another compelling difference is the interpretation of the broader Civil War narrative. The efforts of the National Park Service and private and public partnerships reclaiming threatened battlefields or historic sites during the latter half of the twentieth century promoted the compelling and tragic military historical narrative well. But, with the continued push for battlefield reclamation and new historical scholarship concerning the causes and consequences of the Civil War, it is more apparent the military narrative and commemoration of the cemeteries and battlefields does not completely identify local communities with the national Civil War narrative. The national battlefield parks broadened the Civil War narrative to include issues of the home front, causes and consequences of the war, and Reconstruction.<sup>4</sup>

The Vicksburg National Military Park interprets the military significance of the siege of Vicksburg and looks at the issues of civilian life and Reconstruction. However by utilizing a key structure on the battlefield, the Shirley House, the National Park Service could interpret, on a deeper level, the military history, the Shirley family, and Reconstruction. But, interpretive funding on the part of the National Park Service continues to remain one of the core issues, and keeps the Shirley House from serving as a fully engaging site. Franklin, Tennessee, considered by many to be a leader in battlefield reclamation, is a strong example of successful public and private partnerships within the

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<sup>4</sup> “The Civil War in the Southeast” (Interpretive Brochure, Washington D.C.: National Park Service, 2011). <http://www.nps.gov/frsp/planyourvisit/brochures.htm> (accessed March 4, 2013).

preservation community. But, the interpretation of the larger social, economic, and political issues is secondary to the traditional military battlefield narrative at Franklin's Civil War historic sites, particularly the Carter House and Carnton Plantation and Battlefield.

The focus of this thesis is on two strategic areas of the Western Campaign during the Civil War. The Franklin battlefield landscape and the Vicksburg National Military Park will serve as case studies to compare interpretive issues and reclamation efforts between the established National Park Service-directed site and a community-driven enterprise. Battlefield reclamation should not concentrate on a singular part of the historical narrative, but rather a broader and more historiographically complete interpretation.

Ultimately, the significance of this research on the Western Campaign is based on the presence of opportunity – opportunity to reclaim, opportunity to preserve, and opportunity to interpret. The overarching focus at the Battle of Franklin Civil War historic sites highlights the military strategies and commemoration of the fallen Union and Confederate soldiers. There is no doubt the local community house museums' promotion of the five bloody hours of the battle of Franklin is important; however, today, Franklin, Tennessee, is a growing, extremely prosperous community and bears little resemblance to the small community of 1864. Concentrating the interpretation of the Franklin battlefield narrative to just military history limits the potential audience for a broader Civil War narrative within the community's heritage programming. Almost a decade ago, Franklin's Charge Inc., a land reclamation nonprofit organization created

partnerships to purchase several key areas of the Franklin battlefield. The newly acquired property known as the Carter's Cotton Gin site which once served as the epicenter at the Battle of Franklin, will serve not only as a public space that speaks to the community's identity, but will interpret the larger narrative of the Civil War.

Vicksburg National Military Park has a unique opportunity with the Shirley house, through preservation and interpretation, to incorporate the military history of the battle and the war with the stories of the creation of the park, veterans' reunions, and the effects that emancipation and Reconstruction had on white and African American citizens. A new partnership with the volunteer-based, non-profit group, Friends of Vicksburg, is a first for this national military park. This group assisted in raising donations to help fund "special events, educational programming, battlefield restoration, and preservation of key Civil War historic sites within Vicksburg and for the maintenance of historic features related to the battle on park grounds."<sup>5</sup>

Partnerships created to purchase and preserve threatened battlefields are important; however, complete battlefield reclamation gains meaning and momentum through a broader interpretation of the Civil War narrative. Drawing upon recent Civil War scholarship, implementing inclusive interpretations at Civil War battlefield historic sites such as Vicksburg and Franklin will only enhance their individual sites, reclaiming not only the landscape but relevant stories. Understanding the need for a broader and concise interpretation is critical. Redirecting attitudes towards broader interpretations at

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<sup>5</sup> Friends of Vicksburg National Military Park and Campaign, Brochure available at the Vicksburg National Military Park visitor center, Vicksburg, Mississippi.

Civil War battlefields and historic sites begins at the local and state levels with public and private partnerships working together to reclaim battlefield land that will serve as a public space to interpret the local community's Civil War story and its national significance.

## CHAPTER II

### THE BEGINNINGS OF BATTLEFIELD PRESERVATION: CEMETERIES, RECLAMATION, AND REUNIONS

The first step toward battlefield preservation occurred with the establishment of national cemeteries during the Civil War. The War Department began the process of burying the dead and enumerating the plots as the war unfolded. Army commanders buried the dead, particularly battle casualties, on the ground where they had fought. Burial grounds purchased or condemned were primarily private property. The 37<sup>th</sup> Congress legitimized national burial sites on private land and passed legislation in an omnibus bill that allowed for national cemeteries as deemed necessary by the president. Abraham Lincoln signed this bill on July 17, 1862. This law gave the president the “power, whenever in his opinion it is expedient, to purchase cemetery grounds and cause them to be securely enclosed, to be used as a national cemetery for the soldiers who shall die in the service of the country.”<sup>6</sup>

The Lincoln administration established fourteen cemeteries in 1862. Most of the original fourteen cemeteries were on battlefields that marked, for the first time, actual sites of conflict preserved to honor the dead. The epicenter of Civil War preservation and commemoration was the dedication of the Gettysburg National Cemetery in November 1863. President Abraham Lincoln’s “few, appropriate remarks” defined not only why

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<sup>6</sup> Smith, 15.

they fought, but why this particular landscape on Cemetery Hill was important. His words, forever immortalized, spoke of the importance of sacrifice given by the fallen.<sup>7</sup>

We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this....We cannot dedicate- we cannot consecrate- we cannot hallow- this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far about our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us- that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion-that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain...<sup>8</sup>

Lincoln's Gettysburg Address solidified the reasons to preserve battlefield lands as "consecrated" land.<sup>9</sup>

Commemoration of the dead helped the nation heal and called upon others to recognize their duty as Americans to undertake resolutions to make peace. The monuments and cemeteries during the Civil War revealed how the men wanted their actions to be remembered. The dual emphasis on commemoration and preservation, such as the Hazen monument (1863) at Stones River battlefield, is evident. Units placed the first monuments on battlefield landscapes to honor fallen comrades and mark specific

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<sup>7</sup> Smith, 18.

<sup>8</sup> "Gettysburg Address," November 19, 1863, Abraham Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress.

<sup>9</sup> Garry Wills, *Lincoln at Gettysburg: The Words That Remade America* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), 174-175.

locations of a battle. National cemeteries were larger, but served similar purposes. The cemeteries at Gettysburg, Antietam, Vicksburg, Shiloh, and Chattanooga contained the dead from those battles and celebrated their sacrifice. Cemeteries also offered more than a place for remembrance and commemoration. Reflecting on the dead shifted the focus towards reunification by honoring the valor of soldiers instead of reflecting on the causes and consequences of the war.

In 1867 President Andrew Johnson approved “An Act to Establish and Protect National Cemeteries” that extended the 1862 legislation by mandating all cemeteries have walls, a lodge, ledgers of the dead, a “meritorious and trustworthy superintendent, who shall be selected from enlisted men of the army disabled in service,” and annual inspections. The law allowed the secretary of war to “enter upon and appropriate” land through eminent domain. The power to condemn land for the cemeteries later became a precedent for future federal government control of battlefields.<sup>10</sup>

To understand the driving force between reconciliation and reclamation of battlefields after the war, examining how the North and particularly the South dealt with the dead is critical; however, “early Reconstruction policies did not extend the federal policy of reinterment to Confederates.”<sup>11</sup> Historian John Neff argues, “The creation of the national cemeteries represents the greatest single expression on the part of the federal

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<sup>10</sup> Smith, 20-21. 42. The U.S. Supreme Court in 1896 upheld federal authority to create federal battlefield parks in a case involving the Gettysburg battlefield.

<sup>11</sup> David W. Blight, *Beyond the Battlefield: Race, Memory, and the American Civil War*, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002), 185.

government about the war and its importance to the national existence.”<sup>12</sup> A similar argument for significance may be made for the Ladies Confederate cemeteries. Ladies Memorial Associations across the South, between 1865 to 1900, created a network of women involved in commemorating the Confederacy and laid the foundation for the influential United Daughters of the Confederacy, created in Nashville in 1894, that became a pillar of Confederate heritage preservation.<sup>13</sup>

Throughout southern communities, the Ladies Memorial Associations raised money for the “collecting and transporting of remains, hired the burial crews, and secured appropriate locations for new Confederate cemeteries.”<sup>14</sup> Not only did the Ladies Memorial Associations care for their dead, but acted as “surrogate government agencies” utilizing their skills as “bookkeepers, fundraisers, and lobbyists” for the promotion and administration of the reburial and identification of the dead.<sup>15</sup> In Nashville, the Ladies Memorial Association “purchased land in the existing Mount Olive cemetery to establish a Confederate Circle and moved fifteen hundred bodies from nearby battlefields to a recognized place of rest.” In Vicksburg, the Ladies Confederate Cemetery Association

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<sup>12</sup> John R. Neff, *Honoring The Civil War Dead: Commemoration And The Problem Of Reconciliation* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2005), 134.

<sup>13</sup> Karen Cox, *Dixie’s Daughters: The United Daughters Of The Confederacy And The Preservation Of Confederate Culture* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2003), 2, 16-17.

<sup>14</sup> Caroline Janney, *Burying The Dead But Not The Past: Ladies’ Memorial Associations and the Lost Cause* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 87-88.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, 88.

“oversaw the reinternment of sixteen hundred soldiers from the Vicksburg campaign at “Soldier’s Rest” within the existing city cemetery.”<sup>16</sup> Southern heritage organizations became the catalyst for commemoration of their dead, and in doing so, solidified their reasons for commemoration.

By the late 1890s, organizations such as the United Confederate Veterans and the United Daughters of the Confederacy proclaimed their continued devotion to the Confederacy, as well as to individual husbands, sons, fathers, and brothers. According to Civil War Historian Drew Gilpin Faust: “The Civil War Dead both became powerful and immortal, no longer individual men but instead a force that would shape American life for at least a century to come. The reburial movement created a constituency of the slain, insistent in both its existence and its silence, men whose very absence from American life made them a presence that could not be ignored.”<sup>17</sup> Commemoration of the dead at veteran reunions was real, but as historian John Neff remarked: “From the days of the war through the decades afterward, to remember and honor the dead was to recall their cause and the reasons for their deaths. Reconciliation would always run counter to the undeniable fact that many young men lay in graves because of the actions of the enemy, and no reunion, encampment, or political oration could deny that essential reality.”<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic Of Suffering: Death And The American Civil War* (New York: Vintage Books, 2008), 243-244.

<sup>17</sup> Faust, 248-249.

<sup>18</sup> Neff, 6.

Despite reconciliation, gravesite commemorations emphasizing honor and valor of the Confederate dead would continue in local Southern communities.

Northern veterans groups were not exempt from the rhetoric of military valor and sacrifice. Historian William Blair asserted: “Soldiers who had fought in the conflict looked upon their old days more fondly, with the first inklings of nostalgia that became more prevalent in the beginning of the 1880s. Additionally, the idea was growing that many in the South had paid for their transgressions.”<sup>19</sup> For example, the Army of the Cumberland held their eleventh reunion in Washington, D. C. on November 19, 1879. During the formal address before the society Anson George McCook stated:

Eighteen years- half a generation- have come and gone since the army which we represent here to-night sprang into existence at the call of the country, and side by side with other armies battled for the maintenance of the union of these States. Those of us who, as young men, were present at its organization are now of middle age; those who were then of more mature years have grown old, and the rapidly increasing death toll of our society indicates very clearly that the time is not far distant when the stories of the battles and the achievements, and the services and the suffering of that splendid body of men will be told by the historian alone.<sup>20</sup>

The veterans wanted to keep safe the scenes of conflict so many citizens would learn of their sacrifice and what they saw as the meaning of the war.

Southerners’ desire to make sense of Civil War sacrifices, as well as to honor soldiers slain on the battlefield, led them to erect memorials on “that small mode of the

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<sup>19</sup> William Blair, *Cities of the Dead: Contesting the Memory of the Civil War in the South, 1865-1914* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 121.

<sup>20</sup> “Address before the Society of the Army of the Cumberland at their eleventh reunion,” Anson George McCook, 1879. Tennessee State Library and Archives, [http://state.tn.us/tsla/resources/civilwar\\_database.htm](http://state.tn.us/tsla/resources/civilwar_database.htm) (accessed January 17, 2013).

barren earth which serves as past and cover to our bones.”<sup>21</sup> For thirty years after Appomattox, grief-stricken family members erected more than 70 percent of Confederate monuments at rural Southern cemeteries to honor their sacrifice. Southerners may have remembered their dead in this fashion, but historians Michael Martinez and Robert Harris drew their conclusions about the foundation of national cemetery monuments and national battlefield parks from the work of historian James Mayo. Mayo explained why cemetery monuments were important to the honoring process for soldiers killed in action. “Quite often soldiers are buried in some symmetrical fashion around a memorial, as if to say: ‘United we stood, united we rest.’ the landscape design was small originally, but as the war graves grew in the cemeteries, the memorial arrangement became more powerful.”<sup>22</sup>

The emphasis on “united we stood, united we rest” and the “symbolic proclamation of Confederate guilt” precluded Southerners’ interment on consecrated ground for Union loyalists.<sup>23</sup> This reasoning gave meaning for why Southerners, eager to establish Confederate monuments in cemeteries, arranged their graveyards to underscore the honor and respect owed to fallen soldiers. For example, “The area of Confederate

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<sup>21</sup> J. Michael Martinez and Robert M. Harris, “Graves, Worms, and Epitaphs: Confederate Monuments in the Southern Landscape” eds. J. Michael Martinez, William D. Richardson, and Ron McNinch-Su, *Confederate Symbols in the Contemporary South* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2000), 130-136.

<sup>22</sup> Martinez and Harris, 135.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 135-136.

graves is set apart from nearby civilian graves and is surrounded by heavy black chains. The United Daughters of the Confederacy attached their Cross of Honor on the chain to convey a sense of collective, rather than individual, honor.”<sup>24</sup> During veterans’ reunions the men, their families, and citizens gathered around these cemeteries and commemorated their fallen comrades and loved ones. These rituals solidified the sacredness of their cause.

Consider the case of Franklin, Tennessee, where Southern commemoration triumphed over Northern memorial objectives. The Battle of Franklin, fought November 30, 1864, was short but significant and bloody, especially for the Confederates.<sup>25</sup> In 1866, John and Carrie McGavock, whose home, Carnton, became a Confederate field hospital the night and days after the battle, donated two acres of their land for the proper internment of the Confederate dead. In doing so, the McGavocks not only cared for the bodies of lost fathers and sons of the Confederacy, but began to interpret the battle and consequently, the war. Up until his death, John McGavock gave tours of the battlefield’s prominent positions, retold the valor of the Confederates, and with his wife Carrie, preserved the identity of the dead in the cemetery.<sup>26</sup>

The sentiment of the Confederate dead was so strong in 1865 and 1866 when the federal government sent assistant quartermaster generals throughout the South to appropriate land for national cemeteries, the idea of a national cemetery in Franklin drew

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 136.

<sup>25</sup> Neff, 158.

<sup>26</sup> *Confederate Veteran* 7, no.1 (January 1899): 26.

considerable outrage. The officer in charge at Franklin reported, “the citizens of Franklin will do everything in their power to defeat the locating of a cemetery there, and will not sell land to the government at any price. In case a location is taken forcibly, a guard of twenty men will be necessary to prevent desecration.” Subsequently, a national cemetery was never established in Franklin, Tennessee.<sup>27</sup>

The living determined the prognosis of the dead. For several years after the war, the dead served as the means for “hostilities between the North and the South,” but by the 1880s and 1890s, the dead became the driving force for reunification on a national platform of commemoration.<sup>28</sup> The national interpretation of the war and its meaning began to take shape, and with national cemeteries established, those landscapes became the primary locales for official ceremonies and other formal acts of commemoration. As these ceremonies gained in popularity, battlefield tourism became popular in the form of veterans’ reunions. These reunions started in local communities throughout the country and initiated a broad movement to form veteran’s associations in the North and South.

By the late nineteenth century, the sectional reunion after the war became a political triumph, but its achievement meant racial control of African Americans through the use of Jim Crow. As historian David Blight proposes: “Battlefields served particularly well as the places where this separation became most explicit; no race

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<sup>27</sup> William Alanzo Wainwright, United States Assistant Quartermaster General Records, 1861-1870, Tennessee State Library and Archives, MF Collection Ac No. 1652. See also the McGavock Cemetery Record Book, 1864-1900, Williamson County Archives, Franklin, TN. See also Neff, 157-158.

<sup>28</sup> Faust, 269.

problem was allowed to invade the increasingly mythical reconciliation of the blue and the gray during their reunions on the landscapes that the aging veterans knew as sacred, transforming battlefields into places of sectional healing, though rarely, if ever, places of racial healing.”<sup>29</sup>

Proponents of battlefield preservation on both sides agreed to marginalize race issues. They did not all so readily set aside the bitterness toward enemies who killed comrades and inflicted pain and suffering on prisoners of war. These personal hostilities took longer to dissolve than political ones. Over time, the veteran’s reminiscing downplayed the war’s violence and “helped center remembrance on the veteran’s courage and the camaraderie of battle rather than on the war’s political implication or bloody consequences.” When this happened, the blue and the gray believed they had much to contribute, since both sides experienced the heroism of the battlefield, endured harsh realities of camp life, and devastation of death and defeat. The sense of solidarity and “mutual respect emerged not so much out of the immediate experience of battle as out of a carefully redefined legacy of it.”<sup>30</sup>

The American public, particularly white southerners, created a contented perception of the war that “distanced the institution of slavery from the coming of the war

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<sup>29</sup> Blight, *Beyond the Battlefield*, 172-178.

<sup>30</sup> Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 67.

and embraced military honor as its most enduring legacy.”<sup>31</sup> Historian Gaines Foster commented on this pattern:

The rapid healing of national divisions and damaged southern self image, however, came at the cost of deriving little insight or wisdom from the past. Rather than looking at the war as a tragic failure and trying to understand it, or even condemn it, Americans, North and South, chose to view it as a glorious time to be celebrated. Most ignored the fact that the nation had failed to resolve the debate over the nature of the Union and to eliminate the contradictions between its equalitarian ideals and the institution of slavery without resort to bloody civil wars. Instead, they celebrated the war’s triumphant nationalism and martial glory.<sup>32</sup>

“Honor, bravery, and nobility among veterans became thematic foundations for a constructed theme of reconciliation and reunion,” former Chief National Park Historian Dwight Pitcaithley stated. Veterans commemorating the “fraternity of combatants became the focus of blue and gray reunions,” but focusing the commemoration of the war solely on the gallantry and admiration “perpetuated the Lost Cause interpretation of the war and separated cause from action and consequence on the battlefields.”<sup>33</sup>

These developments on the part of the North and South “fostered a return to the battlefields by both Union and Confederate veterans”—blue-gray reunions between the 1880s and 1920s—“an echo of the past but this time, for reconciliation and

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<sup>31</sup> Dwight T. Pitcaithley, “A Cosmic Threat: The National Park Service Addresses the Causes of the American Civil War” in *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory*. eds. James Oliver Norton and Lois E. Norton (New York: The New Press, 2006), 171.

<sup>32</sup> Foster, 196.

<sup>33</sup> Pitcaithley, 178.

commemoration, not combat.”<sup>34</sup> For the people who lived during this tumultuous period, the deep-seated emotions of connectivity to these landscapes instilled a need to recognize hallowed ground. The landscapes that once were the scenes of horrific carnage became “preserved battlefield parks, complete with monuments and cemeteries that have become a form of enduring, ironic juxtaposition of war and beauty, forever paradoxical.”<sup>35</sup>

Struggling in an increasingly competitive and individualistic postwar nation, Confederate veterans relished the celebration of their self-sacrifice during the war. Orators at monument dedications spoke of their importance. Southerners never questioned whether or not defeat implied something was wrong with their cause or their society. As historian Gaines Foster clarified: “Although it justified the cause and therefore its veterans, the Confederate commemoration did not so much sacralize the meaning of the war as it sanitized and trivialized it.”<sup>36</sup>

After the United Confederate Veterans and the United Daughters of the Confederacy emerged as the preeminent southern heritage organizations by the end of the nineteenth century, public ceremonies and staged pageants that celebrated the unveiling of monuments were elaborate and immense rites of white reunification in the American South. Through a variety of rituals, especially reunions, Confederate veterans carried their interpretation of the Civil War to audiences of white southerners, as well as to

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<sup>34</sup> Richard Sellars, “Pilgrim Places: Civil War Battlefields, Historic Preservation, and America’s First National Military Parks, 1863-1900,” *CRM: The Journal of Heritage Stewardship* 2, no.1(Winter 2005): 20.

<sup>35</sup>Sellars, 10, 20.

<sup>36</sup> Foster, 196.

Northern veterans and local African Americans. With broader participation for every conceivable white club and organization, Confederate reunions exerted a cultural influence greater than mere parades or gatherings of decrepit old soldiers. Their participation in commemorative events “encouraged people to learn what to remember and what it is to remember as part of a social enterprise.”<sup>37</sup> Events that involved the blue and the gray demonstrated sectional reconciliation and speeded it along by celebrating their common wartime experiences, not why each side fought. Thus, the “joint reunions offered tacit testimony and occasional explicit salutes to Confederate honorable conduct in the war.”<sup>38</sup>

The blue-gray reunions also moved veterans’ of both sides towards the idea of battlefield preservation and development. Visitation to national battlefield parks and other battlefields were critical to the process of reconciliation among veterans groups. Commemorations through the blue-gray reunions became the common denominator of all the parks and the feelings of camaraderie and reconciliation activities “moved southerners toward the idea of battlefield preservation and development.”<sup>39</sup> The rapid acceleration of battlefield preservation in the 1890s constituted by far the most intensive and widespread historic preservation activity in the United States of the nineteenth

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<sup>37</sup> Fitzhugh Brundage, *Where Memories Grow: History, Memory, and Southern Identity* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 9.

<sup>38</sup>Foster, 67-68.

<sup>39</sup>Sellars, 20.

century. What the veterans accomplished in terms of preservation in the 1890s would not be impossible today.<sup>40</sup>

The first five Civil War battlefield parks unquestionably depicted scenes of concentrated and explicit warfare. The maintenance and restoration of “road beds, forests, fields, and defensive earthworks” varied at each battlefield park and became “inundated with large quantities of monuments, small stone markers, and cast iron troop position tables that traced the course of the battle and honored the men who fought there.”<sup>41</sup> These battlefield landscapes featured a host of monuments that paid tribute to the valor of the men who gave their lives fighting during the Civil War.

Vicksburg was the last national battlefield park established in the nineteenth century. Here is where the Union Army of the Tennessee split the Confederacy in two and opened up the Mississippi River by July 4, 1863. The Vicksburg battlefield did not receive much attention before the late 1880s. Former Union general and President of the United States, Ulysses S. Grant, passed through Vicksburg but did not stop to see the battlefield in 1880; however, he stopped at the national cemetery. Louisiana veterans erected a monument in 1887, but there is “little evidence of reconciliation” or a broad commemoration by the federal government prior to the 1890s.<sup>42</sup>

The beginning preservation efforts for the Vicksburg battlefield came from the veterans. A key blue and grey reunion took place in Vicksburg on May 25-30, 1890. A

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<sup>40</sup>Smith, 7.

<sup>41</sup>Sellars, 11.

<sup>42</sup> Smith, 179.

“joint visit of veterans from both sides to each other’s respective cemeteries a budding emotions of reconciliation” prompting discussions from both sides about preserving the battlefield.<sup>43</sup> On April 26, 1893, former Confederates acted upon those emotions when “they dedicated a monument to their dead in the city cemetery, where the majority of the Confederate dead rested.”<sup>44</sup> In 1894, a veteran of the 21<sup>st</sup> Iowa envisioned an association, similar to those at the other parks, and pushed Congress to establish a park in Vicksburg. By the fall of 1895, the Vicksburg National Military Park Association formed and named Stephen D. Lee, a former Confederate general in the Western Campaign, as president of the association.

The Vicksburg association worked with Congress to pass legislation for the park. Members of the Grand Army of the Republic and the Society of the Army of the Tennessee traveled to various meetings to campaign for financial assistance. Former Confederate Captain James Everest, at the 1896 reunion, argued “Gettysburg and the surrender of Vicksburg were the two greatest events of the Civil War, and that the valor which attained these results should be equally commemorated.”<sup>45</sup> While preservation and commemoration were reasons for the establishment of the park, military study was a consideration too. The House Committee on Military Affairs cited the need for military study at Vicksburg: “It has been said that it [Grant’s campaign] destroyed all military

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 180. See also Terry Winschel, “Stephen D. Lee and the Making of an American Shrine,” *Journal of Mississippi History* 63, no.1 (2001):21.

<sup>45</sup> Smith, 181.

maxims and precedents, and owing to the ultimate success of the campaign it may be properly prized as a valuable contribution to military science.”<sup>46</sup>

But the hope of reconciliation was at the forefront of the committee’s intentions. In honoring the bravery and courage of the soldiers who fought in the campaign, veterans’ organizations, in the North and South, were in favor of a park at Vicksburg. Congress agreed to preserve Vicksburg due to its historical significance. On February 21, 1899, President William McKinley signed the law that outlined Congress’s purpose for preserving the area: “To commemorate the campaign, siege, and defense of Vicksburg, and to preserve the history of the battles and operations of the siege and defense on the ground where they were fought and carried on, the battlefield of Vicksburg.”<sup>47</sup> With funding from the federal government, the veterans’ efforts to preserve the battlefield at Vicksburg promoted their ideals of reconciliation and commemoration.

The Vicksburg commission’s first order of business was the process of land acquisition. The Vicksburg commission acquired a strip of land, approximately three and a half miles long but only a half mile wide which embraced about 1,200 acres. The most important features of the engagement could be preserved. The commission estimated “only \$40,000 would be needed for land acquisition and \$25,000 for development.” The proposed boundaries and the estimated cost had approval of the Secretary of War and

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 183.

<sup>47</sup> George Boge and Margie Holder Boge, *Paving Over The Past: A History and Guide to Civil War Battlefield Preservation*, (Washington D.C.: Island Press, 1993), 21.

also of the associations of Union and Confederate veterans who participated in the siege and defense.<sup>48</sup> The commission decided on a “main park,” with two “Confederate wings” and two “Federal wings” projecting from the main park and running along the lines of the siege works. The Commission was successful in acquiring the land in the main park and two Confederate wings. But, some landowners did not consent to selling their land at forty dollars an acre. The two Federal wing sections had landowners unwilling to sell at any price. For a successful acquisition of the land, Lee pushed Congress for condemnation of the property. By October of 1900 the commission completed most of the land acquisitions, creating a park of “1,231.08 acres in 111 tracts, costing \$50,488.48,” twenty percent above the original estimated purchase price.<sup>49</sup>



Fig 1. View looking northeast from the Third Louisiana Redan toward the Shirley House, circa 1899. This photograph predates construction of the Illinois State Memorial, which was dedicated in 1906. It indicates the existence of Jackson Road and the Shirley House at the time.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Ronald F. Lee, *The Origin and Evolution of the National Military Park Idea*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1973), under “Shiloh and Vicksburg,” <http://www.nps.gov/history/> (accessed January 20, 2013). See also Smith 188-190.

<sup>49</sup> National Park Service, “Vicksburg National Military Park Cultural Landscape Report, Final Draft, 2009,” <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm> (accessed January 18, 2013). See also Smith, 189-190.

<sup>50</sup>“Vicksburg National Battlefield Park and Shirley House,” ca. 1899. Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, MS. [http://mdah.state.ms.us/arrec/digital\\_archives/](http://mdah.state.ms.us/arrec/digital_archives/) (accessed February 7, 2013).

The park was roughly finished in 1908 with the completion of the landscape survey and road construction. Even though Stephen Lee died this same year, his vision for battlefield preservation did not go unrecognized. In 1920 the park consisted of 1,322.63 acres. But, the park commission was unable to fulfill its goal of restoring the earthworks. This massive undertaking did not occur until the New Deal efforts of the 1930s, but present park boundaries do not include approximately the southern one-third of the Confederate defense positions. This portion of the park, “quitclaimed with the city of Vicksburg in 1966, has some monuments and markers located on city property, although Vicksburg National Military Park owned and maintained them.”<sup>51</sup>

In 1900 the Vicksburg park commission acquired the only surviving wartime building in the park, the Shirley house, which was known as the “White House” during the siege of Vicksburg. Alice Shirley, daughter of James and Adeliencia Shirley, left the house to the commission. Years of neglect after the war took its toll on this house. When the commission gained possession, the house required multiple layers of work to bring it back to its pre-war condition.

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<sup>51</sup> National Park Service, “Cultural Landscape Report, Vicksburg National Military Park, June, 2009.” <http://www.nps.gov/vick/parkmgmt/> (accessed January 20, 2013). See also National Park Service, “Vicksburg National Military Park Cultural Landscape Report Final Draft, 2009,” <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm> (accessed February 5, 2013).



Fig. 2 Shirley house, ca. 1902, prior to restoration, Vicksburg National Military Park<sup>52</sup>

The Shirley house was not the only required work. The park commission called for the “restoration of the forts and lines of fortifications, and marked the lines of battles and other points of interest with tablets.” This process permitted “any state that had troops engaged in the campaign, siege, or defense of the city to erect monuments and markers in memory of its soldiers.” Commemoration continued through acquisition of property and placement of markers on the battlefield, and represented in part by the “numerous sculptures added to the landscape of the battlefield beginning in 1903 by states whose troops served in the Vicksburg campaign.”<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Lester Jones, “Shirley house before restoration, Wexford Lodge,” ca. 1902-03. Historic American Building Survey, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., <http://www.loc.gov/> (accessed January 20, 2013).

<sup>53</sup> National Park Service, “Vicksburg National Military Park: Administrative History, Park Management, Analysis and Evaluation. Final Draft of Cultural Landscape Report, 2009,” <http://www.nps.gov/vick/parkmgmt/> (accessed January 20, 2013).

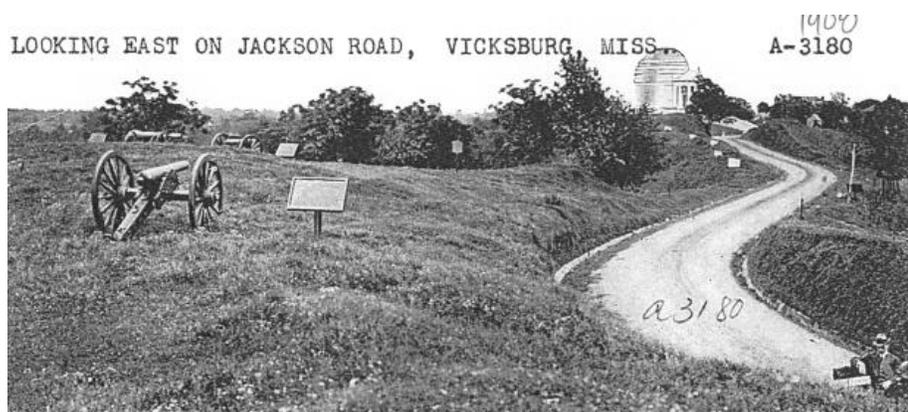


Fig. 3 A postcard of the Third Louisiana Redan, 1908. This particular view shows the landscape after the construction of the Illinois State Memorial, the rehabilitation of the Shirley house and the placement of tablets and cannon on the battlefield.<sup>54</sup>

As the final pieces of the park were put into place, the park commission continued its work of commemoration and remembrance by hosting veteran reunions and observances. At the Mississippi monument dedication in 1909, former Confederate general Benjamin Humphreys spoke: “However went the battle, however keen the anguish that marked the hour of defeat, no man today can read the story of that conflict and note how men died and women tasted worse death without catching from it all an inspiration to patriotism, and that is the only lesson worthwhile that any soldier ever taught on any battlefield.”<sup>55</sup> These dedication speeches validated the purpose of reconciliation at battlefield parks.

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<sup>54</sup> “Vicksburg National Military Park and Shirley house,” ca. 1899. Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, MS. [http://mdah.state.ms.us/arrec/digital\\_archives/](http://mdah.state.ms.us/arrec/digital_archives/) (accessed January 26, 2013).

<sup>55</sup> Smith, 203-204

By far the largest commemorative event at Vicksburg was the joint reunion on October 16-19, 1917. During the “National Peace Jubilee,” seven to nine thousand old soldiers returned to Vicksburg to encamp for several days. The old veterans exhibited a kindred spirit, with major speeches echoing reconciliation. Newspaper accounts of the three-day event emphasized the reunification theme. The *Confederate Veteran* recounted “the magnificent hills of Vicksburg have again felt the tread of the blue and the grey, this time in fraternal association.” The old soldiers celebrated “their first meeting since the war by affectionate demonstrations when recalling circumstances of their first acquaintance.”<sup>56</sup>



Fig. 4 Vicksburg Memorial National Peace Jubilee, Vicksburg National Military Park, 1917.<sup>57</sup>

The Civil War became the *quarrel forgotten*.<sup>58</sup> For African Americans, the golden age of battlefield preservation did not include their efforts during the Civil War.

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<sup>56</sup> “Vicksburg National Memorial Celebration,” *Confederate Veteran*, 25. No.11 (November 1917): 489-490. Williamson County Archives.

<sup>57</sup> Prints and Photographs Collection, Library of Congress, “National Memorial Reunion and Peace Jubilee, Vicksburg, Mississippi, October 16-19, 1917, Mess B,” <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/pan.6a27341/> (accessed January 26, 2013).

In the end, the inclusion of African Americans created a contradiction of American tragedy at any blue and gray reunion. Soldiers preferred to share in the commemoration of their own valor and the remembrance of the dead than recognize the causes and effects of the war. Willard D. Newbill, the U. S. Army colonel in charge of 1917 reunion at Vicksburg, remarked:

Their reunion is now only a memory, but they could not have encamped on more beautiful historic ground nor in a place they could have taken greater pride and delight. They looked upon this Park as their own and loved it as sacred soil; and to them it will remain,, in keeping with their brave, loyal old spirits and declining years, a vision of rugged autumn beauty, and for them hereafter hold a double significance as a spot where once they struggled in bitter strife, but where they again, met over half a century later in the brotherly love of restored confidence and in complete reunion under their original flag.<sup>59</sup>

When veterans gathered years later “under their original flag,” they did not doubt the camaraderie shared by their common legacy. For these men, the Vicksburg National Battlefield Park summed up “the tragedies and heroism that characterized the momentous campaign,” for in that knowledge their proper place in history was secured.<sup>60</sup>

Unfortunately for the veterans, their original conception of battlefield preservation was not to continue. By the turn of the twentieth century, Congress not only debated battlefield parks policy, but the involvement of the parks in the creation of a national

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<sup>58</sup> “President Woodrow Wilson addressing the veterans at the Vicksburg Reunion,” *Confederate Veteran*, 25, No.11 (November 1917): 489-490.

<sup>59</sup> Willard D. Newbill, *General Report of the National Memorial Celebration and Peace Jubilee*, (Washington D.C. : War Department, 1917), 23.

<sup>60</sup> Michael Ballard, *Vicksburg: The Campaign That Opened The Mississippi* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 429-431.

historic preservation policy. Several factors were out of the veterans' hands. The wishes of the recently created National Park Service, combined with the passing of veterans, prompted President Franklin D. Roosevelt to reassign the administration of battlefield parks from the War Department to the National Park Service in August 1933. The Civil War battlefield parks joined a emergent system of preserved historic sites within the National Park Service.<sup>61</sup>

While a new generation of preservationists took over the battlefield parks, it was necessary to acknowledge that each of the five parks was “the creation of a veteran association, sponsored primarily by a veteran in Congress, established by a Congress dominated by veterans, and built and overseen by veterans.” Park Service officials inherited a veteran-centered legacy. Veterans wanted the parks “preserved in their original shape at the time of battle, not landscaped and made into city-park-like recreational areas.” To veterans then, there was no greater dishonor than for one of the battlefield parks “to be landscaped into a recreation park where the graves of their comrades would be trampled by inconsiderate visitors.”<sup>62</sup>

Veterans' rhetoric in support of the battlefield parks, their speeches and reunions spoke of their intentions on moving the sectional division behind and pressing forward as united countrymen. Most importantly, the veterans skillfully utilized the parks to encapsulate what happened on those fields of carnage. Commemorating the valor of the dead was at the core of the establishment of the original five parks and marked a

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<sup>61</sup> Sellars, 27.

<sup>62</sup> Smith, 217-218.

profound effect on the foundations of the nation's legacy of the Civil War. Though the veterans reconciled, preserved, united, and restored battlefields, the desire to remember sacrifices of these men continued to mobilize preservationists and historians into the twenty-first century.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Ballard, 218.

## CHAPTER III

THE BATTLE OF FRANKLIN AND THE LOST CAUSE IN A SOUTHERN  
COMMUNITY

*“But in fifty yards of where I was, the scene. . . seemed like hell itself. . . Dead soldiers filled the entrenchment. . . It was a grand holocaust of death.”* Sam Watkins First Tennessee Regiment<sup>64</sup>

*“To me, that field is holy ground. When I visit it, I feel like taking my shoes off from my feet.”* Civil War veteran upon visiting the battlefield at Franklin, Tennessee<sup>65</sup>

General Ortho Strahl said just before battle: “Boys, this will be short but desperate.”<sup>66</sup> The annals of war may be long searched for a parallel to the desperate valor of the full field charge of the Confederate Army of Tennessee at Franklin. This charge, called “the greatest drama in American history,” perhaps rivals that of Pickett’s Charge at Gettysburg.<sup>67</sup> On November 30, 1864, the Army of Tennessee met the entrenched Federal army of General John Schofield on the fields just outside of the town of Franklin, Tennessee. After five hours and 9,500 lives forever changed, the battle was over. Known as the “Gettysburg of the West,” the Battle of Franklin was one of the bloodiest

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<sup>64</sup> Sam Watkins, *Co. Aytch: A Confederate Memoir of the Civil War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), 218-219.

<sup>65</sup> *Hallowed Ground: Preserving Tennessee’s Civil War Battlefields*, Nashville, TN: Tennessee Wars Commission, 2001.  
[http://www.state.tn.us/environment/hist/tn\\_wars\\_com.shtml](http://www.state.tn.us/environment/hist/tn_wars_com.shtml)

<sup>66</sup> Stanley F. Horn, *The Army of Tennessee* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1941), 403.

<sup>67</sup> Horn, 402-403.

conflicts of the entire Civil War.<sup>68</sup> This battle destroyed any hope for General John Bell Hood's Confederate army moving into Kentucky. Yet, the battle struggled to gain local, state, and national prominence for battlefield preservation for the better part of the twentieth century.

"I never saw the dead lay near so thick." United States Colonel Emerson Opdycke, reported after visiting the works beyond Columbia Pike after the fighting ceased. A reconnaissance patrol from the 104<sup>th</sup> Ohio found sights and sounds "enough to shock a heart of stone... The air seemed close and the smell of blood was everywhere."<sup>69</sup> The events of November 30, 1864, left the citizens of Franklin to assist with the hospitalization and care of wounded Union and Confederate soldiers within their homes, barns, and churches. The heaviest fighting occurred just south of the Carter house, across Columbia Pike eastward past the family's cotton gin. For five long hours, both sides waged horrific warfare. The combat was fierce and from the cotton gin to the locust grove 5,000 dead and wounded laid in grotesque "bundles."<sup>70</sup> J.C. Van Duzer told Major Eckert in Nashville on December 1, 1864, stated "Attack at Franklin last night was a

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<sup>68</sup> "The Story of the Battle of Franklin at the Carter House," The Battle of Franklin, November 30, 1864, BattleofFranklin.net <http://battleoffranklin.wordpress.com> (accessed March 3, 2013).

<sup>69</sup> Wiley Sword, *The Confederacy's Last Hurrah: Spring Hill, Franklin, and Nashville* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), 249.

<sup>70</sup> Sword, 249.

severe battle, the enemy acting with all his forces, and suffering heavily in killed, wounded, and prisoners.”<sup>71</sup>

Fourteen year old Hardin Figuers scampered from his mother’s home early on December 1, 1864, and witnessed a dead Union drummer boy, about his own age, lying in the street. After that sight, his youthful exuberance transformed into a mortified and sickened stupor upon witnessing the mass carnage all around him on the battlefield. The Carters’ cotton gin was a shell; its boards and frame used for the construction of earthworks by the Union army. Historian Wiley Sword described the aftermath: “Within the ditches, randomly strewn across the landscape—everywhere, and in every position imaginable, lay the human wreckage. Along the parapets the mangled bodies piled one upon the other three and four deep. One could have walked upon the bodies and never touched the ground.”<sup>72</sup>

Behind the earthworks sat the Carter house, bullet-riddled and the yard scattered with debris of the dead. Later, Moscow Carter, son of Fountain Branch Carter, the owner of the home, “counted fifty-seven dead Union soldiers lying dead within an area from the smokehouse to about thirty yards north of the house.” Those who examined the Union dead at the cotton gin claimed that “practically all received bullets to the head, reflecting the intense fighting across the parapet and the heavy headlogs from the cotton gin had

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<sup>71</sup> *War Of The Rebellion: Official Records Of The Union And Confederate Armies*, Series I, Vol. 45. Part II Correspondence (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1894), 4.

<sup>72</sup> Sword, 258-259. Hardin Perkins Figuers, “A Boy’s Impression of the Battle of Franklin.” Figuers Family Papers, Tennessee State Library and Archives.

been shot to pieces.”<sup>73</sup> The soldiers produced some of the closest hand-to-hand combat experienced during the entire war. The gruesomeness of the field hospitals was so horrid that W.A. Keesy of the Sixty-fourth Ohio testified to the awful scenes of suffering two weeks after the battle of Franklin: “at once, a sickening, poisonous atmosphere that seemed to suffocate me. I supposed I could soon overcome this, and pressed on; but by the time I had gotten ten feet into the room I found that I had not much time left if I would get out before fainting.” Keesy then visited the line of works still filled with devastating carnage. “I stood there and thought of the awful suffering and slaughter of battle, and how nearly I had come to being one of the numbers to inhabit the ditches,” he said as he trembled.<sup>74</sup> After the battle, and with the Union army’s exit to Nashville, Confederate soldiers handled the quick and gruesome burial details. They buried the dead in shallow graves where they fell on the battlefield. Franklin residents found the stain of war on their lands, their homes, and their commemoration.

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<sup>73</sup> “Col. Moscow B. Carter, interview by Frank H. Smith,” July 1, 1906, cited in Rick Warwick’s *Williamson County Civil War Veterans: Their Reunions and Photographs* (Nashville: Panacea Press, 2007), 53-56.

<sup>74</sup> James Lee McDonough and Thomas L. Connelly, *Five Tragic Hours: The Battle of Franklin*, (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991), 177.



Fig. 5 The Carter House, 1880.<sup>75</sup>

The battle inflicted deep wounds on the citizens of Franklin. Five Confederate generals died on the battlefield that evening, and a sixth Confederate general died two weeks after the battle from his wounds. The logistical problems of caring for the wounded were overwhelming. Franklin had forty-four hospitals, and only three were for the treatment of Union soldiers. Food, sanitation, and shelter were priorities and concerns, but the citizens of Franklin fed and cared for the wounded while the wounded on both sides recognized their compassion. At Carnton plantation, the home of John and Carrie McGavock, the Confederate wounded “piled almost thirty to a room and soldiers occupied a space in all of the outbuildings.”<sup>76</sup> In later years, Confederate veterans remembered Carrie McGavock for the kindness she provided after the Battle of Franklin.

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<sup>75</sup> “The Carter House,” ca. 1880, Tennessee Virtual Archives, War and Reunion: The ‘Lost Cause’ in Southern Memory, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, TN. <http://www.tennessee.gov/tsla> (accessed January 30, 2013).

<sup>76</sup> Sam Davis Elliot, *Soldier of Tennessee: General Alexander P. Stewart And The Civil War In the West* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1999), 245.



Fig. 6 The McGavock's home, Carnton Plantation <sup>77</sup>

In 1865, the federal government ordered Union dead buried at Franklin to be exhumed and moved to the national cemetery at Stones River in Murfreesboro or to the National Cemetery in Nashville. But the Confederate dead lay untouched and unrecognized by the United States government. Prominent citizens of Franklin rose to the occasion to rebury and preserve the memory of the dead. The McGavocks of Carnton plantation established “two acres of their own land for the reburial of 1,481 Confederate soldiers.”<sup>78</sup> Their Confederate cemetery became a key focal point for Confederate

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<sup>77</sup> Carnton Plantation, date unknown but prior to restoration in the 1980s. Tennessee State Library and Archives, <http://www.tennessee.gov/tsla> (accessed January 31, 2013).

<sup>78</sup> *Carnton Plantation and Battlefield*, (Franklin, Tennessee: The Battle of Franklin Trust, Franklin, TN, 2012), 21. The Guide Book may be purchased at the Carnton Plantation and Battlefield gift shop inside of the Fleming Center.

memorial days and reunions of the 1860s and 1870s, and eventually for blue-gray reunions from the 1880s to the 1920s.<sup>79</sup>

The establishment of the Confederate cemetery provided a tangible and visible reminder of the dead of Southern bravery and valor. Privately owned and tended by McGavock family members until their deaths, the cemetery was eventually adopted by the Franklin chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy. The town of Franklin and Confederate veterans praised them for their efforts to commemorate the dead. By the 1880s, Franklin hosted many veterans' reunions. The *Nashville Daily American* reported on September 24, 1887: "McGavock's Grove, situated between the beautiful cemetery with its marble headstones and the modest monument, all enclosed by a neat substantial fence and the famous cotton gin, and was never in better condition than today, for a large assembly."<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> *McGavock Cemetery Book* April 1866, copied by Col. George Cowan in 1910, including a history of the cemetery and deed of the land to the Confederate Cemetery Association, Williamson County Archives, Franklin, TN. MF AC no. 209

<sup>80</sup> "Grand Reunion, in Franklin, 1887 The Memorable Events of War Retold in Franklin: Largest Gathering Ever Known in McGavock's Grove" *The Nashville Daily American*, September 24, 1887. Williamson County Archives, Franklin, TN. MF 138.



Fig. 7 Ladies of Franklin decorating the graves in the Confederate Cemetery, Franklin, TN.<sup>81</sup>

Confederate veterans' reunions held at Carnton plantation in the McGavock's Grove allowed citizens to gain a new identity of victory in the face of defeat while commemorating their dead. In 1901, Judge H.H. Cook delivered an address at the decoration of the graves of the Confederate soldiers in Franklin:

"We have met not only to cherish their memories, but to vindicate their characters and the purity of their motives. The brave never die in vain. The courage of the South had much to do with the preservation of local self government and the individual rights of man. Happy must be the souls of our departed comrades who died for what has been called the "lost cause" when they look down upon us and see that, by wisdom, courage, patience, endurance, and devotion to law and order, we have gained the victory, and to know that the whole civilized world gives more honor and praise to the vanquished than to the victors. You Daughters of the South will care for their graves, and will cherish their virtues and deeds in your hearts forever."<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> "Women in the Confederate Cemetery at Carnton, Franklin, Tennessee. Confederate Veterans Reunion," ca.1890. Digital Civil War Photograph Collection, Tennessee Virtual Archive, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, TN. <http://www.tennessee.gov/tsla> (accessed February 5, 2013).

<sup>82</sup> "The Confederate Dead At Franklin," *Confederate Veteran*, 1901, 9, No. 1 262-263.

The war was over, but the preservation of the dead at Franklin became inseparable from this newly created community identity.

As the years passed, Carnton plantation's landscape remained open and somewhat untouched. But, the Carter house property changed shortly after the war ended. Moscow Carter leveled the breastworks by the cotton gin and his fields were in cultivation for a significant period of time. He also rebuilt a larger cotton gin. The Franklin battlefield took on a new persona, one of suburban-type homes, sidewalks, and new roads. Moscow Carter bragged about the changes in an 1884 letter to *Century Magazine*:

The general aspect of the country has undergone a wonderful change. You could hardly credit your senses were you suddenly transported hither. Instead of fenceless, uncultivated, desolate farms, verdant fields, thrifty orchards, blooming gardens, and almost countless fresh looking homelike dwellings present themselves to view. The recuperative energies of our people are simply astonishing.<sup>83</sup>

But, when the veterans returned to the battlefield at Franklin, the men walked from McGavock's grove next to the cemetery and then to the Carter house to remember the horrifying carnage and speak of the valor of their comrades.

Multiple reunions held during the 1880s to 1910 were full of fanfare and remembrance of the Confederate dead. The *Nashville Daily American* reported on September 15, 1892, the town of Franklin and "the court-house and business section of the city are decorated with flags and bunting from roof to floor and many of the residence

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<sup>83</sup> "Moscow Carter's letter to Century Magazine," in *Williamson County Historical Society*, 25 (Spring 1994), 68.

are likewise making quite a brilliant show. Union and Confederate flags of all sizes are hung and draped together, but the United States flags largely predominate.”<sup>84</sup> The State Association of Confederate Veterans gathering demonstrated their patriotism outwardly:

The few survivors of an era of blood and devastation, who exposed their lives, liberty and fortunes in defense of a people they loved and a cause which they honestly deemed just. The trying times...made them a band of brothers...their gatherings are not those of rebels, traitors or anarchists, plotting the destruction of a government, by simply the meeting of law-abiding citizens of a Union originally founded as well as by their fathers as by the Yankees...they have as much right to pride in these United States...and these gatherings being only for the purpose of brothers meeting with brothers and seeing that history places them in the proper light for posterity.<sup>85</sup>

The Confederate veterans from the Battle of Franklin appeared to desire peace and patriotism, but Franklin’s firm collective reclamation of the battlefield and preservation of the dead turned their attention to another method of commemoration: educational institutions and economic development of the actual battlefield. In 1889, local citizens formed a school that was “entirely non-sectarian; yet sound morals, good citizenship and Christianity will be its corner-stone.”<sup>86</sup> The setting for the school was the site of the cotton gin assault by the Confederates on the Union army during the Battle of Franklin.

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<sup>84</sup> “The Most Hospitable and Gracious Reception by Citizens of Franklin, Bivouacs Reunion,” *Nashville Daily American*, September 15, 1892. Williamson County Archives, Franklin, TN. MF 159.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> Cindy Gentry, *Battle Ground Academy: A Monument to Education*. (Franklin: The Hillsboro Press, 1996), 18-20; William Bate, *Address at Battle Ground Academy dedication in Franklin, Tenn.*, Oct. 5, 1889, p.3, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

The stockholders bought nearly six acres from Moscow Carter in July 1889 for \$1,140.00. The sites importance was because the “ground has a history which will last as long as our institution of government lasts.”<sup>87</sup>

On October 5, 1889, ex-Confederate General William B. Bate, a veteran of the Battle of Franklin, who was a former governor of Tennessee and current U.S. Senator, delivered the dedication speech. Bate proclaimed:

The contributions of a patriotic, brave, and generous people – an educational monument, so to speak – in memory of that battle, which occurred years ago on this spot, and to that successful training of youth which is of the hopeful future. It is a memorial to the patriotism and heroism of those who, a quarter century ago, fought and fell on this historic ground, as it also is a building dedicated to the public good... This cultural and generous people, proud of their lineage, their home, and their history, will see to it that this shall become a school where students will feel honored to have been graduated... Its name, by which we baptize it today – Battle Ground Academy, and the site on which it is erected, are suggestive of those wonderful historic events in our country that had a cause as well as a consequence, and which most appropriately call for a brief reference on this occasion of its dedication.<sup>88</sup>

Bate praised the school as an educational monument that not only commemorated higher learning, but the valor and bravery of the Confederate dead from the Battle of Franklin as well. This educational monument stood as a symbol of the South’s modern rebirth – a place where Bate argued Battle Ground Academy combined “the practical with the

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<sup>87</sup> Gentry, 18-20.

<sup>88</sup> Bate, 23-24.

sentimental...the history of the past and hope of the future unite...as kindred drops that mingle into one.”<sup>89</sup>

The pomp and circumstance that surrounded the beginnings of Battle Ground Academy encouraged the public to identify not with the landscape, but with the institution. In doing so, the land as hallowed ground became secondary. Participation in memorial and commemoration events allowed southerners to enjoy a renewed sense of confidence and as such, experience a deeper sense of social unity. The particular way Franklin fostered community identity was firmly rooted in their educational institutions and iconic historical landmarks in their historical interpretation of the Civil War.<sup>90</sup>

The identification of the origins within this movement studied by scholars such as historian Gaines Foster pointed to the industrialization and integration of the South into a national economy. This shift produced chaotic lasting effects well into the latter half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The rise of black activism, political unrest, and economic depressions raised white southerner fears regarding the nature of the new national order. The increasing number of monuments placed in towns such as Franklin testified to the growing importance of the “Confederate tradition.” But commemorating the war became relegated to the towns and its living citizens, not the dead. The focus shifted from cemeteries to Southern monuments that “occupied a more public place within the daily patterns of life of the citizens, where all would see and profit by it.”<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>90</sup> Foster, 127.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid, 79-80, 129.

Confederate commemoration offered solace from the tensions of the period, and transcended social divisions and created a sense of social unity based on “an escape to a mythical past.”<sup>92</sup>

The new generation of southern commemoration began with Battle Ground Academy. Bate saw the school as a symbolic element of victory and asked the students to “turn the mirror of memory on this field and preserve the truth of history” of their heritage. With this single act, the interpretation of the war took on a different identity that fully embraced the Lost Cause myth and promoted Southern virtue and honor, intentionally pushing the horrors of the American Civil War into a deep abyss. Victory lay within the interests of the present and the actions of the past.<sup>93</sup>

The federal government changed its battlefield policy in 1902. At that time, Franklin was one of fourteen different bills that advocated preservation of individual battlefield sites that went before Congress.<sup>94</sup> Secretary of War Elihu Root worried about the costs of battlefield preservation. The federal government spent over \$2 million dollars on four of the five military parks, while spending at least one hundred thousand dollars at Antietam. Root wanted a change in policy – “the federal government should only acquire the necessary acreage to preserve roadways and lines of battle, where tablets, paid for by individual groups or states, marked the lines.” Root decided to “cut costs in Vicksburg,

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<sup>92</sup> David Curry, “The Virtuous Soldier: Constructing A Usable Confederate Past In Franklin Tennessee,” *Monuments To The Lost Cause*, eds. Cynthia Mills and Pamela H. Simpson (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2003),133.

<sup>93</sup> Bate, 7,8, 15.

<sup>94</sup> Smith, 43-44.

and to the park commission's dismay, Root insisted on a cheaper park, with fewer bridges and roads."<sup>95</sup>

During that same year, a battlefield expert George B. Davis, recommended to a House committee the federal government should end all large land acquisitions. He pondered the fate of the parks if funding was not available to maintain the battlefield parks. The parks would then become "a refuge for tramps and all sorts of people." He preferred to see battlefields preserved like "Antietam, where only key areas were preserved." Davis said most should have "tablets and cannon-ball like monuments in the roads," as well as small areas for "monuments for special purposes."<sup>96</sup> The continuation of the veterans' vision of thousands of acres for new battlefield parks ended at the turn of the twentieth century.

The Franklin battlefield began to change in 1902. Fire destroyed the original Battle Ground Academy. A new campus was built across the street, and school officials sold the property to a local bank, which in turn, sold it to George I. Matthews of Franklin. The next three years, Matthew's built a home a few feet north of the original location of where the Carter family's cotton gin sat during the time of the Battle of Franklin. The house's water lines lay in part of the first line of entrenchments eighteen inches deep. During this time, the entrenchments revealed many bullets and other battle paraphernalia. At the southeast angle of the breastworks Matthews planted a new tree, and its planting

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<sup>95</sup> Christopher Waldrep, *Vicksburg's Long Shadow: The Civil War Legacy of Race and Remembrance* (Lanham: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005), 171. Also see Smith, 43-48.

<sup>96</sup> Smith, 34-45, 49.

revealed Federal cartridge boxes. Matthews also took apart the original cenotaph dedicated to Confederate Brigadier General Patrick Cleburne. What once was a battlefield landscape became a suburban yard.<sup>97</sup>

This destruction did not stop veterans, Union or Confederate, from seeking an established national battlefield park at Franklin. In 1909, T.C. Harbaugh, a Union veteran of Casstown, Ohio, wrote an article for the *National Tribune* in Washington, D.C., advocating for a battlefield park in Franklin:

I know of no more historic battlefield in the land than Franklin. The old gin has vanished; but the bullet-marked Carter House, around which the tide of battle rolled with varying fortunes that bloody day and night, is still extant and marks a historic spot. I cannot see why the national government has taken no steps toward marking the battlefield at Franklin. This is something that should be done, and done before the last of the gallant men who fought there have passed over to rest “under the shade of trees.” 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. Other battlefields of no more importance than Franklin have been tableted and it should not be unmarked.<sup>98</sup>

S. C. Walford, veteran from the 97<sup>th</sup> Ohio added: “I consider Franklin the hardest fought of any I was in. We were on the advance line that broke and made a hasty retreat for the main line. I am in favor of the government marking the battlefield, and I believe that

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<sup>97</sup> “Moscow Carter’s letter to Century Magazine,” in *Williamson County Historical Society*, 25 (Spring 1994), 68.

<sup>98</sup> “Making A National Park At Franklin,” *Confederate Veteran*, (1909), 17, No. 8, 15.

every Confederate living who was in the battle will be in favor of it. You can put my name down as one who wants to see the battlefield of Franklin made a national park.”<sup>99</sup>

But, this did not stop residents of Franklin such as Matthews or other developers from building on the battlefield. Marketing and advertising strategies on the part of local developers encouraged citizens to recognize “Franklin’s Best Building Lots” are “Where the Battle was Fought!” While the town of Franklin hosted the veteran reunion in 1910, local developers promoted their lots for “Battle Ground Park” through the newspaper.<sup>100</sup>



*Advertisement of Battle Ground Park*

Fig 8 Advertisement for Battle Ground Park subdivision, 1910<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>100</sup> *An Abstract Of The Title of Battle Ground Park Addition to the Town of Franklin*, R.H. Crockett, Law Office, Franklin, Tennessee, 1910, Tennessee State Library and Archives.

<sup>101</sup> “Advertisement for Battle Ground Park subdivision 1910,” cited in Rick Warwick, *Williamson County Civil War Veterans: Their Reunions and Photographs* (Nashville: Panacea Press, 2007), 60.

Prior to the veterans' reunion held in Franklin in 1910, Mrs. N.B. Doizer, a member of the Franklin Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Chairman of the Franklin National Park Committee, wrote:

It is not my purpose to discuss the battle of Franklin, but to let the men who took part in that fatal battle, both those who wore the gray and those who wore the blue, know that the members of the Franklin Chapter of the U.D.C. Franklin, Tenn., are 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. 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 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.<sup>102</sup>

During the fiftieth anniversary of the Battle of Franklin in 1914, blue and gray veterans gathered once more to commemorate. Determined to ask Congress for \$250,000 for a national battlefield park in Franklin, the veterans decided on a design plan for the Carter House and Columbia Pike area. The veterans wanted an arch to stretch over the pike etched with the names of all officers who participated in the battle; however, an arch never became a part of the landscape. Congressman E.E. Eslick from the Franklin district wrote Mayor Marshall of Franklin asking that "the property where the Battle of Franklin occurred be created into a national battlefield park." The city mayor estimated the cost to "establish the battlefield around \$872,000, and a resolution adopted by the

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<sup>102</sup>"National Park At Franklin" *Confederate Veteran*, Vol. 17, 1909, No.8, 136.

city, asked that a park not be built.” The proposed quote of condemnation of hundreds of homes would be detrimental to the community.<sup>103</sup>

Residents remained content with Confederate commemorations of the Lost Cause: a Confederate soldier monument, erected by the United Daughters of the Confederacy in the town square, and an educational monument in the form of Battle Ground Academy. What was left of the battlefield disappeared in the mid-1920s, at the same time new efforts to create national battlefields at Stones River and Fort Donelson were succeeding. The *Review-Appeal* in July 1926 advertised: “Thirteen New Home Sites On Sale Today! When General Cleburne was killed in the Battle of Franklin, all that surrounded the General’s death spot south of the Carter House on Columbia were farming lands and a scattering of houses. Today, the same section is thickly populated with modern homes and is making rapid strides in new day improvements.”<sup>104</sup>



Fig 9 Advertisement for Cleburne Heights subdivision, 1926<sup>105</sup>

<sup>103</sup> “The Civil War Park for Franklin Discuss,” *The Review – Appeal*, March 4, 1926. Williamson County Archives, Franklin, TN. MF 110.

<sup>104</sup> “Cleburne Heights,” *The Review-Appeal*, July 29, 1926. Williamson County Archives, Franklin, TN. MF 110.

<sup>105</sup> “Advertisement for Cleburne Heights subdivision 1926,” *The Review - Appeal*, July, 1926. Williamson County Archives, Franklin, TN. MF 110.

All attempts to establish Franklin as a national battlefield park were effectively over by 1926. Franklin residents valued their memorials, monuments, and movements, but wanted to develop their battlefield land. The few remaining elements from the battle scattered throughout the town focused on the battle, promoted Carrie McGavock's efforts with the cemetery, and interpreted a fragmented historical narrative.

Another reason helps to explain why battlefield preservation failed at Franklin: all of the national battlefield parks in Tennessee had national cemeteries as the centerpieces. The absence of a national cemetery at Franklin was that critical piece. Franklin never saw a national battlefield park for many reasons, both local and national. The preservation of the Franklin battlefield was decidedly over, leaving the interpretation of the story up to the legacy of local Confederate heritage organizations. Not until the beginning of the twenty first century would the city of Franklin experience another push for battlefield reclamation, this time, spear-headed not by the federal government but by public and private partnerships focused on land and community preservation.

CHAPTER IV  
BATTLEFIELD RECLAMATION AND INTERPRETATION IN FRANKLIN  
AND VICKSBURG

Alice M. Nichol, granddaughter of Fountain Branch Carter, recalled: “The first sound of the firing and booming of the cannons, we children all sat around our mother and cried.”<sup>106</sup> One hundred and forty nine years after the Battle of Franklin, the Carter House and its outbuildings stand today as examples of arguably the most bullet-filled structures from the Civil War. In 1890, Senator Isham G. Harris and Congressman Washington C. Whitthorne of Columbia introduced bills in the United States Senate and House providing for “the purchase of a site for a military post” near Franklin for “the erection of suitable buildings thereon.”<sup>107</sup>

Multiple bills died in committee meetings, and over the next fifty-nine years, twenty additional bills were introduced to Congress, with the sole intent of creating a national memorial on the Franklin battlefield. Two of the bills provided for a commemorative arch and the others stated a desire for a national park; however, the Carter House was never mentioned in the proposed national park bills.<sup>108</sup> Stanley Horn secured an option for the State of Tennessee to purchase the Carter House in 1951 and

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<sup>106</sup> David R. Logsdon, ed. *Eyewitnesses at the Battle of Franklin*, (Nashville: Kittle Mills Press, 2000), 19. See also Mary Nichols Britt Collection: Tennessee State Archives, MS Ac No 1322 and 1765.

<sup>107</sup> Dan Robison, “The Carter House: Focus of the Battle of Franklin,” *The Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, 23 (March-December, 1963): 17.

<sup>108</sup> Robison, 17.

worked with a local non-profit association to open it for public tours two years later.

Similar to the vast majority of interpreted Civil War properties of the 1950s, the Carter

House remained a place where interpreters told a Confederate-focused story.<sup>109</sup>



Fig 10 Located right on Columbia Pike/ U.S. Highway 31, this is how the Carter House appears today. The addition of the circa 1864 style fence is a new addition within the 2012. The office and the smoke house are visible directly to the left.

The latter half of the twentieth century saw the Carter House and Historic Carnton Plantation become the focal points for interpreting the Battle of Franklin narrative.

Located a mile and a quarter from each other, both historic sites played vital roles during and after the battle. Historic Carnton Plantation became the largest Confederate field hospital in Franklin, and the Carter House was not only the Union army headquarters, but also the center line of defense for the Union army. The overall historical narrative of the Carter family and grounds as it pertained to the Battle of Franklin has not lacked for

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<sup>109</sup> Dr. Rosealie Carter, *A Visit to the Carter House, Franklin, Tennessee, in Photographs, Poems, and Paragraphs*, Visitor Guide to the Carter House, circa 1950s. Carter Family History, Vertical Files, Williamson County Archives.

interpretation. But, stories of women, local citizens prior to and after the Battle of Franklin, slavery, emancipation, and Reconstruction represent a negligible amount of the interpretive narrative.

The Carter House and Historic Carnton Plantation formed the Battle of Franklin Trust in 2009 “to manage the operation of Franklin’s two key Civil War sites in an effort to better coordinate heritage tourism.” The Battle of Franklin Trust Board Chairman Marianne Schroer stated: “Together, The Carter House and Historic Carnton Plantation will have a more powerful significance. This venture has the potential of joining the ranks of Gettysburg, Richmond and Charleston as more local battle sites are reclaimed for public access by such groups as the City of Franklin, The Heritage Foundation and Franklin’s Charge. Certainly the opportunity to affiliate with the National Park Service and the National Heritage Area are greatly enhanced by this joint venture.”<sup>110</sup>

In 2009, Franklin’s Charge provided a grant for the Carter House to receive funding for archeology on the newly reclaimed one-half acre site directly adjacent to the historic house museum that three years previously, had a twentieth-century house and a swimming pool. The archeological digs revealed artifacts of bone fragments, cloth, bullets, and pieces of weapons. During this same year, the Battle of Franklin Trust, in partnership with the Tennessee Historical Commission, combined their resources

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<sup>110</sup> The Battle of Franklin Trust, The Carter House and Carnton Plantation *Battlefield Dispatch* Newsletter, November 2009, <http://www.battleoffranklintrust.org/> (accessed February 7, 2013).

between the two historic sites to incorporate a stronger interpretation of the Battle of Franklin.<sup>111</sup>

On April 17, 2010, the Battle of Franklin Trust held their first official opening at the Carter House of the newly discovered trench lines that revealed the preservation efforts of the past several years; the forward Union line on the Carter House property. The unveiling of the Carter House garden site opened to the public at that time. During the ceremony Battle of Franklin Trust leaders asked spectators to “take a handful of seed to help seed the land and to symbolize the Battle of Franklin Trust’s initiative for future growth.”<sup>112</sup>

Almost three years later, the one-half acre that once was the scene of utter destruction is labeled as the ‘Garden’ on the Carter House tour brochure and a single marker gives a brief overview of the Carter family’s agriculture endeavors and details how their garden was one of the places overcome by the heaviest fighting during the Battle of Franklin. The organization is currently cultivating the Carter House garden back to the 1880s just a few steps south of the recently discovered trench lines. Interpreters do not engage visitors with the landscape, leaving visitors to draw their own conclusions regarding agriculture and interpret on their own an important military feature at the site.

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<sup>111</sup> Battle of Franklin Trust, mission statement taken from their website, <http://www.battleoffranklintrust.org/> and the November 2009 online newsletter, <http://www.battleoffranklintrust.org/Newsletter/> (accessed February 7, 2013).

<sup>112</sup> Civil War Interactive Newswire, <http://civilwarinteractive.com/Newswire/> (accessed February 12, 2013).



Fig. 11 ‘Slave house’ located at the Carter House. Photograph courtesy of Rachael Finch, March 4, 2013.

The interpretive tour is disjointed and incomplete. The ‘Garden’ is an example of the Carter House’s disjointed landscape. The integration of enslaved African Americans is another. The Carter House guide book, available for purchase, touches on the family’s agricultural endeavors, cotton production, and enslaved labor.<sup>113</sup> According to the Carter House guide book: “as the production of the farm increased, so did its work force. Fountain owned twenty-eight slaves living in seven cabins according to the 1860 census. Among the slaves was a couple, Jack and Calpurnia. Jack was born about 1830 and Calpurnia in 1825. At least five of Calpurnia and Jack’s children were born into slavery on the Carter farm.”<sup>114</sup> By leaving out details on enslaved African American families at the Carter House as it pertains to antebellum farm landscapes in Middle Tennessee, does

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<sup>113</sup> *The Carter House* (Franklin, Tennessee: The Battle of Franklin Trust, 2012), 13-14. The Guide Book may be purchased at the Carter House museum gift shop.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

not provide visitors with a completely felt interpretive experience. Nor does the guided tour freely offer up an explanation of how or why the Carter family became slaveholders, their reasons for building and operating a cotton gin, or details surrounding slave life on the Carter farm. The 'slavehouse,' moved from Leiper's Fork, lacks interpretive markers and does not provide a voice for enslaved people living at the Carter House property prior to and during the Civil War. The exact whereabouts of Carter's slave cabins may be debatable, but the current placement of the 'slavehouse,' next to a Civil War era cannon against the barricades of the Union line, may be debatable too.<sup>115</sup>

Starting on the back porch of the house, the guided tour's primary focus is the Battle of Franklin, its effects on the entire Carter family and the hand to hand combat exhibited by the Union and Confederate soldiers fighting in the dark for five hours. The tour does provide detailed accounts from Fountain Branch Carter and his son Moscow Carter as to the conditions of their property and the tragic loss of their mortally wounded son and brother, Todd Carter, after the battle. Yet, the Carter House misses the opportunity to fully represent the reasons for war, issues on the home front during Union occupation, emancipation, or Reconstruction by continuing to place its primary emphasis on the battle.

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<sup>115</sup> The Carter House, *Standard Tour Brochure for the self guided and guided tour of the house and grounds*, tour taken February 25, 2013.



Fig. 12 Carter House Garden, April 17, 2010. Photograph courtesy of Rachael Finch



Fig. 13 Carter House Garden. Union trench line was site of some of the heaviest fighting between Union and Confederate troops November 30, 1864. Photograph courtesy of Rachael Finch, April 17, 2010



Fig. 14 Confederate re-enactors, April 17, 2010. The Unveiling of the Carter House Garden. Photograph courtesy of Rachael Finch.



Fig 15 Looking north from Strahl Street, this is the Carter House garden, complete with the covered trench line. The Battle of Franklin Trust plan to bring the garden back to its 1880s appearance. The current visitor center is located behind the trees to the left. March 2, 2013.

The Carter House is not alone in this struggle to blend preservation efforts with a complete historical interpretation. Historic Carnton Plantation suffered similar issues. Historic Carnton Plantation is a National Historic Landmark and has been under the direction of the Carnton Association since 1977.<sup>116</sup> Carnton is also the setting of the acclaimed novel, *Widow of the South* (2005) by Robert Hicks, which is based on the life of Carrie McGavock. According to the Battle of Franklin Trust's website, Historic Carnton Plantation is a "national model dedicated to the preservation, interpretation, and

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<sup>116</sup> The Battle of Franklin Trust, Historic Carnton Plantation history, available online, <http://www.battleoffranklintrust.org/> and at Historic Carnton Plantation's direct website, <http://www.carnton.org/history.htm> (accessed February 26, 2013).

management of a Franklin, Tennessee, house museum, historic landscape, and Confederate Cemetery.”<sup>117</sup>

The guided house tour begins on the back porch and describes the events of the afternoon of November 30, 1864. Carnton’s interpretive tour includes the entire home, a visit to the blood- stained floors upstairs, and a peek at the original McGavock cemetery ledger. The guide book on Carnton in the gift shop states: “Slavery was the greatest central characteristic of Southern plantation life. The buildings and overall broad scope of Carnton’s antebellum years reflected the money and prominence of its white owners, but they also reflected in vivid detail the toil and craftsmanship of African American slaves. Carnton is as much a black landscape as it is a white landscape.”<sup>118</sup> While this is indeed a true statement, the guided tours only briefly touch on the McGavock family roles as slaveholders in Middle Tennessee and to African American experiences during the war or Reconstruction. The two story brick ‘slave cabin’ is restored and is open to visitors during operating hours, however, the guided tour does not incorporate bringing visitors to the cabin and does not detail the remote daily lifestyle of a plantation. The central interpretation places emphasis on the family and particularly John and Carrie

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<sup>117</sup> The Battle of Franklin Trust, mission statement for Historic Carnton Plantation, available online, <http://www.battleoffranklintrust.org> and at Historic Carnton Plantation’s direct website, <http://www.carnton.org/history.htm> (accessed February 26, 2013).

<sup>118</sup> *Carnton Plantation and Battlefield*, Guide Book. The Battle of Franklin Trust, Franklin Tennessee. The Guide Book is available to purchase inside of the Carnton Plantation gift shop.

McGavock's legacy in the aftermath of the battle and the establishment of the Confederate Cemetery holding the remains of 1,481 Southern soldiers.<sup>119</sup>

The myopic focus on Carrie's work falls short of providing a broader interpretation of what the town of Franklin endured after the battle. Recently, the Battle of Franklin Trust expanded the name of Historic Carnton Plantation to include the word, battlefield. This may indicate the organization's recognition their story is clearly focused on the Battle of Franklin and its lingering effects on the McGavock family, its connection to the Confederate cemetery, and its proximity to the recently reclaimed Eastern Flank Battlefield Park. Carnton may be better served to examine its interpretation on the African American experience in Middle Tennessee, emancipation and Reconstruction to bring about the causes and consequences for the war. In doing so, this may lend credibility to the inclusion of 'battlefield' to their moniker. Working with heritage organizations and regional academic institutions such as Middle Tennessee State University's Center for Historic Preservation, may allow for new historical scholarship and research to provide a well rounded interpretation of the site.

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<sup>119</sup> Historic Carnton Plantation, *Standard Tour Brochure for the self guided tour and guided tour of the grounds and house*, taken February 26, 2013.



Fig 16 This is the walkway leading from Cartnon's visitor center to the McGavock family and Confederate cemeteries. The plaque interprets Loring's advance over the McGavock's property which is now the Eastern Flank Battlefield Park just beyond the cemeteries. March 3, 2013.

Broadening the story to include the town's experience of the home front during the war, and the role of other women within the community may bring a greater understanding to the depth of suffering endured by soldiers on both sides at Franklin. There are multiple accounts that could bring intensity to the story. For example, Fannie Courtney, a 19 year old Unionist living in Franklin wrote to the United States Sanitary Commission and remarked on conditions after the battle:

There were forty four hospitals in town- three for the Federal wounded and the rest for the Confederates. Red flags were waving from unoccupied dwellings, the seminaries, churches, and every business in town. My mother and I took charge of a hundred and twenty wounded men, who occupied the Presbyterian Church, it being the largest Federal hospital, and with what we could spare assisted at another which was in a house owned by my mother and near our home. We fed the men twice a day. We never had time to rest, only as we sat down to eat something hurriedly, for as soon as we had finished feeding our patients in the morning, we had to return home to prepare the next meal. I must not forget to tell you of my little brother, twelve years old, who always went with us to the hospital and would raise the weary heads of the soldiers to give them coffee or water, and feed those who were not able to feed themselves. He even went upon the battlefield and worked hard, covering the dead who were not half-buried.<sup>120</sup>



Fig 17 This is how the McGavock's home, Carnton appears today. The back porch once held the bodies of several dead Confederate Generals after the Battle of Franklin and the entire house, outbuildings, and yards became the largest Confederate hospital. Today, visitors may see the Civil War Trails marker prior to walking up to the house. March 3, 2013.

Currently, tourists come to the Carter House and Historic Carnton Plantation and Battlefield to learn more about the Battle of Franklin and the Civil War. At the present time, each historic house museum has a visitor center, complete with exhibit areas and artifacts dedicated to telling the battle narrative through the eyes of the Carter and McGavock families. While the individual sites merged to provide a more positive visitor experience, their stories continue to lack a complete authentic narrative of the shared histories of the entire Civil War story.

In recent years, the State of Tennessee purchased the old Franklin High School gymnasium directly north of the Carter House as a potential next step for a fully integrated story at Franklin. In March of 2012, The Battle of Franklin Trust Chief of Operations Officer Eric Jacobson announced: "the organization is in discussions with the

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<sup>120</sup> Fannie Courtney, "Letter to E. Root, of the U.S. Sanitary Commission Franklin, Tn, March 1865," *Williamson County Historical Society Anniversary Edition, No. 7, 1966-1976*. "Eyewitness Account of the Battle of Franklin," Courtney Family papers, Vertical Files. Williamson County Archives, Franklin, TN.

State of Tennessee to turn over the gymnasium site adjacent to The Carter House on Columbia Avenue to facilitate building a state of the art Civil War museum and interpretive center. This is an enormous opportunity for Franklin as well as the citizens of the State of Tennessee to build one of the country's most impressive Civil War museums. It would be located adjacent to a National Register Civil War battlefield site and house. This unused property can be and should be incorporated into the battlefield story surrounding the Battle of Franklin."<sup>121</sup> The *Williamson Herald* article stated, "In an effort to take advantage of increased tourism opportunities and public awareness resulting from Tennessee's Sesquicentennial Civil War commemoration, representatives from the Battle of Franklin Trust have requested that the Tennessee Historical Commission consider allowing the Battle of Franklin Trust to construct a Civil War museum on the now unused property that adjoins the historic Carter House National Register site."<sup>122</sup>

Currently, the vacant gym sits on property just north of the Carter House. The Battle of Franklin Trust "envisions constructing a first-class museum on the property as a complement to The Carter House and other Battle of Franklin sites. The request is under consideration by the Tennessee Historical Commission." If allowed, the property would be "conveyed in trust, with the State of Tennessee retaining control of architectural

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<sup>121</sup> "Battle of Franklin Trust seeks old FHS gym from state for Civil War museum," *The Williamson Herald*, March 2012. Taken from the Battle of Franklin Trust website, [www.battleoffranklintrust.org](http://www.battleoffranklintrust.org) and the Williamson Herald website, <http://www.williamsonherald.com/> (accessed, March 1, 2013)

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*

designs and other elements of construction, as well as retaining oversight for the use of the museum property.”<sup>123</sup> Tennessee Historical Commission Chairman Sam Elliott of Chattanooga said, “We are optimistic that a happy medium can be reached between the practical necessities of raising private dollars and the public’s need to ensure that one of Tennessee’s most precious Civil War sites is preserved and protected by the State.”<sup>124</sup> The Tennessee Historical Commission and the Battle of Franklin Trust are evaluating options similar to the one used in connection to the Hermitage historic site.

According to the *Williamson Herald*, “The multi-million dollar cost of constructing the museum will be the responsibility of the Battle of Franklin Trust. It is expected that a fundraising effort would be initiated in late summer. The State of Tennessee and the Battle of Franklin Trust would initiate an archaeological evaluation of the now unused property to determine what artifacts remain from the 1864 battle. The artifacts, which would remain under state ownership, are expected to be displayed at the museum.” Carter House Board of Directors President Ed Underwood stated, “We’re enthusiastic about the possibility of building the museum and interpretive center next to The Carter House. It will serve as the first stop visitors will make when coming to Franklin to learn the history and hear the stories of the Battle of Franklin and why the Civil War was important.”<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

More importantly, heritage tourism plays a key role in determining the long term approach to the Interpretive Center. The State of Tennessee Department of Tourist Development Commissioner Susan Whitaker acknowledged, “During the past two years, Tennessee’s Civil War Trail and Sesquicentennial Signature events have already drawn tens of thousands of tourists to Tennessee. Having a Civil War museum and interpretive center right next to The Carter House and Battle of Franklin battlefield would be a tremendous educational and tourism asset for the entire state. Having the museum built and operated through the fund-raising efforts of the local non-profit Battle of Franklin Trust would save the taxpayers of Tennessee millions of dollars, a win for all of us, particularly those who want to preserve and communicate Tennessee’s significant Civil War history to our children and visitors.”<sup>126</sup> By incorporating key partnerships the Battle of Franklin Trust may witness the old Franklin High School gymnasium becoming the Interpretive Center for the Battle of Franklin Trust while interpreting not only the battle of Franklin story but a Middle Tennessee Civil War story.



Fig. 18 The future Battle of Franklin Trust Interpretive Center and Museum and former Franklin High School gymnasium. Photograph courtesy of Rachael Finch. March 2011.

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

The struggles at the Carter House and Carnton Plantation mirrored those of the Shirley House, even as the latter became part of Vicksburg National Military Park in 1900. At the time of the Vicksburg battle, the Shirley House, once the residence of James and Adeline Shirley, a Unionist family who owned slaves and 60 acres two miles outside of Vicksburg, was 400 yards outside of the Confederate fortifications, east of the third Louisiana Redan. Situated on the a high elevation back off of the old Jackson Road, on May 17, 1863, saw Union troops storm the property. They found Adeline, her young son, and two black slaves. According to a written account by Alice Shirley Eaton, James and Adeline's daughter, in 1900 detailed:

The Confederates, knowing that they must soon retreat behind their fortifications at Vicksburg, began their preparations by destroying what they could outside, and burned houses in the vicinity; but my mother's persistent refusal to go out of hers, and her determination to prevent its destruction, delayed its being set on fire until the Federals made their appearance on the hills to the east of us. The great hosts advanced rapidly, and the house, the grounds, the road, and the woods behind were soon alive with Union soldiers, and that same afternoon the fighting began. War, terrible war, had come to our very hearthstone, and here my mother and brother remained for three days. The two house servants stayed by them. Household treasures were soon destroyed under the ruthless hand of the soldier.<sup>127</sup>

That afternoon the first clash of fighting occurred between Confederate and Union troops, turning the Shirley house into a makeshift field hospital for the dying. The family lived in a cave behind the house for a little while during the following siege. Alice continued:

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<sup>127</sup> Terrence J. Winschel, ed., *Alice Shirley and the Story of Wexford Lodge* (Washington, D.C.: Eastern National, 1993), 21.

Those three days must have been a time of great distress to my mother, and I think she never entirely recovered from the strain caused by the war. She told me that she and the two house servants sat most of the time in the chimney corner, where the bullets might not strike them. Our carriage driver and others of our colored men were digging a cave in the side of a hill in the valley some distance back of the house, for her to move into as [Major] General [James B.] McPherson had said she must not stay at the house, as it was no place for a woman. On the fourth day of the siege [May 21] she left, and lived in this miserable cave, a blanket strung across the opening, with her trunk and a rocking chair, all her possessions available then, and half sick, my father found her a few days later, and stayed there himself until he was taken sick. With no beds to sleep on, no decent food, and weary with his long, hot journey, what wonder he was sick! They moved to a house of a planter a few miles farther out, where they remained a few weeks, when the shells began to reach them there, and they were by General Grant's personal direction, moved three miles farther back still, into an empty negro cabin.<sup>128</sup>

During the siege of Vicksburg and the surrender that followed on July 4, 1863, Alice, then only 19 years old, became engaged to Union Army Chaplain John Eaton. Eaton became a Colonel of the 63<sup>rd</sup> U.S. Colored Infantry and served as the general superintendent of freedmen for the Department of the Tennessee. He stayed in Vicksburg establishing the freedmen into camps. Their marriage came on September 29, 1864, and proved to be a long and happy marriage. John Eaton and Alice are buried in Arlington National Cemetery.<sup>129</sup> The Shirley's home was virtually destroyed by the siege and the family never returned to the house after the war was over. James and Adeline Shirley's

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<sup>128</sup> Winschel, 22.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid, 24.

daughter Alice, however, decided to move their graves from Vicksburg's Cedar Hill Cemetery to behind the house.<sup>130</sup>

After the establishment of Vicksburg National Military Park in 1899, the federal government initiated efforts to purchase the house and grounds from Alice Shirley Eaton for the sole purpose of restoring the house and opening it as a war memorial. The resident commissioner of the Vicksburg National Military Park Commission, Captain William T. Rigby, contacted Alice Shirley Eaton and asked if she would accept a mere twenty dollars an acre for the her parent's property to become part of the park. Alice stated:

My father died soon after the siege, as much a sacrifice for his country as any soldier who fell in battle, and my mother, left to depend upon me in her last years, went down to her grave mourning the treatment she had received from the Government. No, Capt, while I am deeply interested in the Park & would not ask an unreasonable price, as some are doing, I think we have made sacrifice enough.<sup>131</sup>

The sentiment of their government rejecting her mother's claim, even with the personal testimony of General Grant, for reparations due for damages to her home in June of 1867, cut to the core. In 1899, Congress did approve an appropriation to compensate the Shirley family for damages to their home, but Alice considered the sum compensation enough for only a "small part of our loss." But, she outlined the conditions under which she would consider selling her home. The preservation and restoration of the house was

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<sup>130</sup> Samuel Carter III, *The Final Fortress: The Campaign For Vicksburg, 1862-1863* (New York: St.Martin's Press, 1980), 218-219.

<sup>131</sup> Winschel, 26.

her foremost priority. “The house was the most conspicuous object in the American lines and naturally should be so in the Park. The preservation of my old home would make more real the whole situation to any visitor in the future. I think I ought to receive for my property not less than \$2,500, and I would like to bury by the old house, my father and mother, whom the war drove from it.”<sup>132</sup>



Fig 19 The Shirley house during the Siege of Vicksburg, 1863. The 45<sup>th</sup> Illinois dug caves for protection into the hillside around the house.<sup>133</sup>

Alice Shirley Eaton did not receive her full request for payment; the government paid only twenty five dollars for the house and 60 acres, but the remains of her parents were removed from the city cemetery and interred behind the house on April 21, 1900.<sup>134</sup> When the Federal government purchased the building from the Shirley family it did so with the promise to make it the “most conspicuous object on the battlefield.” On

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid, 26.

<sup>133</sup> Lester Jones, “The Shirley House,” ca. 1863, Library of Congress, Historic American Buildings Survey, Washington, DC. <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/> (accessed March 6, 2011).

<sup>134</sup> Winschel, 26-27.

November 7, 1902, Alice wrote, “ I am happy to hear that the repairs on the old house are so near finished, & only wish I could find a convenient to go down an see it...I hope someday to take a trip down there to see the place. I am glad it is to be a museum.”<sup>135</sup>

But, the Shirley House never served as a completed museum. During the New Deal, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) not only drastically disturbed the battlefield landscape at Vicksburg by filling in gullies, laying sod, and building terraces, but the National Park Service, with the assistance of the Public Works Administration (PWA), built a replica of a Southern antebellum mansion for its museum located at the bottom of the hill from the Shirley House.<sup>136</sup>



Fig 20 The original visitor center and old administration building. This PWA building is situated just south of the Shirley house and the Old Jackson Road and the 3rd Louisiana Redan. February, 2013.

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid, 27.

<sup>136</sup> Waldrep, 281-282.

The new museum and visitor center had its “exhibits completed and installed” in February of 1937.<sup>137</sup> This new visitor center and museum was the first of its kind constructed by the PWA and catered to Confederate descendents, “irritated by the federal government’s refusal to allow the internment of Confederate soldiers in the National Cemetery next to the Union dead with a marker commemorating the ideals of the Confederacy.”<sup>138</sup> Any ideas regarding the interpretation of the home front or Reconstruction were of no importance, even though the Shirley House during the 1870s had a direct connection to the horrors of lynching. On December 7, 1874, after the city forced out the Carpetbaggers, a “bloody riot ensued with fighting erupting between whites and blacks along the Jackson Road forcing blacks to take refuge inside of the abandoned Shirley house.” The whites “stormed the house and seven blacks were killed in the front yard of the house.”<sup>139</sup>

The park restored the house to its original appearance by 1902, and veterans visited the property during the 1917 reunion. The house became “lodging for workers of the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s and with the last park service workers leaving the house by the early 1960s.” But, regrettably, by the 1950s and 1960s, the park service was ignoring the house. Long-deferred maintenance left the house ill-suited for

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<sup>137</sup> Ralph H. Lewis, *National Park Service Museum Curatorship in the National Park Service 1904-1982*, Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Curatorial Services Division. Wahsington, D.C., 1993.  
[http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/curatorship/pdf/3.pdf](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/curatorship/pdf/3.pdf) (accessed, March 1, 2013.)

<sup>138</sup> Waldrep, 281-282.

<sup>139</sup> Winschel, 25.

any interpretive program. A place where issues of occupation, home front, emancipation, and Reconstruction could be explored “remained closed to the public, with access limited only to those park employees performing necessary inspections and repairs.”<sup>140</sup>



Fig. 21 The Shirley House May 2010 before completion of restoration project. Personal photograph of Rachael Finch.

In recent years, the park officials realized the interpretative narrative failed to provide useful thematic integration of Vicksburg, the Civil War, emancipation, and Reconstruction because they lost focus of remembering ‘why’ the house stood. Over the past three years, the park acquired funding necessary for road improvements, additional land purchases north of the national cemetery, and rehabilitation of the Shirley House to enhance the overall historical narrative incorporated into the visitor’s experience at the park. The Park Service’s willingness to focus its attention on the overall Civil War and Reconstruction narrative exemplifies the shift in the twenty-first century to demonstrate why Civil War landscapes are important.

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<sup>140</sup> National Park Service, Vicksburg National Military Park, “Environmental Assessment Rehabilitation and Restoration of the Shirley House,” November 2009. [www.nps.gov/vicksburg/park](http://www.nps.gov/vicksburg/park) (accessed January 26, 2013).

The new approach at the Shirley House reflected developments from an August 1998 meeting of the superintendents of the Civil War battlefield parks in Nashville, Tennessee. They reached the conclusion that “battlefield interpretation must establish the site’s particular place in the continuum of war; illuminate the social, economic, and cultural issues that caused or were affected by the war, illustrate the breadth of human experience during the period, and establish the relevance of the war to people today.”<sup>141</sup> The Department of the Interior’s appropriations bill charged the secretary to “encourage Civil War battle sites to recognize and include in all of their public displays and multi-media educational presentations the unique role that the institution of slavery played in causing the Civil War and its role if any, at the individual battle sites.”<sup>142</sup>

The necessary improvements for Vicksburg National Military Park, and particularly the Shirley House, became a reality with federal funding in 2009. The park received “\$1.9 million in stimulus funds for the rehabilitation of the Shirley House.” This amount far surpassed the emergency funds of \$246,000 to stabilize the house in 2004. This financial support provided for new flooring, staircases, and interior painting as well as fire safety features. An additional “\$2.3 million in stimulus funds financed the stabilization of Mint Springs bluff at the south end of the National Cemetery inside the

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<sup>141</sup>National Park Service, *Interpretation at Civil War Sites: A Report to Congress, 2000*. [http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/icws/icws\\_toc.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/icws/icws_toc.htm) (accessed March 4, 2013.)

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid*, 173.

park, and an additional \$200,000 allowed for road improvements within certain sections of the park.”<sup>143</sup>



Fig. 22 Sign highlighting stabilization plan for the Shirley House, May 2010.

In addition, an updated 2009 park video documentary presented a clearer picture of the Vicksburg campaign and the larger Civil War and Reconstruction narrative. Women and United States Colored Troops have interpretive areas within the park’s visitor center museum. The 2010 Long-Range Interpretive Plan suggested installing “a significant amount of new interpretive media” to address the “inadequate” staffing levels at the park.<sup>144</sup> Vicksburg National Military Park officials understand the needs of their battlefield and have multiple interpretive plans pointing out the necessary steps to create progressive changes within their historical narrative. Unfortunately, the funding spent for the interpretive planning does not include funding for the actual interpretation.

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<sup>143</sup> Danny Barnett Jr., *The Vicksburg Post*, “Shirley House renovations on schedule at Vicksburg National Military Park,” December 13, 2010. <http://www.vicksburgpost.com> (accessed January 26, 2013).

<sup>144</sup> Vicksburg National Military Park, “2010 Long Range Interpretive Plan,” National Park Service, <http://www.nps.gov/hfc/pdf/ip/VICK%20LRIP.pdf> (accessed February 5, 2013.)

But, in 2012, Vicksburg National Military Park unveiled their overall interpretive plan with the theme: “The Vicksburg Campaign and subsequent period of Union occupation through Reconstruction reveal complexities in executing a war and rebuilding a community.”<sup>145</sup> The Shirley House became recognized for its proximity to the Federal siege lines, its prominent role during the forty-seven day efforts by the Union to capture Vicksburg, its use as the headquarters for the 45<sup>th</sup> Illinois Infantry, and its use as a smallpox hospital in 1864. The house also played a prominent role in the activities of African-Americans both military and civilian, during Union occupation of Vicksburg and Reconstruction.<sup>146</sup>

In the summer of 2012, the Shirley House opened for visitors. But, the visitor experience does not match up to Vicksburg’s Long Range Interpretive Plan. While the plan’s expectations are to interpret the civilian experience through the lens of the “Shirley family, the military experience of Union soldiers, living conditions, and field hospitals, and the African American experience of the Shirley family slaves and the Reconstruction battle/lynching,” there is no assigned or available permanent staff for this site.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> The National Park Service “Vicksburg National Military Park, Long Range Interpretive Plan, 2012, <http://www.nps.gov/vick/parkmgmt/upload/VICK-2012-Annual-Interpretive-Plan.pdf> (accessed February 8, 2013).

<sup>146</sup> National Park Service, Vicksburg National Military Park, “Environmental Assessment, Rehabilitation and Restoration of the Shirley House, 2009.” <http://home.nps.gov/vick/parkmgmt/> (accessed February 8, 2013).

<sup>147</sup> Vicksburg National Military Park, “Long Range Interpretive Plan, 2012,” <http://www.nps.gov/vick/parkmgmt/upload/VICK-2012-Annual-Interpretive-Plan.pdf> (accessed on February 8, 2013)

The completed 1.6 million dollar renovation, complete with ADA accommodations, portable public restrooms, public access steps and parking, only benefits park visitors if and when the site is open. Even with the extensive renovations, the Shirley House is relatively empty, containing few interpretive artifacts, and does not fully engage with the visitors. During the Vicksburg sesquicentennial, special events planned during Memorial Day weekend of 2013 will showcase the Shirley house. The park officials aim to have the Shirley house open and Vicksburg National Military Park may now have the opportunity to present the Civil War narrative as it pertains to Vicksburg, but also, the house.<sup>148</sup>



Fig 23 The Shirley house completely stabilized, it meets ADA standards, with an elevator and parking in the back. Newly installed concrete pathways and handrails are additions too. February, 2013.

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<sup>148</sup> National Park Service, Vicksburg National Military Park, 150<sup>th</sup> events [www.nps.gov/vicksburg-national-military-park-cw150-events.htm](http://www.nps.gov/vicksburg-national-military-park-cw150-events.htm) (accessed March 4, 2013).



Fig 24 The empty interior of the Shirley house prior to any interpretive exhibits. June, 2012.



Fig 25 Interior of the front hall in the Shirley house, VNMP, February, 2013



Fig 26 The interpretation currently has the family dining room located in the back room on the main floor. Originally, the Shirley's dining room was in the basement; given the humid climate of the deep South this was typical of the period. February, 2013.

## CHAPTER V

### WHERE ARE THE BATTLEFIELDS? PARTNERSHIPS IN PRESERVATION:

#### RECLAIMING CIVIL WAR BATTLEFIELDS ONE PROJECT AT A TIME

A busy rush hour congests Columbia Pike leading motorists into downtown Franklin. Sprawling landscapes and quaint neighborhoods disappear while urban growth pushes into downtown Franklin, Tennessee. Neighborhoods, libraries, pizza parlors, and strip malls stand on land where almost 150 years ago one of the bloodiest battles of the entire American Civil War occurred. But, over the past ten years, the city of Franklin shifted from a once ‘lost’ battlefield and gained national recognition as a leader in battlefield preservation.

Franklin residents, Civil War enthusiasts, and government officials, spent the past decade attempting to broaden the battle’s interpretation and create new momentum for what is recognized as battlefield reclamation. Battlefield reclamation calls for the demolition or removal of twentieth-century buildings and structures on battlefield land. It is not preserving open spaces; it calls for the recreation of open spaces.

The beginning of the battlefield reclamation movement in Franklin may be traced to the community struggle to build a new library in 2000-2001. For the better part of the late 1990s, Williamson County commissioners, the Library Board, the City of Franklin, and the Heritage Foundation of Franklin and Williamson County debated the appropriate site for the new county library. The Library Board determined its citizens needed a more modern facility and searched for land in downtown Franklin. By February 2000, the local

newspaper, *The Review-Appeal*, published an article that detailed the Library Board's decision "to purchase, with the assistance of the County, land on Second Avenue for the new main library." The county commissioners asked the city to assist with the cost of land acquisition and purchase. The city initially was a willing partner, but in May, the city's financial committee decided "the cost of \$1 million dollars was excessive."

According to Mayor Jerry Sharber, "The cost of the parking garage, city building codes, and drainage costs were too much."<sup>149</sup> Citizens, many county commissioners, and the Downtown Franklin Association supported the downtown library. They criticized the city of Franklin for not providing enough support for the library.

The Library Board and the Williamson County Commissioners next explored purchasing a portion of the Battle Ground Academy property off Columbia Avenue.<sup>150</sup> Library Board Chairman Jim Cross felt this particular site provided "extra space for additional buildings in the future, and the site's access and visibility from Columbia Pike and Granbury Avenue were ideal." But, the Heritage Foundation and the Downtown Neighborhood Association fought to keep the library in the "heart of downtown." Both organizations felt it critical to create a walking environment for people visiting the library to use and connect with the downtown district.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Clift Confehr, "City committee not recommending \$1 million for library," *The Review-Appeal*, March 15, 2000. Williamson County Archives, Franklin, TN. MF 233.

<sup>150</sup> Cletus Sickler Forsbach, "Property committee votes for BGA library site," *The Review-Appeal*, December 15, 2000. Williamson County Archives, Franklin, TN. MF 236.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*

On December 15, 2000, the Library Board voted unanimously to approve a site outside of downtown. Nancy Williams, executive director of the Downtown Neighborhood Association, was against the move: “A library is the information center of town...the Second Avenue site is in the urban center of our historic district and should remain.” But, several others interviewed for the same article pointed out that many library patrons drove and did not walk to the current library. A trustee for the Library Board, Doris McMillian, stated “Main Street does not represent cultural diversity. It is the job of the board to represent the identity of the entire county, not just the downtown area.” Julian Bibb, library trustee and member of the Heritage Foundation board said, “I am in favor of this BGA site. It would create a synergy to combine a performing arts museum and library...I see it as being a huge success story.” County Commissioner Clint Callicott indicated the county may not build a performing arts center, but would find uses for the buildings, and “that is part of the master plan. A performing arts center has been under discussion for a long time. This [BGA location] has created excitement toward this library.”<sup>152</sup>

Nowhere in this community debate did people discuss the potential impact on the battlefield. Months later, however, on August 8, 2001, County Commissioner Chuck Eades called for support for the development of a resolution to stop plans for construction on what he called “the real battlefield.” Eades stated “the county should not compromise

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

the site by building on it.”<sup>153</sup> Eades went on to say, “This site (BGA) is perfect for a battlefield memorial park and all existing construction would be removed when Battle Ground Academy abandons the site and the county has the deed to the land.” While Eades tried to find support from fellow County Commissioner Stan Tyson, Tyson said he “didn’t have a problem with building the library because the structures built by the private school over the years compromised the battlefield site long ago.”<sup>154</sup> County Executive Clint Calicott defended his position on purchasing the site: “The BGA campus would have been sold to another buyer. By obtaining the property, the county ensures its preservation from residential or commercial development. I envision commissioning a master plan to guide the county in preserving the BGA property where a major part of the Battle of Franklin raged in November 1864.”<sup>155</sup>

Then a new threat to battlefield land emerged. The Williamson County School Commission considered building a new elementary school on Columbia Pike adjacent to the Harrison House, which is a National Register property associated with the Battle of Franklin. The Heritage Foundation, Save The Franklin Battlefield, Sons of Confederate Veterans, and the Carter House petitioned for the acreage to be saved because it was ‘hallowed ground’ where the Confederates formed their regimental lines before the battle. Thomas Cartwright, then historian at the Carter House, spoke at a prayer rally to save the

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<sup>153</sup> Alice Jackson, “Battle rages over library’s location,” *The Review-Appeal*, August 8, 2001. Williamson County Archives, Franklin, TN. MF 239.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*

landscape across from the Harrison House: “The land the school is being built on is historically significant. It must be preserved.”<sup>156</sup>

As the late push to stop construction on the library site progressed, Eades hoped for greater commitment from heritage organizations in Franklin. Heritage Foundation Executive Director Mary Pearce clearly was in a predicament over his proposal. Pearce continued to voice her group’s support “for the library in downtown Franklin and indicated the Heritage Foundation’s efforts would be directed toward purchasing Domino’s and a small strip mall across from BGA property and in front of the house where the Carter Cotton Gin stood,” a previously acquired by the Heritage Foundation. “Eades seems to prioritize what he sees as historic preservation differently than many members of the preservation community,” Pearce said. “He found the area for the new elementary school unworthy of preservation. There were 500 acres in that area with little or no intrusive development.”<sup>157</sup>

The library issue continued into the fall. In October 2001, *The Tennessean Williamson A.M.* and *The Review-Appeal* prepared competing stories about the issues surrounding the construction of the new library on core battlefield land. *The Review-Appeal* reported:

The library will be built on the north side of the Battle Ground Academy campus on Columbia Avenue as planned, and a portion of the old campus

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<sup>156</sup> Alice Jackson, “Rallying of Forces: Harrison House scene of another battle 136 years later,” *The Review-Appeal*, June 13, 2001. Williamson County Archives, Franklin, TN. MF 238.

<sup>157</sup> Alice Jackson, “Battle rages over library’s location,” *The Review-Appeal*, August 8, 2001. Williamson County Archives, Franklin, TN. MF 239.

will be set aside for a Civil War memorial park to commemorate ground zero of the bloody battle fought in November 1864. The commissioners rebuffed pleas from members of Save the Franklin Battlefield and other historic preservationists seeking to set aside the entire 12-acre campus as a battlefield park.”<sup>158</sup>

Save the Franklin Battlefield, organized in 1989, continued to lobby for the library’s construction at the Second Avenue location. Its August newsletter stated “the County Commission, and current city administration, has the opportunity to preserve a larger and very significant site on the battlefield. The Battle Ground Academy site is where the advancing Confederate force became entangled with the retreating Union brigade of hundreds of Union soldiers and leading to the Confederate breakthrough at the Carter house.”<sup>159</sup> But, their pleas fell on deaf ears. The Williamson County Library became part of the landscape in 2002. In its March 2002 newsletter, Save the Franklin Battlefield claimed that County Commissioners and the Library Board believed “that by building the library on this last open part of the Franklin Battlefield, and then fully naming it the War Memorial Library, they are actually creating a battlefield park.”<sup>160</sup> Next the scene shifted to the proposed sale of the Franklin golf course and country club next to Carnton Plantation. This time, the efforts were successful, launching the battlefield reclamation for the Carter’s Cotton Gin site.

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<sup>158</sup> “New library will stay at old BGA site,” *The Tennessean*, “Williamson A.M.” “Library will rise on battle site,” *The Review-Appeal*, “New library will stay at old BGA site,” October 12, 2001. Williamson County Archives, Franklin, TN. MF 240.

<sup>159</sup> *Save The Franklin Battlefield*, August 2001, 3. Williamson County Library Special Collections.

<sup>160</sup> *Save the Franklin Battlefield*, March 2002, 4. Williamson County Library Special Collections.



Fig. 27 The Williamson County Library (the previous Battle Ground Academy property), located at the corner of Granbury Avenue and Columbia Pike. Several original buildings to the Battle Ground Academy campus remain to the south. Photograph courtesy of Rachael Finch. October 2010.

The turnaround for Franklin occurred simultaneously with an article written for *National Geographic* in April 2005. Journalist Adam Goodheart visited Franklin and highlighted Franklin's mistakes (along with multiple other Civil War battlefield sites in towns across the country), but he spoke to Franklin's efforts to rectify past issues. Representatives from the private sector and state and county preservation and conservation groups came together to form a land reclamation group called Franklin's Charge. Goodheart's article gave energy to their efforts and boasted their credibility within the historic preservation community.<sup>161</sup>

Goodheart thought he would find nothing left of the battlefield at Franklin. But, what he found was a collective effort of land reclamation and preservation. The strong and viable public/private partnerships were born from the recognition of past mistakes, including the missed opportunity at the library site which continued to go unrecognized

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<sup>161</sup> Adam Goodheart, "Civil War Battlefields: Saving the Landscape of America's Deadliest War," *National Geographic*, April 2005, <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/> (accessed January 20, 2013).

as any sort of memorial park with proper interpretation. Franklin's efforts after the library issue changed tactics and partners. The creation of state and national collaborative partnerships between Franklin's Charge, the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area, The Civil War Trust, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the Land Trust for Tennessee prepared Franklin's local historic and heritage organizations for one of their biggest challenges; the acquisition of 112 acres of threatened battlefield land off of Lewisburg Pike.

The 112 acres in question sat next to Historic Carnton Plantation and the Confederate Cemetery property lines. The large landscape, originally the Franklin Golf Course and Country Club, became available on the real estate market in 2004. When the idea of acquiring the land for a potential battlefield park arose, Franklin Mayor Tom Miller voiced support for a battlefield park and believed, "The city should participate in the purchase of historic properties."<sup>162</sup> Mayor Miller and Franklin's Charge agreed to accept Rod Heller's challenge. Heller, who bought the golf course and country club land from a land speculator in 2004 for five million dollars, was chairman emeritus of the Civil War Preservation Trust. Heller leased the land to the country club, while the city and Franklin's Charge raised a combined total of five million for the purchase of the Country Club of Franklin. Heller bought the property to prevent development on the

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<sup>162</sup> Clint Confehr, "Budget committeemen like battlefield park idea," *The Review Appeal*, September 9, 2004. At the time, country club members had 900 petitions against the use of city money to assist in the purchase of the land for a battlefield park. Williamson County Archives, Franklin, TN. MF 251.

land. Miller asked the city aldermen to “match the \$2.5 million Franklin’s Charge raised and purchase the land from Heller for a city park.”<sup>163</sup>

Mayor Miller led U.S. Representative Lincoln Davis on a tour of the battlefield properties in Franklin and suggested the National Park Service study and determine those sites that would be most likely for the creation of a national battlefield park. Davis agreed to “introduce legislation that called for a federal feasibility study for the creation of a park.”<sup>164</sup> The National Park Service, while recognizing the extreme importance of the Battle of Franklin and the surrounding historic sites, did not endorse creating a national military park for Franklin.<sup>165</sup>

According to an article in *The Tennessean* in July 2008, Tim Bemisderfer, the National Park Service spokesman for the feasibility study in the Southeast Regional Office, told attendees at the Franklin’s Charge Civil War Symposium that it was unlikely a new national park would come to Williamson County. Bemisderfer’s reasoned “Those organizations that own and operate historical sites, such as the city with Fort Granger, a non-profit at Carnton Plantation and the state with the Carter House, are doing a good job on their own... We have heard from these partners, both publicly and privately, and what

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<sup>163</sup> Clint Confehr, “Mayor shows congressman Franklin’s battlefield,” *The Review Appeal*, September 3, 2004. Williamson County Archives, Franklin, TN. 251.

<sup>164</sup> Clint Confehr, “Battle for Preservation, Davis pushing for national battlefield park feasibility study,” *The Review Appeal*, October 6, 2004. Williamson County Archives, Franklin, TN. MF 251.

<sup>165</sup> Bonnie Burch, “Don’t expect to see federal workers leading tours in Franklin Civil War battle sites anytime soon,” *The Tennessean*, July 2, 2009. <http://www.tennessean.com> (accessed January 20, 2013).

we've heard is that a lot of these organizations would like to continue managing the properties themselves. For the National Park Service to have a management presence, you've got to have something to manage, first off."<sup>166</sup>

Bemisderfer's final analysis was the National Park Service looks for threats or resumes control of resources when no one has cared for them or the resources are threatened. But he stated: "The resources in Franklin are being exceptionally cared for by wonderful, qualified groups from across the spectrum, so we don't necessarily feel the need to step in to save a resource."<sup>167</sup> The National Park Service recognized the significance of the Battle of Franklin and the efforts put forth by the local historical and heritage organizations to preserve their resources. But, the Park Service did not see a new federal role in Franklin outside of that already played by the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area. While this decision may have discouraged some, not having a national military park made it possible for what happened next: the land acquisition of core battlefield land. But this did not come without its fair share of preservation concerns for the existing land reclamation efforts from 2005 and the strategic maneuvers for future acquisitions.

The land reclamation efforts, spearheaded by Franklin's Charge and the city of Franklin, became the Eastern Flank Battlefield Park, which incorporated into the city of

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<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

Franklin's park system in February 2006.<sup>168</sup> Unfortunately, financial burdens of the city and the economic downturn in recent years caused the Eastern Flank Battlefield Park to include little interpretation. Over the past six years, the Eastern Flank integrated into the Civil War Trails program. Even though the Eastern Flank is located next to historic Carnton Plantation and the Confederate Cemetery, the lack of any additional interpretation became a sore subject for those not residents of the historical and heritage organizations in the community. The empty clubhouse, a supposed visitor and interpretive center, sits vacant; however, in July of 2011, the state of Tennessee awarded "the city of Franklin a \$500,000 Transportation Enhancement Grant for the installation of an access road off of Lewisburg Pike for the Eastern Flank Battlefield Access Improvement Project."<sup>169</sup>

This access road will allow visitors to not only have better accessibility to Carnton Plantation and the Confederate Cemetery, but for the first time, visitors will be able to engage with part of the battlefield landscape through biking and walking trails complete with interpretive signage. "Tennessee's Civil war battlefields are wonderful educational destinations, and they attract thousands of visitors to the state each year," Governor Bill Haslam said. "It is imperative we preserve these areas and make the necessary improvements to ensure they are accessible to residents and visitors. I'm pleased the state can contribute to those efforts. The grant is possible through the federal

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<sup>168</sup> *Save the Franklin Battlefield*, <http://www.franklin-stfb.org/recent.htm> (accessed on March 6, 2013.)

<sup>169</sup> Kevin Walters, "State of Tennessee Awards \$500,000 Grant for Eastern Flank Battlefield Loop," *The Tennessean*, July 21, 2011. "Battlefield Park Gets A Boost," *Williamson County A.M.* July 22, 2011 Williamson County Library Special Collections. Franklin, TN.

transportation program that is administered by the Tennessee Department of Transportation.<sup>170</sup> The former mayor of Franklin, now the Commissioner of Transportation for the state of Tennessee, John Schroer added, “Through Transportation Enhancement grants, TDOT has funded more than \$259 million in non-traditional transportation projects. Established by Congress in the early 1990’s, the program supports activities designed to strengthen the cultural, aesthetic, and environmental aspects of the nation’s transportation system.”<sup>171</sup>

The proposed loop road, almost a mile in length, would enter the grounds near the original access to the Carnton Plantation bordering the park property to the south. In addition to providing access and battle interpretation, Franklin Alderman Mike Skinner noted, “It will take traffic off the current access which winds through a residential neighborhood and will provide access to the Carnton Plantation as well.”<sup>172</sup> Historians, residents, and visitors to Franklin wondered if an interpreted battlefield park would be cultivated at the country club site purchased over six years ago to prevent the land from becoming an upscale housing development. While this was a land conservation victory for the battlefield, the local historical and heritage organizations continued to primarily promote the Battle of Franklin’s military history which underscored reclamation and preservation: a complete and accurate interpretation. And, for those not thoroughly

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<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> Gregory L. Wade, “State Helps Fund Battlefield Road,” Article taken from Franklin’s Charge website, <http://www.franklinscharge.com/state-helps-fund-battlefield-road/> (accessed March 1, 2013).

engaged in the preservation of battlefield landscapes, the way the Franklin historical community handled land reclamation without any visible interpretation did not set well with everyone in the community. In 2012, Franklin's Charge received \$150,000 in partnership funding from the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area to design and build twenty interpretive markers, covering all aspects of the war at the Eastern Flank Battlefield Park. These markers will be installed in the 2013-2014 calendar year, and will provide a concise interpretation.<sup>173</sup>



Fig. 28 Part of the Eastern Flank Battlefield Park. The Confederate Cemetery and Carnton Plantation sit off in the distance. The tennis courts are a reminder of its former days as a country club. October, 2010. Photograph courtesy of Rachael Finch.



Fig. 29 Sign for the Eastern Flank Battlefield Park. Photograph courtesy of Rachael Finch, October 2010.

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<sup>173</sup> Kevin Walters, "Franklin battlefield park gets funding for kiosks, signs," *The Tennessean*, October 2011. Williamson County Library Special Collections, Franklin, TN.



Fig. 30 There are remnants of tennis courts, this is a portion of the Eastern Flank Battlefield Park. Just to the right of the photograph, the loop road will connect visitors off of Lewisburg Pike/Highway 431 with Carnton Plantation. Within 2013, new interpretive markers will be placed over the Eastern Flank. March 3, 2013.



Fig. 31 The former Country Club Clubhouse and parking lot. The sign for the Eastern Flank Battlefield Park is to the left of the photo as is the Civil War Trails marker. Photograph courtesy of Rachael Finch, October 2010.

The Tennessee Civil War trails marker provided information on the artillery shelling the Eastern Flank areas of the battlefield received and details of a veteran reunion; however, these stories have not been truly incorporated into the battle of

Franklin narrative at the historic house museums, particularly the continued commemorations of Civil War veterans in McGavock's Grove. In July of 2012, the City of Franklin installed phone apps placed in front of the Civil War Trails marker. "This is a great way for visitors to learn the history of the area, and also a wonderful way for our department to track the visitors to our parks," said Lisa Clayton, Parks Director. "The Battlefield Preservation Commission believes that the Historic Parks Audio Tour reinforces our mission by connecting these powerful stories and providing interpretation to anyone who wants it, whether it's a park visitor or someone who lives entire states away," said Battlefield Preservation Commission Vice-Chair Sam Whitson.<sup>174</sup> However, statement the city's audio tour speaks to just a few of the Civil War historic sites in Franklin.

Each historic site in Franklin are key players in the ongoing development for an all-encompassing interpretation of the Civil War. As Franklin's Charge and their partnerships at the local, state, and national level move forward with the Carter Cotton Gin site, land reclamation and preservation cannot stand on a reconstructed cotton gin and entrenchments alone. The partnerships between their local heritage organizations, particularly the African American Heritage Society, may assist with the healing of racial issues stemming from slavery and its aftermath and bring about solid interpretation for shared histories that bind community identity and authenticity to the landscape.

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<sup>174</sup> "Park Dept and Battlefield Preservation Commission Launch New Audio Cell Phone Tour," The Tour Highlights Sites Impacted by the Civil War and the Battle of Franklin, July, 2012. <http://www.franklin-tn.gov/> (accessed March 1, 2013)

Franklin's Charge formed for one purpose; to protect the 112 acres of battlefield property from development. And, not only did Franklin's Charge reclaim the landscape, their partnerships with the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area provided three educational symposiums to educators, professionals, and heritage tourists in 2007, 2008, and 2009 that depicted the Civil War story in Middle Tennessee. The national recognition by the Civil War Trust and the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area offered Franklin something they lacked previously: established, strong, well funded, and trained professionals from historical and heritage organizations who promoted the resources of the Battle of Franklin at the state and national level to a broader audience.<sup>175</sup>

In 2008, Franklin's Charge had the opportunity to reclaim another critical part of the battlefield, part of the Federal retrenchment line across the street from the Carter House. Ironically, this site that contains a turn-of-the-century farmhouse, known as the Holt House, originally belonged to George Matthews, the man who purchased the land from the bank after the original Battle Ground Academy burned and moved to the west side of Columbia Pike in 1902. In 2008, the asking price for the one-acre site was \$950,000. Once again, the Civil War Trust stepped in and assisted with the fundraising necessary to acquire the land.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> Franklin's Charge, see mission statement, <http://www.franklinscharge.com/> (accessed January 20, 2013).

<sup>176</sup> Civil War Trust, "Save 1.07 Acres at the Franklin Battlefield" A Message from Jim Lighthizer, CWPT President. Available online at, <http://www.civilwar.org/> (accessed February 5, 2013).



Fig. 32 Holt House property, photograph courtesy of Rachael Finch, October 2010.



Fig 33 This is the current condition of where the Holt House property used to be located. The house is now in a different part of Williamson County and currently the land has received a Conservation grant through the National Park Service. March 2, 2013.

But this was not the only available site up for sale. Next door to the Holt House, another piece of core battlefield land slated for development as a condominium complex on Columbia Pike in Franklin went up for sale. The property included a small concrete-block shopping center and a Domino's Pizza building. Directly behind the Domino's is a residential property owned by the Heritage Foundation. While the Carter House tells thousands of visitors each year the story of the Battle of Franklin, urban sprawl and development of the surrounding area gives little visible evidence a Civil War battle was ever fought there.



Fig.34 Current land acquisitions along Columbia Pike. Photograph courtesy of Rachael Finch, February 2013.



Fig.35 The Domino's Pizza and behind it, the house owned by the Heritage Foundation. Located at the corner of Cleburne and Columbia Pike. Across the street, a part of the original battlefield has been turned into a city park preserved as open space and a part of the city park system. Photograph courtesy of Rachael Finch, October 2010.

Franklin's Charge and their partnership with the Civil War Trust and grants from the American Battlefield Protection Program allowed for archeological excavations around the Holt House property and the Carter House. In 2009 and 2010, GIS mapping conducted by a Middle Tennessee State University graduate student, interning with Franklin's Charge, produced a complete map that documented the economic development of Franklin, the scope of the battlefield landscape, areas of reclaimed land, land in the process of being reclaimed, and threatened or lost battlefield landscape. This GIS map, presented at the National Council for Public History national conference in Portland,

Oregon in March 2010 and also the Tennessee Geographical Information Systems Conference in Gatlinburg in April 2010, gave the land reclamation and preservation efforts in Franklin state and additional national recognition.(see Appendix A).

Franklin's Charge, The Battle of Franklin Trust, the city of Franklin, and local heritage organizations led the battlefield preservation movement at the turn of the twenty-first century. Now, the critical turning point is here. This is the time to look forward and strategically plan for the future of the Battle of Franklin interpretive sites. Many heritage tourists, especially younger generations tied to technology, enjoy media as a means for learning and engaging with their environment. Augmented digital technology should be integrated as a part of the interpretation of the current historic sites and the Carter Cotton Gin site. The historic house museums in Franklin also must learn how to incorporate their stories into the bigger picture of the Middle Tennessee campaign and promote an integrated visit for heritage tourists that highlights Franklin's connections to the broader interpretive narrative of the Civil War.

The efforts of Franklin's Charge for preservation pushed the organization one step closer to preserving a core part of the battle of Franklin. As it worked with the Tennessee Department of Tourism and their strong partnership with the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area, the Carter Cotton Gin site became part of the Civil War Trails program and gave heritage tourists another opportunity to learn about the Battle of Franklin.<sup>177</sup> Interestingly, this site not only was the area of some of the heaviest

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<sup>177</sup> Franklin's Charge, Carter Cotton Gin project, taken from their website, <http://franklinscharge.com/carter-cotton-gin> (accessed January 17, 2013).

bloodshed during the Battle of Franklin, but was the original site for Battle Ground Academy, the rebuilt gin by Moscow Carter, and the Cleburne Heights subdivision of the 1920s. This particular land acquisition may be more significant than the 112- acre reclamation and preservation efforts of the Eastern Flank Battlefield Park. The Carter Cotton Gin site is the central feature of the battlefield. It deserves a holistic and integrated interpretation.

In June 2010, *The Tennessean* reported on the progress of the land acquisition. “Our goal is to have that land restored to a battlefield park and a replica of the cotton gin built in time or ahead of the sesquicentennial event in 2014,” said Ernie Bacon, Franklin’s Charge president. And the city of Franklin agreed to act as the pass-through entity to receive grants to help Franklin’s Charge with purchases. The article also spoke of the homes being bought down Cleburne Avenue as part of the park. One of the homeowners, Sarah Faye Fudge, who is 64, spoke openly about her feelings about her home, “I grew up in the stone house, and agonized over selling my childhood home, but I made peace with it. It is a very sad thing to think about it not being there, however, because the Civil War preservation was a really neat idea, and very important I think that makes it ok. It’s kind of like going back to the ground from whence it came.”<sup>178</sup> Sarah Faye Fudge recognizes the value of historic preservation and asserts the removal of her home will bring added value to the Civil War story. This home will be moved to a

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<sup>178</sup> Kevin Walters, “Battlefield group zeroes in on next targets,” *The Tennessean*, June 2010. Taken from <http://www.southernheritage411.com/> (accessed January 20, 2013).

different part of Franklin and the land opened up for open space as part of the Carter's Cotton Gin site.



Fig 36 This home will be relocated to another part of Franklin or Williamson County and the lot will serve as part of the upcoming Carter's Cotton Gin site. The site is in partnership with the Civil War Trust. March 3, 2013

As the reclamation process came to a close in late 2010, the Tennessee Department of Transportation gave a state grant of \$960,000 that allowed for the purchase of the strip mall and gave Franklin the unprecedented opportunity to turn this land into a Civil War battlefield park. The strong outpouring of public support solidified their grant. Tennessee Department of Transportation spokeswoman, Julie Oaks said, "We had 407 letters of support from citizens. That tends to make a difference." Ernie Bacon said, "it will join with the Tennessee Historical Commission to tear down the commercial buildings on the site."<sup>179</sup> The preservation community in Franklin realized public opinion and support makes or breaks battlefield-preservation efforts. As Franklin's Charge worked to secure the final stages of the property, the decision to move the Fudge house and the Holt House instead of demolition was a smart assessment on its part.

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<sup>179</sup> Josh Adams, "Tennessee grant to help buy Civil War site," *The Tennessean*, November, 27, 2010.

In May 2012, Franklin's Charge announced they raised the additional funds necessary to meet the matching \$500,000 from the Civil War Trust towards the purchase of the Carter's Cotton Gin site. Mike Graniger, who is vice chairman of the Civil War Trust and a Williamson County resident stated, "To have conceived this park in the first place, and to have acquired several other parcels surrounding the strip center is great. We have seen the work Franklin's Charge has done in the past, and we were confident the group could achieve the goal." The goal is a robust one. Plans are for the Carter's Cotton Gin interpretive property to be constructed on the exact ground where it originally stood when the Battle of Franklin occurred November 30, 1864.<sup>180</sup>

The park will include a cotton gin interpretive property as well as a partial replication of the original Federal earthworks on the site. Julian Bibb, a local attorney with Stites and Harbison and founding board member of Franklin's Charge, places this preservation project in its proper context: "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, thanks to the help of some incredible partners and supporters. This project will be the centerpiece of a greatly enhanced Civil War offering when we commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Franklin in 2014."<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Kraig McNutt, "Franklin's Charge meets deadline to secure matching \$500,000 grant from the Civil War Trust," Battle Of Franklin Blog, entry posted May 30, 2012, <http://battleoffranklin.wordpress.com/2012/05/30/battlefield-preservation-update-franklins-charge-meets-deadline-to-secure-matching-500k-grant-from-civil-war-trust/> (accessed February 13, 2013).

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

Years in the making, on February 13, 2013, the public/private partnerships gathered on the land close to the Domino's strip mall site and celebrated the finalized purchase of the Carter's Cotton Gin site. Civil War Trust's President Jim Lightizner confessed that he once believed the city's Civil War battlefield would forever be relegated to being a home to parking lots, fast-food restaurants, and roadways. "I didn't think I'd ever hear anything about Franklin except maybe an occasional newspaper article about something else (that had) been paved over," Lighthizer remarked.<sup>182</sup> Fortunately for the community and Franklin's Civil War historic sites, the outcome was different. One by one, pieces of the fragmented battlefield returned to open space. "It's a near miracle, when you think about what Franklin Charge has accomplished, what the citizens of this community accomplished," Lighthizer said. "...That is a community taking back their national heritage after it had been paved over."<sup>183</sup>

As a land reclamation group, Franklin's Charge's involvement from an interpretive viewpoint was, up to this point, with their educational symposiums conceived and partially funded by the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area. The looming issue of providing an accurate and authentic historical narrative representative of shared histories will be Franklin's biggest challenge and Franklin's greatest opportunity for a full interpretation at the Carter's Cotton Gin site. For the future of Civil War battlefield reclamation in the city of Franklin, the preservation and heritage communities must not

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<sup>182</sup> Kevin Walters, "Franklin Civil War Park Plan Continues To Advance," *The Tennessean*, February 19, 2013.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*

only believe in Franklin's recognition as a national leader in preservation, but actively engage the local community to build a foundation based on a solid understanding of what makes battlefield preservation important today. If Franklin officials take active steps to follow the best practices concepts set forth the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area, the city and its Civil War historic sites will bring authority for the entire interpretation of the Battle of Franklin and the American Civil War.

The Civil War veterans recognized the value of battlefields. Their efforts are why battlefield preservation continues today. As historic preservationists move forward in the twenty-first century, saving historic battlefields goes beyond the importance of saving "hallowed ground." Well-preserved and well-interpreted Civil War battlefields, particularly when the experience is authentic and memorable, draw heritage tourists who frequently spend significant amounts of money battlefield communities. The tax and economic benefits support the local economy and provide revenue streams to maintain the historic sites for future generations.<sup>184</sup> Unlike the Civil War veterans, preservationists and local historic communities like Franklin and Vicksburg have the remarkable opportunity to receive matching grants, educational support, public programming, and reciprocal partnerships from heritage areas or battlefield preservation groups whose primary focus should not just be the reclamation of the battlefield, but strategically reclaiming valuable open space for communities to educate and protect the whole story about the nation's greatest conflict, the Civil War.

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<sup>184</sup> The Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area website, "How Battlefield Preservation Benefits Communities," <http://www.tncivilwar.org/> (accessed January 20, 2013).

## CHAPTER VI

### NO LONGER TIED TO THE OLD STORY: CONCEPTUALIZING CARTER'S COTTON GIN SITE AND THE SHIRLEY HOUSE FOR THEIR COMMUNITIES

Preservationists and historians today recognize that entire battlefield landscapes do not exist in their original organic forms. The “why preserve?” question has an answer: to preserve endangered battlefields for the continued sustainability of the historic resource, provide a complete interpretation that will bring significance to the site, incorporate an economic development plan that integrates smart growth for future acquisitions of land, promote heritage tourism for revenue and recognition, and dedicate a true ‘open space’ community identity. The harder question to answer is not why, but “so what?”

Across the United States, battlefields preserved originally by the Ladies Memorial Associations, Civil War veterans, and the federal government provided generations of Americans shaped the country’s future shaped and redefined a nation. While the war created a stronger country by eradicating a slave-based agrarian economy, it also redefined citizenship. Women preserved the valor of fallen soldiers. Veterans of the Civil War sought to preserve the landscapes where the efforts of the fallen commemorated a lasting legacy. No one could predict the historical impact battlefield preservation would have on the nation today. Yet, establishment of cemeteries in the 1860s to the battlefield preservation movement of the 1890s to the 1930s took deep roots and shaped the National Park Service of the 1930s to the 1970s, and the present day.

The Carter's Cotton Gin site is unique in today's battlefield reclamation movement. Not only is this site tied to a battle fought during the Civil War, but it has the opportunity to share other stories of Middle Tennessee's role in everyday citizen's lives, agriculture, slavery, emancipation, and Reconstruction. This site may be the model of not only battlefield reclamation through preservation of the landscape but of the story.

Determining the type of interpretive site must be based on proper historical research and documentation, not just photographs or local lore. The military historical research is vast. Retelling the battle through a soldier such as S. A. Cunningham tells firsthand the desperate combat situation for soldiers: "The enfilade fire from the cotton gin (Cleburne's brace men failed to take the line across the pike) was so severe that our dead were piled upon each other and far on in the battle. 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.'"<sup>185</sup>

Having accounts from various citizens, particularly women and African Americans will allow visitors and the local community to understand the bloodshed in 1864. Frances, a school girl at the Franklin Female Institute, experienced:

The afternoon of December 1<sup>st</sup>, some of us went to the battlefield, to give water and wine to the wounded. All of us carried cups from which to refresh the thirsty. Horrors! What sights that met our girlish eyes! The dead and wounded lined the Columbia pike for the distance of a mile. In Mrs. Skyes yard, Gen. Hood sat talking with some of his staff officers. I didn't look upon him as a hero because nothing had been accomplished

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<sup>185</sup> S.A. Cunningham, "Story Of A Terrible Battle: The Carnage at Franklin, Tennessee, Next to that of the Crater," *Southern Historical Society Papers*: 23, 1896, 189-192. Middle Tennessee State University, James Walker Library Microform Special Collections. (accessed February 20, 2013).

that could benefit us. From this sad scene, we passed on to a locust grove thicket, and men in every conceivable position could be seen, some with their fingers on the triggers, and death struck them so suddenly they didn't move. Past the thicket we saw trenches dug to receive as many as ten bodies. On the left of the pike, around the old gin house, men and horses were lying so thick that we could not walk. Gen. Adam's horse was lying sark and stiff upon the breastworks. Ambulances were being filled with the wounded as fast as possible, and the whole town was turned into a hospital.<sup>186</sup>

Broadly based thematic stories and interpretation are critical to the overall preservation of reclamation efforts for Civil War resources in the twenty-first century. The foundation of the preservation movement continues to be the protection of fragile resources and the recovery of those resources once thought to be lost. The historical narratives and continued preservation efforts of Franklin and Vicksburg are tangibly tied to reclamation and interpretation. In the twenty-first century, reclamation efforts for the preservation of the landscape and the interpretation of the historical narrative embrace community identity.

The shift in interpretation and education of the Civil War was helps to shape the twenty-first century movement. The National Park Service received some backlash from certain heritage groups concerning the push for a broader-based interpretation that includes slavery as a cause for the war at national battlefield parks. Organizations such as HERITAGEPAC and the Sons of Confederate Veterans were quite vocal and wrote of their displeasure on the interpretive new direction for Civil War battlefield parks. Jerry Russell of HERITAGEPAC, a lobbying group dedicated to the preservation of American

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<sup>186</sup> "Inside The Lines At Franklin," *Confederate Veteran*, 2, 1895, No. 3, 72-73.

battlefields, described this as “a cosmic threat to all battlefields in this country.” The Sons of Confederate Veterans sparked a bigger argument in an article published in the 1998 *Confederate Veteran*: “The primary source of preserving battlefields is to understand the military actions which took place there and to remember the men who fought there. To attempt to change the way that a battlefield is interpreted to include social issues of the day does a great disservice to the military strategies and to the soldiers who sacrificed their all at these important battlefields.”<sup>187</sup> At Vicksburg National Military Park, the interpretation inside of the visitor’s center places slavery as a primary cause and consequence of the Civil War. Regardless of lobbying groups, the national battlefield parks are speaking to the social and political issues surrounding the war.

Confederate heritage groups perceived any Civil War interpretation that discussed slavery was disparaging, degrading, and South-bashing. They believed national Civil War battlefield parks should only describe the course of battle and not provide a dialogue on the reasons for the war. Jerry Russell stated in an email to Dwight Pitcaithley, Chief Historian of the National Park Service:

These Great Battlefields are the only means by which we true lovers of American History can get a full understanding and complete account of what actually took place in regard to the battle and the men who fought it. Why and how those two armies got to that battlefield is irrelevant at the point of that battle. The only thing that matters at that point is WHAT happened and not why. Allow the NPS to deal only with the facts about the battle and leave the why to the educators.<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> Collin Pulley, “Forward the Colors: A Report from the Heritage Defense Committee,” *Confederate Veteran* 4 (2000): 8.

<sup>188</sup> Pitcaithley, 177. Email correspondence, Jan.9, 2000, Richmond, VA, in “Jerry Russell” file, Park History Subject Files, National Park Service, Washington, D.C.

The conflict between the National Park Service and those who wished to continue ignoring slavery and a discussion of the causes of the war at Civil War battlefield parks indicated the distance between professional historians and “history buffs” of the Civil War. The separation created a dichotomy of interpretations and motives for continued, but yet, inconsistent battlefield interpretation.

Contrary to popular beliefs held by some Confederate heritage groups, the Park Service’s commitment to introduce of interpretive materials based on current historical scholarship on the causes and consequences of the war, grew out of a pledge to provide meaningful educational programs. Confederate heritage groups argued the federal government was being “politically correct and intended to demean the memory and honor of the men who fought for the Confederacy.” Much to the surprise of the dissenters, the interested public preferred the new interpretations. Dissenters’ fears never occurred. The new exhibits at multiple battlefield parks across the country “demonstrated the causes and effects of the war and provided a venue to explore Civil War battlefields without diminishing the honor and valor of Confederate soldiers.”<sup>189</sup>

More to the point, without the larger perspective, the efforts of both armies are “rendered meaningless.”<sup>190</sup> The integration of African Americans’ struggles during slavery and emancipation into the story of “sacred ground” at national military battlefield parks attract other visitors, black or white, to battlefields. Ira Berlin stated: “The task

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<sup>189</sup> Pitcaithley, 185.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid, 185.

before us is not to politicize our history. The task is not to make our history more politically correct. It is not even to assure funding of the battlefields in an often politically poisonous environment. The task is to interpret history in a way that is more inclusive, to make a better history, and a richer history. It is to make a history in which all Americans can see themselves, so that the past may, at long last, be past.”<sup>191</sup>

Communities faced with interpretive challenges like Franklin, Tennessee, may find the task is to pursue a fuller interpretation of their story and seek assistance through partnerships with the national battlefield parks, preservation and educational programming, and local heritage organizations to establish an integrated interpretation for their sites.

The Carter’s Cotton Gin site in Franklin, Tennessee, has the ‘once in a lifetime’ opportunity to present a full narrative utilizing public and private partnerships to integrate shared stories. Preservationists, focused on the Battle of Franklin interpretation, should consider the terms “*marginalizing, concealing, suppressing, and masking.*” By focusing on a strong military presence over the years the narrative made it “easy to deny the significance of slavery, deny its reality as a violent and brutal economic and cultural system, deny it had anything to do with the Civil War, deny its harsh reality, and lasting legacy throughout the life of the nation...a Civil War landscape where battle tactics, troop movements, characteristics of armaments, and casualties crowd out any talk of

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<sup>191</sup> Ira Berlin, “Slavery In American Life: Past, Present, and Future” *Rally on the High Ground: The National Park Service Symposium on the Civil War*. Ed. Robert Sutton (Eastern National, Washington D.C. 2000), 19.

causes or consequences.”<sup>192</sup> The denial of a ‘race problem’ and the redirection of the 1880s and 1890s to a ‘separate but equal’ mentality of the white and black experiences marginalized the African American Civil War and Reconstruction experiences in hindered the forward progress necessary to bring about national healing and commemoration.<sup>193</sup> This site was, and will be again, focused on a cotton gin. Based on a slave driven economy prior to the Civil War, it will be critical to interpret slavery from the Carter family’s perspective, the slave’s viewpoint, and as it pertained to Middle Tennessee during the war and Reconstruction. In doing so, 150 years of misunderstanding the local and national stories may redirect attention to embrace a united story of their community’s national and local identity.

The federal creation of the National Heritage Areas and the American Battlefield Protection Program in the mid 1990s, provided thousands of dollars in matched grant funding for the acquisition, preservation, education, and interpretation of battle sites. A unit of the National Park Service, these organizations established a viable state and local presence and promoted the message of public and private partnerships as a stabilizing force within the preservation community. As the twenty-first century continues, the battlefield preservation movement is working to implement a ‘best practices’ approach promoting shared stories of the American Civil War.

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<sup>192</sup> Edward T. Linenthal, “Epilogue: Reflections” *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff Of American History*, Ed. James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton, (New York: The New Press, 2006), 214.

<sup>193</sup> Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 354-355, 358.

In 2013, the issues facing the Carter's Cotton Gin site may be time. As of now, the Domino's Pizza building and the strip shopping center still stand. It may be time to forge ahead with a congruent interpretive plan for the Carter's Cotton Gin site. The interpretive plan may focus on the broader interpretive themes of Middle Tennessee agriculture, antebellum life on farms and plantations including the relationships between white and black families in everyday life based on the agrarian slave based economy that drove industries such as cotton gins in local communities across the South and in Franklin. Understanding the causes and consequences for the Civil War may be best suited for interpretation within the Carter's Cotton Gin site. The Battle of Franklin narrative is strong militarily, but interpreting local citizens' reactions to Union occupation from 1862-1865, emancipation, and Reconstruction may provide the emphasis necessary to fill in the gaps of the battle narrative.

The Vicksburg National Military Park is preparing for their sesquicentennial events too. For one hundred years, the Shirley house remained in the backdrop of the larger, and at that time, more important military and commemorative interpretation of the battle and siege. Today, this is not the case. With stabilization in place, the Shirley house is capable of providing the missing elements of slavery, home front, Union occupation, emancipation, and Reconstruction. Utilizing the house as the main character, the Park Service may bring in whatever artifacts necessary to complete the interpretation of the house during the battle and siege of Vicksburg. Broad educational programming for the 150<sup>th</sup> commemoration of Vicksburg and the high traffic summer season can be the

springboard the park and its partners, such as the Friends of Vicksburg, need to acquire necessary funding for future heritage programs.

The Carter House, Historic Carnton Plantation and Battlefield, and the Shirley house are unique together and as individual sites. Collectively, all have vital stories important to the Western Campaign, Union occupation, Reconstruction, and the American Civil War narrative to provide well rounded interpretations of military actions at their sites which attract visitors throughout the year. Each historic site is committed to telling their distinctive stories. For example, the Carter House is giving a full battlefield tour, separate from the house tour, twice a day every Tuesday through Saturday. This tour takes visitors to different battlefield stops in Franklin and incorporates the Eastern Flank and the Cotton Gin site too. The Vicksburg National Military Park partners with licensed battlefield tour guides who provide visitors a battlefield tour experience unlike the individual driving tour set forth by the Park Service. Each site is a historic site because of its relationship to the Civil War, but how each site interacts and interprets its history may depend on the motivations of the board of directors, individuals, or government agencies.

The Battle of Franklin Trust and the Vicksburg National Military Park recognize the value of the landscape. Historic Carnton Plantation and Battlefield spent many a year re-cultivating the McGavock family garden next to the house. While not part of the interpretive guided tour, visitors are welcome to walk the garden and see the beauty of the heirloom 1840s-1860s plants and flowers. The Carter House garden is being cultivated to contain certain crops the Carter family had on their farm. The garden's

current size may benefit from becoming a community garden for area residents. Partnering with local garden clubs or Middle Tennessee State University's agriculture center, the Carter Garden could provide another form of community identity and stewardship to Franklin, the county, and the battlefield. The Vicksburg battlefield also has a heritage garden. Situated directly in front of the old visitor center/old administration building, their heritage garden developed through a partnership with the Warren County Mississippi Master Gardeners growing heirloom vegetables and promotes "a different type of educational programming incorporating science and agriculture on the battlefield through the Let's Move Outside initiative."<sup>194</sup>

These Civil War historic sites and battlefields are important to their local communities and to the national story. Funding may continue as a fundamental issue for the Shirley house to receive the proper interpretive needs at Vicksburg National Military Park. Yet, the opportunity for funding may not be the primary issue for the Carter's Cotton Gin site. The benefit of public/private partnerships drives fundraising higher through private donations and state and federal grants for conservation, environmental, and educational programming. Carter's Cotton Gin site may be the nation's newest example of how to approach a broad interpretation of a very challenging topic. Utilizing partnership resources for research, funding, and administrative needs the Gin site may become not only a vital national historic site but also an example of the possibilities and

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<sup>194</sup> Heritage Garden at Vicksburg National Military Park, <http://www.nps.gov/vick/historyculture/heritage-demonstration-garden.htm> (accessed March 5, 2013).

potentials of energized, engaged public/private partnerships promoting community identity to the greater American Civil War story.

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## APPENDIX

GIS and the Franklin Battlefield: Rediscovering the Battlefield through an  
Urban Landscape

Developed by Rachael A. Finch, Middle Tennessee State University  
PowerPoint Presentation researched and developed  
January to February, 2010.

Presented at National Council for Public History Annual Conference,  
Portland, OR, March, 2010.

Presented at Tennessee Geographic Information Conference,  
Gatlinburg, TN, April, 2010.

# The Battle of Franklin

## Rediscovering the Battlefield Through an Urban Landscape

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Graduate Research Assistant  
Franklin's Charge and the Center for  
Historic Preservation  
Middle Tennessee State University

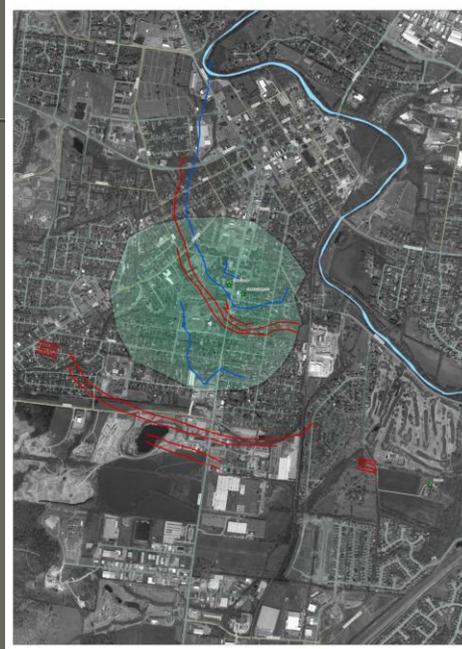
## Why Map Franklin?

- To stress the importance and significance of Franklin is key to understanding the last days of the Western campaign in Tennessee.
- Generating visual demonstrations assists the process of correcting past errors in preservation planning
- A fragmented battlefield makes it more difficult to identify specific core battlefield land.
- Determining where the strongest areas of fighting occurred on the battlefield in relation to specific historic structures still standing leads the direction of future acquisition opportunities
- As current preservation efforts are being fought over Franklin's battlefield landscape, maps help direct those efforts with accuracy and efficiency and have a direct impact on heritage tourism and future city planning.



## Modern Overlay Map

\*\* After geo-referencing points on the 1864 map, layers were created to enhance the modern street grid of the city of Franklin on top of the battlefield landscape.



## Geo-Referencing in Process



This shows aerial photography overlaying the street grid (line shape files). The purpose of this map is to show where the Eastern Flank Battlefield Park and Carnton are located with respect to where 'core' battlefield is located at Carter House and Carter's Cotton Gin. The Gin Site is roughly 3 to 4 acres of land currently being acquired by Franklin's Charge.

## Carter House



The Union command epicenter for the Battle of Franklin. November 30, 1864, the Carter family, the Lotz family, and several other neighbors hovered in the basement during the entire battle. The Carter's youngest son, Tod was found 100 yards to the west of his family home the day after the battle.

## Carter House



The backyard and porch of the Carter house took multiple bullets and hand to hand combat occurred on this very spot. This home is unique in that it has retained its battle features on not just the main house but several outbuildings as well.

Carter House Outbuildings - Trenchline is immediately to the right of these structures. Franklin's Charge proposed Cotton Gin Site is located across Columbia Pike (Hwy. 31)



## Carter House Trenchline



Trenchline Archaeological Dig - Franklin's Charge received an American Battlefield Protection Grant that provided funding for archeological research conducted on the Carter house property.

Trenchline research continues on the west side of the Carter property as well



## Proposed Cotton Gin Site



Columbia Pike (Hwy. 31). The Battle of Franklin's most intense scenes of fighting occurred where this modern day strip mall and 20<sup>th</sup> century housing stands today. Franklin's Charge, in partnership with the CWPT, is working to acquire the property from its current owner and transform the landscape back to what it once was.



## Holt House

First phase of the land acquisition process for reclaiming the proposed Carter's Cotton gin site. In partnership with Franklin's Charge and the Civil War Preservation Trust.



## Memorial Park

Former Pizza Hut property, part of the Battle of Franklin epicenter landscape that has been reclaimed and returned to an open space city park named Cleburne Park.



## Public Library



Williamson County Library, built in 2003 over core battlefield property. While a library benefits a community, there are no interpretive markers, at the present time to depict the impressions the Battle of Franklin left on this piece of the landscape.

## Collins Farm City Park



The Collins Farm was once a part of the Carnton Plantation property during 1864. This piece of the battlefield has been saved and turned into a small open space city park, complete with Civil War Trails interpretive markers . It was the site of heavy Union artillery shelling and engagement on the Union left (next to Hwy. 431)

## Eastern Flank Battlefield Park

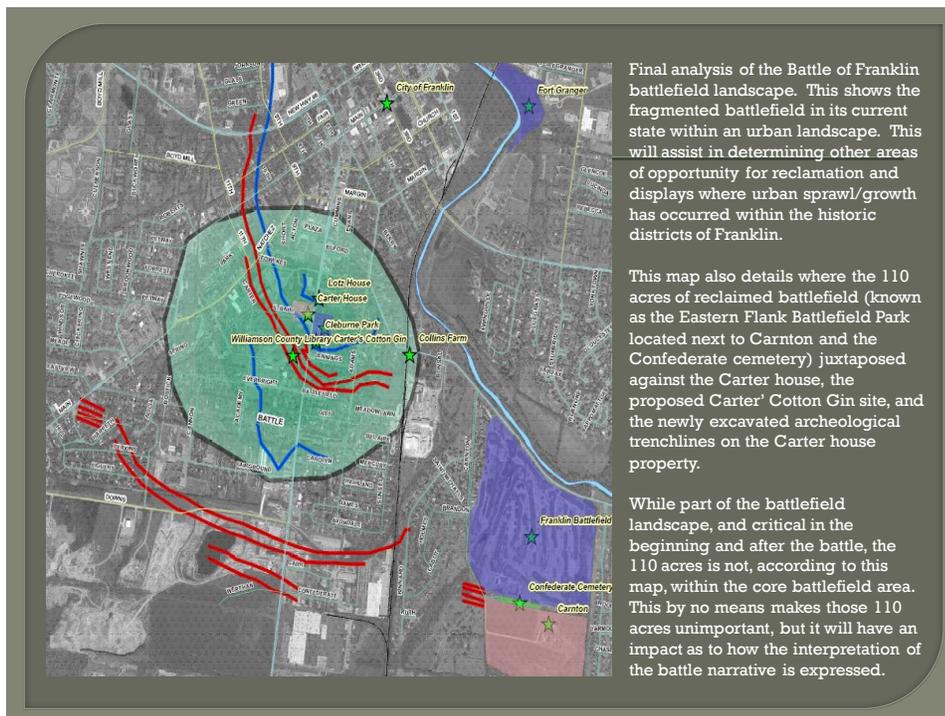


The former Franklin Country Club and golf course property is the largest contiguous battlefield landscape procured to date. The partnership between Franklin's Charge and the City of Franklin made this land acquisition possible. The open space city park, the Eastern Flank Battlefield Park, has one public access road off of Carnton Lane. Within the next year, there will be better access for visitors off of Lewisburg Pike.

## Carnton Plantation Property



Historic Carnton Plantation and the Confederate Cemetery are adjacent to the Eastern Flank Park. While Carnton and the Carter House are part of a newly established 501c3 called The Battle of Franklin Trust, the Confederate Cemetery is still under the supervision of the Franklin chapter of the United Daughter's of the Confederacy. Future partnerships between the Battle of Franklin Trust (Carnton and Carter) and the UDC will expand this portion of the battlefield landscape total to over 150 acres.



## Research Results

- GIS has yielded new information on battlefield areas in Franklin
  - Results show where core battlefield actually lies in relation with the entire battlefield landscape
  - Created a spatial database of historic points for the Battle of Franklin, troop movements, trench lines, historic structures, and landscape
  - Created a GIS geo-referenced map of the Battle of Franklin
- Created a 21<sup>st</sup> century map of the fragmented battlefield in Franklin for Franklin's Charge and the Center for Historic Preservation at MTSU