

**STONES RIVER:  
CREATING A BATTLEFIELD PARK, 1863-1932**

by

John Riley George

A Dissertation Submitted to the  
Faculty of the College of Graduate Studies at  
Middle Tennessee State University  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
in Public History

Committee:

Dr. C. Brenden Martin, Chair

Dr. Derek W. Frisby

Dr. Mary S. Hoffschwelle

Dr. Carroll Van West

Murfreesboro, Tennessee

May 2013

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks to the many people who have helped me along the way:

My major professor, Dr. Bren Martin, for standing with me throughout this process. I will always be grateful for his advice, support, and friendship.

The members of my dissertation committee, Dr. Derek Frisby, Dr. Mary Hoffschwelle, and Dr. Carroll Van West, for their encouragement and patience.

Kathy Slager of the Department of History for putting out unexpected fires, and my friends and classmates, Dr. Angela Smith and Dr. Brian Hackett, who never failed to offer their insight and expertise.

Dean Michael D. Allen and the MTSU Office of Research, and Dr. Rebecca Conard and the Public History Program, for funding my research trip to the National Archives in College Park, Maryland. While there, the assistance of Joe Schwarz and Tim Mulligan guaranteed success.

Rodney Ross at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. and Christine Windheuser of the Archives Center at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History for going above and beyond in locating important documents.

Mary Oliver at Dayton History for help in acquiring Albert Kern's photographs, and John Lodl of the Rutherford County Archives for sharing his knowledge and enthusiasm for local history.

The staff of Stones River National Battlefield, especially Gib Backlund and Jim Lewis, for the opportunity to work with the museum and archival collections. My

employment with the National Park Service has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my professional life, in no small part because of an outstanding group of co-workers.

Finally, none of this would have been possible without the love and support of family. I cannot thank my mother, Edith George, enough for all that she has done to keep me going. It hasn't been an easy road, but it would have been impassable without my wife, Valerie. I dedicate this dissertation to her and our son, Clay.

## **ABSTRACT**

Congress did not designate Stones River National Military Park until 1927, although soldiers erected the first commemorative monument on the battlefield in 1863. This dissertation addresses those years between the end of the battle and the dedication of the park in 1932, documenting the individuals and groups involved in the long process of preserving the site.

One of the largest battles of the American Civil War, Stones River took place December 31, 1862 through January 2, 1863 near Murfreesboro, Tennessee. The battlefield became an early site of commemoration. Union soldiers erected the Hazen Brigade Monument soon after the battle. The U.S. Army created Stones River National Cemetery at the close of the war, one of the first cemeteries of its kind. These sites were the focal points of commemoration and battlefield tourism in the late nineteenth century.

The first unsuccessful attempts to create a military park at Stones River coincided with the “golden age” of battlefield preservation in the 1890s, when Congress reserved the battlefields of Chickamauga-Chattanooga, Shiloh, Gettysburg, Antietam, and Vicksburg. Individual commissions were responsible for preservation activities at those parks, influenced heavily by national veterans’ groups. Though there was some national support for a park at Stones River, local Confederate and Union veterans were the primary sponsors of that effort in this period.

Battlefield preservation lagged in the early twentieth century due to congressional concerns over cost and the necessity of more military parks. Commemorating the Stones

River battlefield in this era was the work of the Nashville, Chattanooga, and St. Louis Railway. Other attempts by local leaders, individuals, and interested organizations were not successful.

Stones River was part of the “second wave” of battlefield preservation in the 1920s. By that time, the number of veterans had dwindled to a few very old men. The federal government, via the War Department, exerted more control over preservation decisions, following a limited site model instead of encompassing thousands of acres and extensive monumentation.

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## **PRELUDE:**

### **THE BATTLE OF STONES RIVER**

#### **THE APPROACHING BATTLE**

As 1862 came to a close, the outcome of the Civil War was very much in doubt. The Union Army of the Potomac withstood a September invasion of Maryland by the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia, but with a horrific cost at the Battle of Antietam. In the aftermath of that battle, President Abraham Lincoln issued his preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, a war measure that freed slaves in the states that remained in rebellion that would go into effect on January 1, 1863. His proclamation, though controversial at home, would make it more difficult for foreign powers to recognize the legitimacy of the Confederacy, while also diminishing the labor force the Confederates relied upon to sustain the war effort. In that troubled autumn, Lincoln hoped for a decisive battlefield victory to shore up the tenuous support for his war policies, both at home and abroad.

In the western theater, Union forces occupied Nashville and threatened to advance further into the southern interior. The Confederates launched an invasion of Kentucky, hoping to turn that divided state for their cause and draw the Federal army out of Tennessee. The Kentucky Campaign did not go well for the Confederates; after the Battle of Perryville in October, they withdrew from the state and the two opposing armies found

themselves in Middle Tennessee—the Union firmly in control at Nashville and the Confederates in winter camp thirty-five miles away in and around Murfreesboro.<sup>1</sup>

In mid-December the two eastern armies clashed again at Fredericksburg, Virginia, resulting in a resounding defeat for the Union. With waning opportunities for a significant victory, Lincoln and his General-in-Chief, Henry Halleck, ordered General William S. Rosecrans, the newly-appointed commander of the Fourteenth Army Corps in Nashville, to move against the Confederates. Rosecrans resisted for a time, explaining that he needed to resupply and reorganize his forces. Finally, with pressure from Washington mounting, Rosecrans relented. On the day after Christmas, the Army of the Cumberland (as it was unofficially known at the time) moved toward Murfreesboro and Confederate General Braxton Bragg's Army of Tennessee.<sup>2</sup>

The Army of the Cumberland advanced southward in freezing rain, constantly harassed by Confederate cavalry. Most of the army had reached Murfreesboro by December 30. They camped in a line of battle extending three miles, from McFadden's Ford on the left to the intersection of the Franklin Road and Gresham Lane on the far right.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> James Lee McDonough, *Stones River: Bloody Winter in Tennessee* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1980), 26-33; Larry J. Daniel, *Battle of Stones River* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2012), 4, 11-12, 19.

<sup>2</sup> McDonough, 64-66.

<sup>3</sup> Daniel, 33, 63.

Rosecrans and Bragg were veteran military officers. Both were graduates of West Point trained in the same tactics; it is little wonder that they would devise similar battle plans. Rosecrans planned to attack the Confederate right, turn their flank, and get between Bragg and Murfreesboro. Bragg planned to attack the Union right, seize the Nashville Pike and parallel railroad, and cut Rosecrans off from his supply lines to Nashville. Both planned their attacks for early on December 31. The key difference that morning would be the time at which the assaults would begin. Bragg got the jump on Rosecrans by starting his attack much earlier.<sup>4</sup>

#### THE CONFEDERATE ASSAULT ON THE UNION RIGHT

At dawn on December 31, the Confederates stormed the Union right flank. The Federals expected the day's battle to begin on their left, and were inexplicably unprepared for the attack. Many of the Union soldiers at the end of the line were still asleep; others were preparing breakfast and morning coffee. Few expected any action at their position when thousands of Rebels smashed into their camps.<sup>5</sup>

Writing more than thirty years later, Robert B. Stewart, a veteran of the Fifteenth Ohio Infantry, recalled the chaos of the Confederate's surprise assault on the Union right that morning. "Just as I had taken my meat and coffee from the fire, and was sitting down on a cold rock to eat my breakfast, a few shots rang through the woods in front. We had hardly time to be alarmed before others followed, and we heard bullets singing

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<sup>4</sup> McDonough, 75, 78.

<sup>5</sup> Daniel, 72-75.

uncomfortably near and saw our pickets rushing in, followed by a line of gray, yelling and shooting like demons.”<sup>6</sup>

Stewart remembered that there was no time to give or receive orders. “We just tumbled over each other . . . we snatched up our cartridge boxes and rushed for our guns,” but the Confederates were upon them. “Not a skirmish line, but a line of battle; not one line, but two or three, it seemed to us. The woods were just full of them. They swarmed, they overflowed, they were a regular flood.” There was nothing for the surprised Federals to do but retreat.<sup>7</sup>

Stewart and his comrades made their way through a field standing in thick corn stalks. “I could hear the bullets striking the stalks. I could hear them strike a comrade as he ran; then there would be a groan, a stagger, and a fall. I could hear the wild yelling behind . . . I felt as though I would like to be all legs, with no other purpose in life but to run.” By that time the Union soldiers were “so scattered and mingled that hardly two of a company were together, and there did not seem to be anyone to give us a word of command. It was a plain case of everyone for himself, and the devil take the hindmost.”<sup>8</sup>

As each Union regiment fell back, the unit beside them was exposed to the Confederate onslaught and had to retreat as well. Within a short amount of time, most of

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<sup>6</sup> Robert B. Stewart, “The Battle of Stones River, As Seen By One Who Was There,” *Blue and Gray: The Patriotic American Magazine* 5:1 (January 1895): 12-13.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

the Union right wing had collapsed. It then fell upon the division of General Philip H. Sheridan to try to stem the tide.

#### THE SLAUGHTER PEN AND THE CEDARS

Near the Union center, Sheridan's men began to offer some resistance to the Confederates. They fought off two assaults from the Rebels before falling back to a second and then third position in the rocky, wooded ground past the Wilkinson Pike. Here Sheridan joined his left with the right of General James S. Negley's division at a right angle. The rocks and thick cedars provided the Union soldiers with an excellent defensive position. They held this ground for two hours of constant fighting before they too had to fall back as they ran out of ammunition.<sup>9</sup>

The advantage that the position had given them for defense was now an obstacle to retreat. The terrain of cedar thickets and limestone outcroppings made it all but impossible to maintain order. According to legend, the fighting in this area was so bloody that soldiers from Illinois dubbed it "the slaughter pen" because it reminded them of the killing floors of the Chicago beef processing plants.

Arza Bartholomew of the Twenty-first Michigan Infantry survived the Slaughter Pen and described the action in a letter to his wife written a few days after the battle: "I can tell you that the Rebels had us about as tight as need be . . . Every man fought on his own hook," [and as the Confederates advanced they] "poured in shot and shell from both

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<sup>9</sup> Daniel, 117, 129.

sides . . . if you could just see the woods you would say that a man could not get out alive . . . the timber was all cut to pieces.” General Lovell H. Rousseau’s Division, including a crack brigade of U.S. Regular Infantry, marched into the cedars and held the Confederates at bay for a time. The Regulars took heavy casualties, but covered the retreat of their state volunteer counterparts before pulling back toward the Nashville Pike.<sup>10</sup>

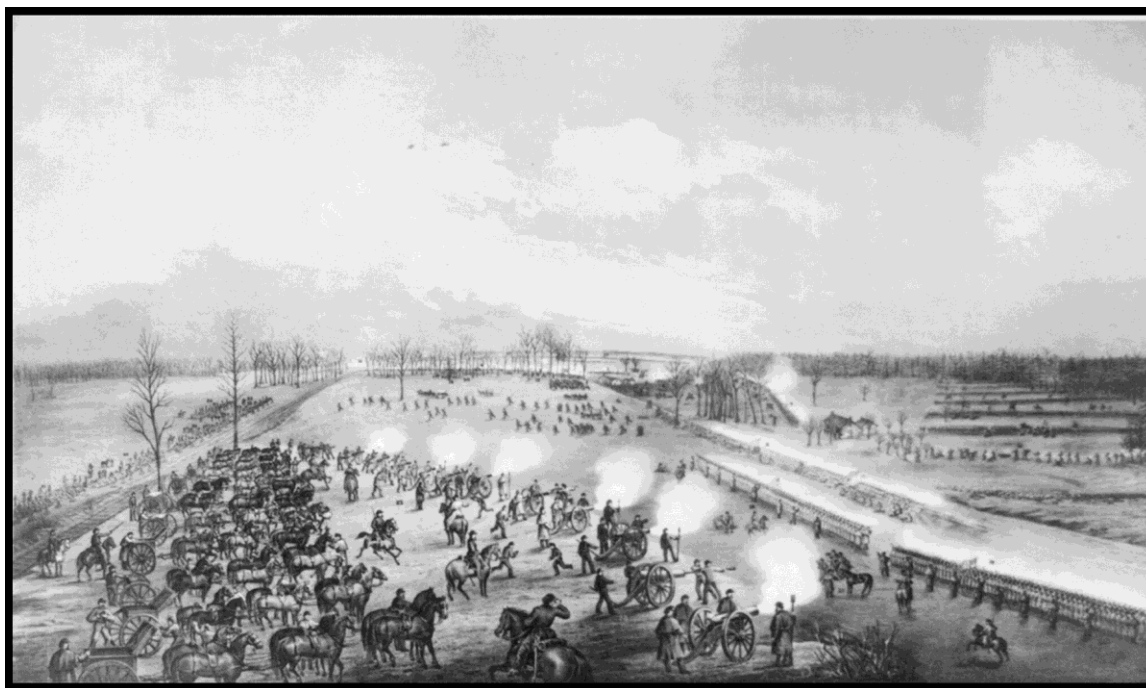


Figure 1. Union Defense Along the Nashville Pike by A.E. Mathews. Mathews served with the Thirty-first Ohio Volunteer Infantry at Stones River. National Archives.

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<sup>10</sup> Arza Bartholomew to Frances Bartholomew, January 10, 1863, Regimental Files, Twenty-first Michigan Infantry, Stones River National Battlefield. Although he survived the battle, Bartholomew would die of disease in May 1863 while stationed in Murfreesboro. He is buried in Stones River National Cemetery; McDonough, 119-120.



## THE NASHVILLE PIKE AND THE COTTONFIELD

The Union forces had suffered greatly in the Cedars, but their stubborn defense had bought precious time for General Rosecrans to regroup and establish a new position along the Nashville Pike and the railroad. The Confederates had pushed the Federals all day and expected to continue their success when they emerged from the woodline into a large cottonfield. Then the Union artillery and infantry from Rosecrans's new line opened fire (Figure 1).<sup>11</sup>

An entry from Indiana officer William Huntsinger's diary recounts the point where Union forces checked the Confederate advance: "As soon as the line could be reformed the pursuing enemy came in sight, debouching out of the cedar woods . . . the line was recalled and directed to a point on the right, where the Chicago Board of Trade Battery was in position on a slight elevation on a knoll, which became the center of the new line . . . Repeated charges were made upon this part of the line during the day, which were successfully beaten off by the infantry and artillery until nightfall."<sup>12</sup>

Writing long after the war, Stephen J. Tanner of the Confederate Ninth Texas Infantry remembered marching "right up to our fighting line. I pressed through this line, thinking we were to take its place, and stood for some time between these lines while the battle raged. I was spellbound at what I saw." Tanner recalled that the smoke from the

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<sup>11</sup> Daniel, 129, 141-145.

<sup>12</sup> Quoted in George W. Parker, et. al., *History of the Seventy-ninth Regiment Indiana Volunteer Infantry* (Indianapolis: Hollenbeck Press, 1899), 60-61.

morning's fighting "made a mid-night darkness" in the early afternoon. "The blaze from their guns made a wall of fire that revealed the faces of the men and was reflected by their glazed cap bills as far as I could see up and down the Union lines . . . I cannot tell why, but it seemed to me to be a field of glory." Arkansas infantryman W.A. Garner had a different perspective when he recounted one Confederate charge that was repulsed by Union infantry laying undetected in a low spot: "It was our time to run," he said.<sup>13</sup>

### THE ROUND FOREST

The Rebels pushed the Union soldiers back almost three miles from the Franklin Road to the Nashville Pike. The retreat of the Federal right and center was like a door swinging on a hinge, the "hinge" being the brigade commanded by Colonel William B. Hazen. By mid-day, Hazen's Brigade anchored the far left of the Union line in the "Round Forest," a small copse of timber bisected by a railroad cut.<sup>14</sup>

As the battle raged in the Cedars and cottonfield, the Confederates assaulted Hazen's position four different times. Had the new Union left given way, it would have spelled disaster for Rosecrans, making it impossible to sustain the final defensive position along the pike. But Hazen's Brigade, with support from other infantry and artillery units,

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<sup>13</sup> E. Russell Tanner, *Stephen Jennings Tanner: Autobiography and Genealogy* (Privately printed, 1970), 39; W.A. Garner to J.W. Thomas, June 1, 1897, Regimental Files, Twenty-fifth Arkansas Infantry, Stones River National Battlefield.

<sup>14</sup> Daniel, 157; Daniel A. Brown, "Marked for Future Generations: The Hazen Brigade Monument, 1863-1929" (Research report, National Park Service, 1985), 5.

held their ground. Hazen's Brigade were the only Union troops that did not fall back from their original position on December 31.<sup>15</sup>

In his diary, Captain James Cooper of the Confederate Twentieth Tennessee Infantry gave an account of the last futile charge against the Round Forest: "Wounded men were coming in a stream, dead were lying all around, and on every living face was seen the impress of an excitement which has no equal here on earth . . . To the left the battle still raged furiously, and ever and anon there would rise almost every sound, the swelling shout of men rushing to the bloody charge." But when Cooper's regiment began to advance, "the firing had almost ceased, and a most unearthly silence prevailed. We moved forward slowly at first . . . Our walk then quickened into a run, and the whole line dashed forward with a shout. We were a little confused at a Brick house on the road, but soon got around it and swept forward in gallant style." By this time Hazen and the units supporting him opened with fire so heavy that "our men . . . were falling with every step . . . we had done all men could do and had to fall back." After this assault "both parties seemed willing to quit fighting for the day, and silence settled down over that bloody field."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 168.

<sup>16</sup> William I. Alderson, ed., "The Civil War Diary of Captain James Litton Cooper," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 15 (1956): 152. The "Brick house" was the ruins of the home of Varner D. Cowan that burned before the battle.

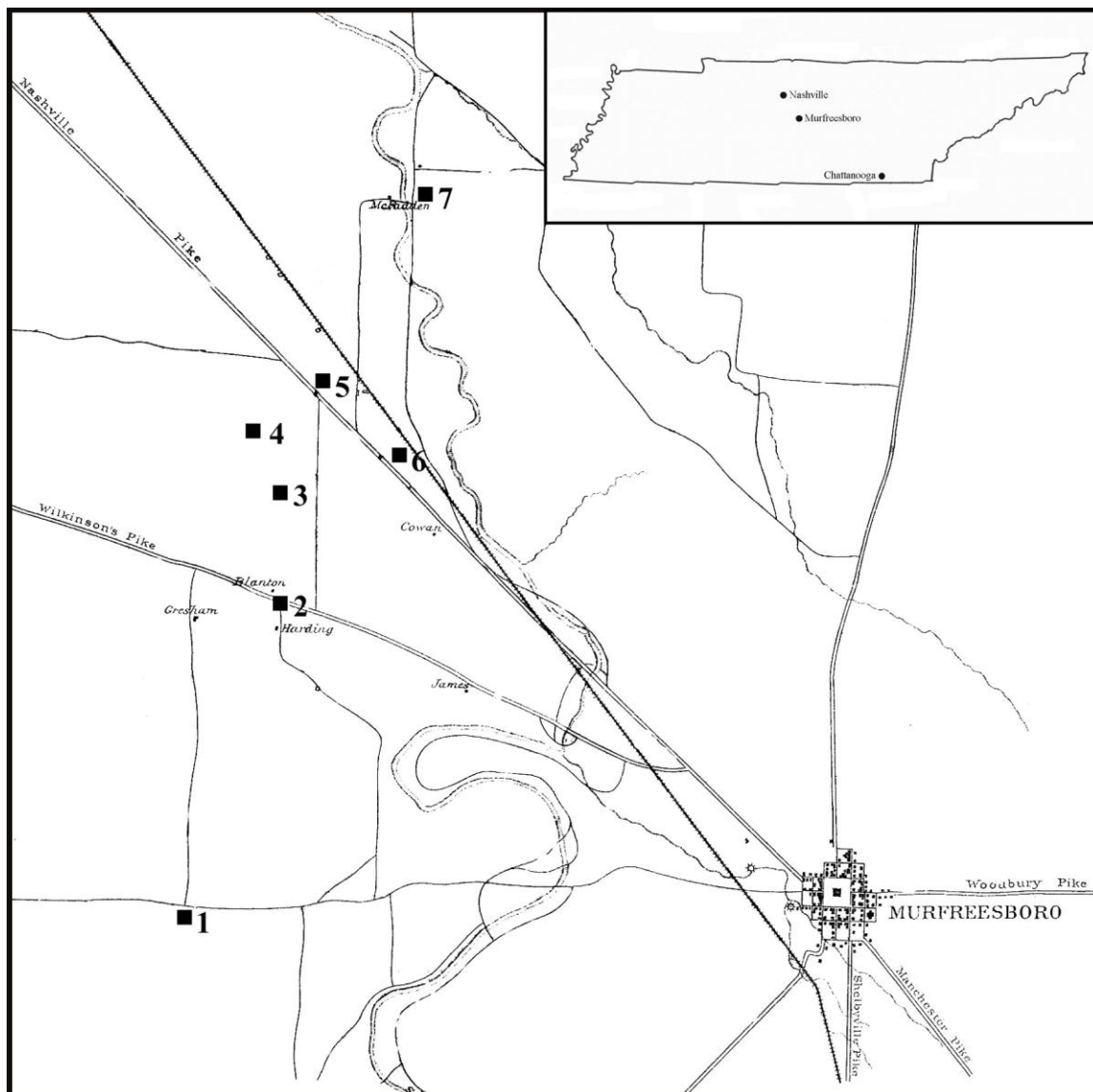


Figure 2. Map of the Significant Points of the Battle of Stones River. 1. Franklin Road and Gresham Lane where the Confederates surprised the Union right on December 31; 2. The “Slaughter Pen,” where the Union forces delayed the Confederate advance; 3. The Cedars, the scene of desperate fighting; 4 and 5. The Cottonfield and Nashville Pike, where Rosecrans checked the Confederate advance; 6. The “Round Forest,” where Hazen’s Brigade withstood four Confederate assaults; and 7. McFadden’s Ford, the scene of the Confederate charge on the afternoon of January 2 and the Union artillery barrage that drove them back, effectively ending the battle. Map adapted by the author from the *Atlas to Accompany the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1891-95), Plate XXX.

## McFADDEN'S FORD

On New Year's Day, Bragg was surprised to see that Rosecrans had not abandoned the field during the night. The Army of the Cumberland had taken a heavy loss, but so had the Confederates. There was only a few small skirmishes and artillery fire on January 1, and both armies used the day to regroup, resupply, and care for their wounded. Rosecrans moved some of his men across Stones River at McFadden's Ford, occupying a hill in front of the Confederate right.<sup>17</sup>

Bragg was concerned that the Union force could use that position to direct artillery fire down his line. On the morning of January 2, he ordered General John C. Breckinridge's Division to push the Federals back across the river. Breckinridge's brigade commanders opposed the decision because they believed their men would be exposed to the fire of Union artillery massed on a ridge above McFadden's Ford. Nonetheless, Bragg insisted on the attack.<sup>18</sup>

Samuel Welch of the Fifty-first Ohio Infantry recorded in his diary that in the late afternoon a "massed column" of Confederates moved quickly toward the Union position. "We were ordered to lie down flat on the ground . . . All at once we saw their hats. They were then within twenty yards of us. Suddenly we rose and fired a volley from the front line," simultaneous to a volley fired by the Rebels. "When the sudden shock of this double volley was over it seemed to me that both lines of battle were annihilated, and

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<sup>17</sup> Daniel, 173.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 180-181.

before I had time to notice who had fallen their second line came over the ridge.” The Confederate charge forced the Union soldiers to fall back to the river.<sup>19</sup>

Marcus Woodcock, a Tennessean who served in the Union Ninth Kentucky Infantry, remembered that the Union troops “fell back down the hill and across the river in the greatest disorder, every man taking his own course and running at the top of his speed.” The Rebels closely followed the retreating Federals “yelling like the very furies.” However, in their pursuit, the Confederates exposed themselves to the fifty-seven artillery pieces “closely-parked” on the ridge above the opposite river bank. “As I reached the river, a continued flash of lightning seemed to light up the scene, and immediately after peal upon peal in such quick succession as to form almost an unbroken continued roar,” Woodcock recalled. The “deafening yells of the elated Rebels were changed into shrieks and groans,” as the Union artillery poured grapeshot and canister into the Confederate ranks.<sup>20</sup>

The Union forces counterattacked the retreating Confederates. Woodcock said that the Union soldiers plunged into the river “cheered by the cry of fresh troops who were coming onto the field by thousands.” The counterattack pushed the Confederates

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<sup>19</sup> Diary of Samuel Welch, Regimental Files, Fifty-first Ohio Infantry, Stones River National Battlefield.

<sup>20</sup> Marcus Woodcock, *A Southern Boy in Blue: The Memoir of Marcus Woodcock, 9<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Infantry (U.S.A.)*, Kenneth Noe, ed. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1996), 131-137.

back to their original position. In less than an hour the Confederates had sustained over 1,800 casualties with nothing to show for the sacrifice.<sup>21</sup>

Woodcock reported that the Union soldiers “immediately proceeded to examine the battleground . . . I felt *good*; and despite the many suffering companions that were lying around I could not avoid occasional remarks of rejoicing at our success.” He was shocked at his own reaction, stating “a battle seems to take all the firm feelings from a man. I could look upon the faces of my dead comrades and at the same time think of our victory with a complacency of mind that caused me to shudder at my want of proper feeling. In spite of my attempts to bring my mind to bear upon the subject in its proper light, I felt satisfied because we had whipped the rebels.”<sup>22</sup>

Although Woodcock and his comrades could not have known it at the time, this charge effectively ended the Battle of Stones River. The two armies were at a standstill for a couple of days before Bragg, concerned that Rosecrans would soon get reinforcements from Nashville, decided to retreat toward Tullahoma. Though the battle was a tactical draw, the Confederates abandoned the field, leaving the victory (and Murfreesboro) to the Union. As Samuel Welch recorded in his diary, “all that was left to do on that bloody field was to bury the dead.”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Welch Diary.

**CHAPTER I:**  
**THE FIELD MADE HISTORICAL, 1863-1895**

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF STONES RIVER

With the benefit of modern hindsight, we know that the Battle of Stones River was one of the most significant battles of the American Civil War with over 81,000 troops engaged. The casualties (killed, wounded and captured) suffered by both armies amounted to one-third of each force. Percentage-wise, the Union lost more men at Stones River than any other major battle of the war; for the Confederacy, the percentage lost was second only to the Battle of Gettysburg. Eighteen months removed from the first battlefield clashes of North and South, Stones River was the last great battle of the early war period, before the inevitability of the Union war machine began to take hold. Though it was overshadowed in just a few months by the fall of Vicksburg and the battles of Gettysburg and Chickamauga, at the time it occurred it was described as “the battle of the war.”<sup>1</sup>

To that time, nothing in the western theater, save Shiloh, could rival Stones River in size and cost. The battle fired imaginations, particularly in the North. The Union victory at Stones River sutured the gaping wound that was the Fredericksburg disaster and renewed hope that Federal forces would eventually win the war. Lincoln got the battlefield victory he so desperately needed; his Emancipation Proclamation went into

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<sup>1</sup> “The Battle of Murfreesborough or Stone’s River,” *Deseret News*, January 14, 1863, 228.



effect as the Battle of Stones River was being fought. Months later, he told Rosecrans “you gave us a hard-earned victory, which, had there been a defeat instead, the nation could scarcely lived over.”<sup>2</sup>

Union forces would occupy Murfreesboro for the remainder of the war. Almost immediately, the army set about building Fortress Rosecrans, the largest earthen fortification ever constructed in North America. The site covered two hundred acres, securing Murfreesboro as a supply base that supported a series of maneuvers and battles that extended the Union Army further into the heartland of the South. The advance to Chickamauga, Chattanooga, and Atlanta began at this point.<sup>3</sup>

#### STONES RIVER AND EARLY CIVIL WAR COMMEMORATION

Days after the last shot was fired at Stones River, Henry Halleck wrote, “the field of Murfreesboro is made historical, and future generations will point out the places where so many heroes fell gloriously, in defense of the Constitution and the Union.” Halleck, known as “Old Brains” among the rank and file, was not being especially prescient—he made similar comments about other battles. But, in his elation over the victory, he

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<sup>2</sup> Roy B. Basler, ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1953), Vol. 6: 424.

<sup>3</sup> Edwin C. Bearss, “A History of Fortress Rosecrans” (Research Report, National Park Service, 1960), 4; Daniel, 211.

recognized that something important had occurred at Stones River that was worthy of remembrance.<sup>4</sup>

As Richard Sellars has noted, armies “left behind landscapes devastated by the violence and destruction of war, yet suddenly imbued with meanings more profound than mere pastoral beauty. The battlefield would no longer be taken for granted as ordinary fields and wooded lands.” The survivors of the battle certainly held the “field of Murfreesboro” in this new light. More than one regiment or brigade set aside small cemeteries or plots specifically for their fallen comrades, but some made more elaborate plans for commemorating their dead and the battlefield where they fell.<sup>5</sup>

Battlefield commemoration is driven by a need to find meaning in the “violence and destruction of war.” In that sense, acts of commemoration initiated by veterans are inherently different from those initiated by others, sometimes years after the event. To be sure, later commemorations are honest and heartfelt, but veterans have experienced what can only be imagined by non-participants and cannot be fully explained in mere words.

Historian John Neff has identified three elements that are typical of commemorative acts. First, the act reflects a relationship between the dead and a cause for which they died—the loss and suffering experienced is justified by a greater purpose. Second, there is a relationship between the dead and the living—often expressed as a

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<sup>4</sup> Quoted in *New York Tribune*, January 10, 1863, 1.

<sup>5</sup> Richard West Sellars, “Pilgrim Places: Civil War Battlefields, Historic Preservation, and America's First National Military Parks, 1863-1900” *CRM: The Journal of Heritage Stewardship* 2:1 (Winter 2005): 30.

sense of indebtedness. Third, there is a relationship between the present and future—a need to preserve the “ideals and values” of the current generation to those that follow. Perhaps for war-hardened veterans, commemorative acts replace the “want of proper feeling” that Marcus Woodcock experienced after Stones River.<sup>6</sup>

Commemoration at Stones River was facilitated by the course of the war. Murfreesboro would remain under Union control; the Army of the Cumberland was based in the area for a full six months after the battle and Fortress Rosecrans was still a formidable Union garrison after the main army moved south. Unlike other battlefields where the soldiers had quickly moved on to other campaigns, there was time to create lasting memorials to those who had lost their lives in the battle and to remember what had happened on this newly hallowed ground. Soon after the battle, the U.S. Regulars began to raise funds for a monument to their fallen comrades and there was also an effort to so honor the entire Army of the Cumberland. Hazen’s Brigade would erect one of the nation’s first Civil War monuments, and the federal government would establish one of the first national cemeteries on the battlefield.

Lieutenant Colonel Oliver L. Shepherd proposed the idea of a monument to the U.S. Regulars at Stones River. Shepherd was an 1840 graduate of West Point who had fought in the Seminole and Mexican Wars. He served at frontier outposts in the New Mexico Territory and Texas afterwards. Early in the Civil War, he served with the

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<sup>6</sup> John R. Neff, *Honoring the Civil War Dead: Commemoration and the Problem of Reconciliation* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005), 2.

Eighteenth United States Infantry, rising to command the brigade of U.S. Regulars at the Battle of Stones River.<sup>7</sup>

The U.S. Regulars had buried their fallen comrades on a knoll between the Nashville Pike and the railroad. The location was the same position occupied by Battery H, Fifth U.S. Artillery during Rosecrans's last defensive stand on the first day of the battle. Shepherd proposed placing a monument there to "commemorate the brigade's role in the battle and honor its dead." He presented the idea to his battalion commanders who were "enthusiastic for the project." The proposal was then printed and distributed among the brigade.<sup>8</sup>

The circular, dated April 6, 1863, stated that a committee had been convened to devise a plan for an appropriate monument. The committee suggested that the brigade construct a "burial mound covering the entire ground where our comrades are buried," roughly eighteen yards square and seven feet high. Then, "at some future day," the brigade would erect a "handsome marble monument with appropriate national emblems sculpted upon it, and also the names of the dead, of the Brigade, killed in the Battle or dying of wounds received."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Mark Wells Johnson, *That Body of Brave Men: The U.S. Regular Infantry and The Civil War In The West* (New York: De Capo Press, 2003), xxvi-xxix.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 337-339.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

A review of the rolls showed that there were 2,135 enlisted men present with the brigade at that time. The committee suggested that each enlisted soldier contribute one dollar to cover the cost of constructing the monument. They further suggested that each officer contribute five dollars toward that goal. The money would then be invested, with the accrued interest used for “incidental expenses of erecting the monument, while the principal will be wholly devoted to the monument itself.”<sup>10</sup>

At the next payday the monument committee collected the brigade’s contributions. The fund eventually totaled just over nineteen hundred dollars. The brigade entrusted the money with Shepherd, who was transferring to the headquarters of the Fifteenth U.S. Infantry at Fort Adams, Rhode Island. The brigade would eventually erect the monument, though it would take two decades and some controversy before completion.<sup>11</sup>

In the summer of 1863, John Fitch compiled a “volume of portraits, sketches, and incidents,” titled the *Annals of the Army of the Cumberland*. Fitch was a prominent lawyer and newspaper editor from Alton, Illinois, who served as the Provost Judge for the Army of the Cumberland. That such a work was created in the relatively short life of the organization is a testament to the interest in that army and Stones River, its greatest battle up to that time.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> “Death of John Fitch,” *Alton Weekly Telegraph*, August 1, 1878, 1.

The book was a form of commemoration in its own right, but it also had a more tangible goal. In his preface, Fitch states that the *Annals* was “intended as a souvenir that shall remain when this army shall have been disbanded and these stirring times and scenes have passed away.” He hoped that it would be prized by the “soldiers of the Cumberland . . . as their book, to be preserved by succeeding generations as a household treasure, its pages to be scanned by the descendant, while glorying in the deeds of a patriot sire during the dark days of the Great Rebellion.” Besides “affording pleasure to our soldiers and imparting information to the people,” Fitch proclaimed that any proceeds from the book’s sale would be used to erect a monument on the Stones River battlefield.<sup>13</sup>

An artist’s rendition of the proposed monument was included in the frontpiece of the *Annals* (Figure 3). Judging from that depiction, the monument was intended to be a tall obelisk inscribed with the names of prominent officers that lost their lives at Stones River, such as General Joshua Sill and Rosecrans’s Chief of Staff and close friend, Lieutenant Colonel Julius Garesché. The planned inscription also referred generally to the “perhaps two thousand of our gallant band [that] have ‘slept the sleep’ upon the battlefields of Stone River, or have since languished and pined away unto death from wounds there received.” Fitch asserted that the monument would not be “of a boastful and

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<sup>13</sup> John Fitch, *Annals of the Army of the Cumberland* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1863), 3-5.

vainglorious character, but simply to proclaim the story of the conflict and to transmit to posterity the moral of civil war.”<sup>14</sup>

It is not known how successful the *Annals* were in soliciting the monument fund. J. B. Lippincott and Company of Philadelphia had, according to Fitch, provided a “generous expenditure” on the book’s production and it had been “issued almost regardless of cost.” Perhaps that was the publisher’s contribution toward commemorating the Battle of Stones River. Within three months the book was in its fourth edition.<sup>15</sup>

The monument, however, was not to be. Fitch wrote the preface to that fourth edition in Chattanooga, dated one day after Union forces had broken the Confederate siege of that city at Missionary Ridge. He seemed to walk back the earlier goal of a monument at Stones River; perhaps the Battle of Chickamauga in September and the struggle for Chattanooga had brought the realization that there would be more great battles before the war would cease. Although the monument plan had not been abandoned, he wrote that if “the scheme shall prove inexpedient, owing to unquiet times in Tennessee in the future, or from other cause, the fund accruing from the sale of the volume will be directed to some charitable purpose or channel for the benefit of the invalid or crippled soldier of the Union, his widow or orphans.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 243.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 3-5.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

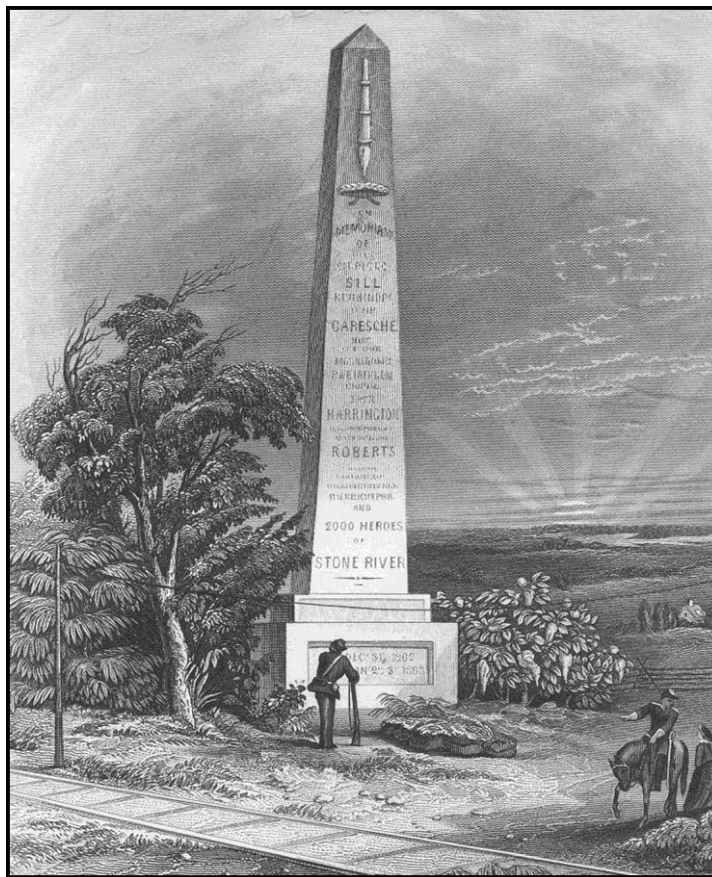


Figure 3. The Proposed Monument to the Army of the Cumberland. From John Fitch's *Annals of the Army of the Cumberland*.

#### THE HAZEN BRIGADE MONUMENT

Members of the Hazen Brigade erected a tribute to their fallen comrades in 1863 that stands to this day, the oldest Civil War battlefield monument in its original location. Monuments had already been erected on Civil War battlefields prior to that of the Hazen Brigade. Notably, Confederate soldiers had placed a monument to Colonel Francis Bartow on the Manassas battlefield where he had died, and another marked the graves of the Thirty-second Indiana that died in the Battle of Rowlett's Station, Kentucky. These



monuments are unusual in that they were erected while the war still raged and the outcome was not certain. Indeed, Bartow's monument did not survive the war; only its base remained at the time of the Second Battle of Manassas in 1862.<sup>17</sup>

Captain Amasa Johnson of the Ninth Indiana Infantry selected the spot for the Hazen Brigade cemetery soon after the battle. Johnson chose the Round Forest, the location Hazen described as the scene of the "best service rendered by my command in the war." They buried the brigade's dead in two long trenches, later adding individual tombstones arranged in rows by regiments. Within a few months, men from the brigade erected the monument in the small cemetery.<sup>18</sup>

Unfortunately, little record exists to tell us who came up with the idea or design for the monument, but Hazen was directly involved with the project. Colonel Isaac Suman of the Ninth Indiana recalled having a discussion with him about the monument during its construction. In early 1863, the brigade camped several miles away in the small

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 32; Alec Bennett, "History of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Indiana Infantry Monument" (Washington D.C.: National Cemetery Administration, 2012), 1. The 32nd Indiana Monument was moved from its original location because of preservation concerns. The Soldier's Monument in Berlin, Connecticut is believed to be the oldest Civil War monument in its original location. It pre-dates the Hazen Brigade Monument by several months. The Hazen Brigade Monument is the oldest known Civil War *battlefield* monument in its original location.

<sup>18</sup> Brown, 5, referencing "Proceedings of the Reunions of the Ninth Indiana Veteran Volunteer Infantry" (Indianapolis: Indiana State Library), 3<sup>rd</sup> reunion, 34, 37; William B. Hazen, *A Narrative of Military Service* (Boston: Ticknor and Co., 1885), 71; Charles F. Lawson, "Ground Penetrating Radar Investigations at Stones River National Battlefield" (National Park Service, 2003), 18-19. It is not known if any of the tombstones correspond to the remains that lay beneath them.

Rutherford County town of Readyville, and in June the brigade was involved in the Tullahoma Campaign. During this time, Hazen's approval would have been necessary to place some of his men on detached duty to construct the monument.<sup>19</sup>

We know the names of three men in the detail that built the monument:

Lieutenant Edward K. Crebbin of the Ninth Indiana, who supervised the project, and Sergeant James Murray and Private David Cochran of the Forty-first Ohio. Any special skill or experience that suggested them for the work is not known. We do know that Crebbin was on detached service at Murfreesboro from June to November, and Murray and Cochran did not return to their regiment until July 1864.<sup>20</sup>

The crew constructed the monument between July and December 1863. Private John B. Smith of the 115<sup>th</sup> Ohio Infantry visited the monument on December 31, the first anniversary of the battle, and observed workers constructing the stone fence around the lot. A later report described the monument, constructed of native cut-limestone, as a “quadrangular pyramidal shaft, ten feet square at the base and eleven feet in height, surmounted by a neat coping.” Its design suggests an Egyptian mastaba, a popular funerary motif of the time (Figure 4). The surrounding limestone wall was four feet high and two feet thick, with three entry steps centered on the south side of the monument.

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<sup>19</sup> Brown, 6-7, referencing “Proceedings of the Reunions of the Ninth Indiana Veteran Volunteer Infantry,” 14<sup>th</sup> reunion, 54.

<sup>20</sup> Brown, 7-8, referencing Robert L. Kimberly and Ephram S. Holloway, *The Forty-first Ohio Veteran Volunteer Infantry in the War of the Rebellion* (Cleveland, Ohio, 1897), 192, 195.

The enclosed cemetery lot was approximately one hundred feet long and forty feet wide.<sup>21</sup>

The work of inscribing the monument began in February 1864. Privates Daniel C. Miller and Christian Bauhof of the 115<sup>th</sup> Ohio did the work. In that month, the Swiss-born Miller wrote in a letter to his family that “I and Bauhof are already working for two and a half days at the monument” and that they enjoyed the work. Miller and his family had immigrated to America around 1857 and settled in Ohio. Miller gained experience as a stonecutter while working for a monument company in Canton. Bauhof was a co-worker of Miller’s back in Ohio.<sup>22</sup>

The 115<sup>th</sup> Ohio was stationed in Murfreesboro with primary duty guarding the railroad from frequent raids by Confederate cavalry. Inscribing the monument was a welcome diversion from the boredom of garrison life. In another letter, Miller wrote that other than the work on the monument “we have nothing to do.” It is not clear who arranged for Miller and Bauhof to work on the monument; Miller wrote that he didn’t know if they would be paid specifically for the work, but had been told “Hazen will treat us well.”

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<sup>21</sup> Brown, 8, 14, 19, referencing the John B. Smith Diary, Manuscript Collection, Ohio Historical Center, Columbus, Ohio, and the Report of E.B. Whitman, December 1, 1865, Records of the Quartermaster General, Stones River National Cemetery, Record Group 92, National Archives, Washington, D.C., (hereafter RG 92).

<sup>22</sup> Daniel C. Miller Letters, Regimental Files, 115<sup>th</sup> Ohio Infantry, Stones River National Battlefield; Brown, 10.

Miller last mentioned the monument in his letters home in May 1864. General Horatio Van Cleve, commanding Fortress Rosecrans, also issued an order that month instructing his chief engineer to “take possession of and receipt for . . . tools used in constructing a monument on the battle-field of Stone River now in Charge of Sergeant Murray 41st Ohio.” This would suggest that the monument was probably completed that month. Murray was still involved with the project, supervising the final work before rejoining his regiment that summer near Atlanta.<sup>23</sup>

On the south side of the monument the inscription states that it was dedicated to the memory of the soldiers of Hazen’s Brigade that were killed at Stones River on December 31, 1862. On the west side is listed the names of the officers killed in the battle, and on the east side the officers who died at Shiloh. Hazen may have planned to add something similar for those who died at Chickamauga and Chattanooga. He had a later addition made to the south side that simply reads: “Inscribed at the close of the War, Chicamauga-Chatanooga.”

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<sup>23</sup> Gen. Horatio P. Van Cleve, Special Order No. 128, Murfreesboro, Tennessee, May 7, 1864, William Babcock Hazen Papers, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.; Brown, 8.



Figure 4. The Hazen Brigade Monument. This is the earliest known photograph of the monument, taken between its completion in 1864 and May 1870 when the additional inscription was made. Library of Congress.

In May 1870, Leonard S. Doolittle, the superintendent of Stones River National Cemetery, wrote to Hazen discussing the additional inscription. Although the monument lot was not under Doolittle's official jurisdiction at the time, he was handling the addition. The text of Hazen's original request for the new inscription is not known, but it must have been lengthy. Doolittle explained to Hazen that there wasn't enough room for the content in the letter size he had requested, "but making them a little smaller I will be able to get it all on the front towards the pike." He added that the work had not started earlier because there was only one stonecutter in the area, and he had been unable "to get

him at the work.” The unidentified stonecutter had agreed to do the work for twenty-five cents per letter, for which Doolittle would bill Hazen when the job was done.<sup>24</sup>

The additional inscription is surely incomplete; it does not contain the detail of the earlier inscriptions, although there is room for more. It is not known why the work ended. Perhaps Doolittle halted the project when he realized that the stonecutter had misspelled both Chickamauga and Chattanooga.

#### STONES RIVER NATIONAL CEMETERY

In March 1864, General George H. Thomas, then in command of the Army of the Cumberland, directed General Van Cleve to select an “eligible site for the founding of a National Cemetery at your Post, for a last resting place for the heroes that fell at ‘Stone’s River,’ as well as for those who may be called upon to give up their lives in that region of country for the cause of Freedom.” Thomas ordered Van Cleve to make arrangements for laying out the cemetery as soon as possible.<sup>25</sup>

Congress had authorized the establishment of national cemeteries for the Union war dead in 1862. Often the graves of deceased soldiers were scattered; some lay on the battlefields where they died, others in hospital or local church, community, and even family cemeteries. Concern by the public that the remains were not properly accounted or

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<sup>24</sup> L.S. Doolittle to William B. Hazen, May 17, 1870, Hazen Papers. The only stonecutter listed in the 1870 Census of Rutherford County was David D. Newgent of Murfreesboro.

<sup>25</sup> Gen. George H. Thomas to Gen. Horatio Van Cleve, March 29, 1864, RG 92.

cared for led to the designation of twelve such cemeteries in 1862. There would be fourteen by the end of the war with the inclusion of the cemeteries Thomas ordered established at Chattanooga and Stones River. The plan for those cemeteries was different in that the men interred there were not only the casualties of the battlefields on which they were buried, but were intended for all of the Union dead collected from sites throughout the surrounding area.<sup>26</sup>

Van Cleve assigned the duty of selecting and laying out the site of the cemetery at Stones River to Captain John A. Means of the 115<sup>th</sup> Ohio. In civilian life Means was a civil engineer and had previously done topography work for the army in and around Murfreesboro. Means was the superintendent of the cemetery, overseeing the preparation of the grounds until he was mustered out with his regiment at the close of the war. His successor, Chaplain William Earnshaw, wrote that Means “very reluctantly turned away from a work that fully engaged his sympathies.”<sup>27</sup>

Means selected a site between the Nashville Pike and the railroad, on the small knoll where the dead of the Regular Brigade already lay, a short distance north of the Hazen Brigade cemetery. The work of preparing the cemetery was done by members of the 111<sup>th</sup> United States Colored Troops (U.S.C.T.) in “four squads of twenty-five men each.” A newspaper correspondent visiting the site in September 1865 reported that

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<sup>26</sup> Sellars, 24-25, 32; Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008), 217.

<sup>27</sup> Brown, 19; Report of William Earnshaw, October 5, 1866, Stones River National Cemetery Files, Stones River National Battlefield (hereafter Cemetery Files).

“those who fell here deserve well that special honor should be paid to their remains. This is about to be done.”<sup>28</sup>

Earnshaw was born in Pennsylvania in 1828, the son of English immigrants. He had grown up around the textile industry, but became a Methodist Episcopal minister as a young man. When the Civil War began, he entered the service as the chaplain of the Forty-ninth Pennsylvania Infantry, and was present at most of the major battles in the east. After Gettysburg, he was transferred to the Army of the Cumberland and was later assigned to oversee the new national cemeteries at Stones River and Nashville.<sup>29</sup>

Earnshaw had taken charge of the cemetery in June 1865, but because of the summer heat he was unable to begin the reburial program at Stones River until early October. His crews began by reinterring the soldiers buried on the Stones River battlefield (except for those of the Hazen Brigade) and then in a “cemetery on the east side of the pike between the city and Fortress Rosecrans.” Next were those resting in the Murfreesboro City Cemetery and several other points within the town. These initial

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<sup>28</sup> Earnshaw’s Report; “The South As It Is,” *New York Times*, September 2, 1865; Miranda L Fraley, “The Legacies of Freedom and Victory Besieged: Stones River National Cemetery, 1865-1920,” *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 64:2 (Summer 2005): 137.

<sup>29</sup> 1850 U.S. Census, Mifflin County, PA; 1860 U.S. Census, Cumberland County, PA; 1880 U.S. Census, Montgomery, County, OH (Ancestry.com U.S. Federal Census Collection, online at <http://www.ancestry.com/>, census records hereafter cited with census year and location). J.C. Gobrecht, *History of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers* (Dayton, OH: United Brethren Printing Establishment, 1875), 235-236.



reburials of the dead from the battlefield and Murfreesboro numbered around three thousand men.

From Murfreesboro, Earnshaw and his detachments from the 111<sup>th</sup> U.S.C.T. followed the path taken by the Army of the Cumberland in the Tullahoma Campaign, gathering up the remains of the Union soldiers that died at Hoover's Gap, Liberty Gap, and Guy's Gap. From there they moved north of Stones River along the railroad to LaVergne, Smyrna, Stewart's Creek, and Florence; then as far south as the Cumberland Mountains. During this period Earnshaw and his details, numbering by then about three hundred men, were reportedly reburying fifty to one hundred soldiers per day.<sup>30</sup>

Once the crews had removed the bodies of the men buried in the more accessible areas, they "followed each road upon which our army moved at various times, searching the entire country, and tracing obscure by-ways." Earnshaw stated that he and the 111<sup>th</sup> "felt it our solemn duty to find every solitary Union soldier's grave that marked the victorious path of our men, in pursuit of the enemy of our common cause, whether those enemies were soldiers in the rebel army proper, or guerillas and bushwhackers." Indeed, he reported that "we have visited every place eighty or ninety miles northeast, east, and southeast" of the cemetery.<sup>31</sup>

Exhuming, moving, and reburying the remains was gruesome work, but it was also exacting. Earnshaw stated that "as each body was disinterred it was placed in a good

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<sup>30</sup> Earnshaw's Report; Faust, 226.

<sup>31</sup> Earnshaw's Report.

substantial coffin, and in order to preserve inviolate whatever record we were able to find on or inside the grave, we first copied it upon the coffin lid and then upon the head board intended for the new grave.” The burial parties then recorded the information in “a book always carried for that purpose, [and] compared before the remains were laid in the grave.” Earnshaw was confident that his records were “the very best that could be made under the circumstances.” Still, he sadly reported that over one-fourth of the remains relocated were unidentified.<sup>32</sup>

The completed cemetery included sixteen acres for the cemetery itself, plus four acres reserved for a “Keeper’s garden.” The cemetery contained several sections, including one dedicated to the Union dead from the Battle of Franklin. A visitor noted that these sections were “traversed by graveled avenues, named after the heroes of the battle,” such as Sill and Garesché. All of the graves were marked with white painted wooden headboards, and the entire cemetery was enclosed in a white picket fence. The headboards were soon replaced with stone, and construction began on a substantial rock wall that replaced the picket fence. There was a high flagpole in the cemetery center, which was called Lincoln Square (Figure 5).<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Report of E.B. Whitman, May 1869, RG 92; “The Battle Field of Stone River,” *Cincinnati Commercial Tribune*, September 27, 1869, 2.



Figure 5. Stones River National Cemetery, c.1866. This is the earliest known photograph of the cemetery. National Archives.

At one point plans called for a monument in the center of the cemetery. (Possibly the proposed monument to the Army of the Cumberland). One observer reported that the monument would be seventy-five feet high. Curiously, an ominous news item appeared in an 1866 newspaper that stated, “The Superintendent of the National Cemetery at Murfreesboro, has received numerous warnings [from whom the article does not say] that he will never be permitted to erect on its grounds any monument to Union soldiers.” The

failure to erect the monument probably had more to do with funding such an ambitious project rather than any threats of destruction or violence.<sup>34</sup>

Of course, the threat of vandalism or destruction of Union graves was one of the primary motivations for gathering up soldier's remains in central locations in the first place. But the choice of these locations was driven by other factors, as Edmund B. Whitman, one of the men charged with selecting sites for national cemeteries, delineated in an report to General Thomas. The first criterion Whitman used for selection was "distinguished localities of great historical interest, whereby such uses, we might commemorate the events in which these men had done a distinguished part and at the same time, bestow the highest honors upon their memories."<sup>35</sup>

The commemorative act of creating a national cemetery was a powerful statement. As Drew Gilpin Faust has noted, "gathered together in mass cemeteries with graves marshaled in ranks like soldiers on the field of battle, the dead became a living reality, a force in their very presence and visibility." Cemeteries like the one at Stones River, she states, "contained ordered row after row of humble identical markers . . . who represented not so much the sorrow or particularity of a lost loved one as the enormous and all but unfathomable cost of the war." Choosing Stones River as a site of a national cemetery gave recognition to the battlefield as a place of "great historical interest" and

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<sup>34</sup> *New York Times*, September 2, 1865; "Tennessee Items," *Memphis Daily Avalanche*, May 25, 1866, 2.

<sup>35</sup> Whitman Report.

served as a reminder of what had happened on this ground. In a sense, John Fitch's goal for the Army of the Cumberland monument, "to proclaim the story of the conflict and to transmit to posterity the moral of civil war," was realized by the cemetery itself, even in the absence of a great obelisk.<sup>36</sup>

With the establishment of the National Cemetery, the federal government had assumed responsibility for a commemorative site on the Stones River battlefield. The 1862 act authorizing national cemeteries had provided for the purchase of land for that purpose, but it was after the war before the federal government would acquire legal title to the cemetery at Stones River. In 1868, the government paid James M. Tompkins, one of the owners of the land on which the Stones River National Cemetery now stood, \$932.50 for twelve and a half acres. The government purchased the remaining seven and a half acres from "Richard Wasson, et. al.," for an additional \$594.50. The total cost for the cemetery grounds was \$1,527.<sup>37</sup>

The government did not take ownership of the Hazen Brigade Monument and cemetery lot for several more years. In March 1874, Major Oscar Mack inspected the Hazen Brigade cemetery and reported that he thought it "would be advisable for the U.S. to buy this land," and that "the present owner is making inquiries about it." He estimated

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<sup>36</sup> Faust, 248-249; Fitch, 243.

<sup>37</sup> Sellars, 32; Deed Book 15, 357, Deed Book 16, 30-32, Office of the Register of Deeds, Rutherford County, TN.

that it could be purchased for about one hundred dollars, which would “be much cheaper than to remove the remains, and the monument to the National Cemetery.”<sup>38</sup>

The site was owned by the heirs of Varner D. Cowan and was part of what was known as “Lot 5.” The Chancery Court had ordered that Lot 5 be sold as part of the settlement of the estate. Nelson Cowan, an African American who was likely a former slave of the Cowan family, purchased it on note. In October 1874, the court decreed that part of Lot 5 was to be sold at auction as a partial payment for the land if the whole was not paid off before December of that year. Nelson Cowan did not pay off the note by the deadline.<sup>39</sup>

On February 1, 1875, the court auctioned a portion of Lot 5, including the cemetery and monument but extending from the Nashville Pike to the railroad. The “highest and best bid” was offered by Superintendent Doolittle, acting as agent for the U.S. government, who purchased the lot for two hundred dollars. With this sale the Hazen Brigade Monument and cemetery lot were incorporated into the purview of Stones River National Cemetery. The federal government had assumed responsibility for one of the earliest Civil War monuments.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Brown, 25, referencing the Report of Oscar J. Mack, March 1874, RG 92.

<sup>39</sup> Chancery Court Minute Book L, 148-150, Office of the Register of Deeds, Rutherford County, TN.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

## THE CEMETERY COMMUNITY

The creation of Stones River National Cemetery inadvertently contributed to the rise of a new community. Outside its walls, landowners put much of the battlefield back into cultivation, as before the war. A reporter visiting the battlefield in 1869 wrote “where the sanguinary conflict once raged are now to be found fields of corn and cotton . . . To take a casual view of the landscape[,] there is nothing to suggest to the mind the thought of battle. But a glance at the little spots of timber scattered here and there tells the tale of the great conflict.” Although he may not have realized it, he was witnessing another, less obvious, tale unfolding.<sup>41</sup>

Within those cottonfields, where the plow continued to turn up “bullets, bones, cannon-balls and bayonets,” the reporter observed African Americans “engaged in picking the snowy material which enters so largely into the world of commerce.” On the surface, the view was no different than what one would have seen before the war. But these were freedmen, not slaves; and increasingly, they were the landowners cultivating the land and establishing their homes on the battleground.<sup>42</sup>

Much of the Stones River battlefield was situated in the Ninth Civil District of Rutherford County. By 1870, the African American population of the district had almost doubled and outnumbered white residents three to one. Freedmen were acquiring land in the district as early as 1868, and by 1880 as many as thirty African Americans

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<sup>41</sup> *Cincinnati Commercial Tribune*.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

owned land there. There are many reasons why freedmen chose this area to settle. Some, such as Nelson Cowan, had been enslaved on nearby farms and simply stayed in an area they had always known as home. Others had come to know the area through their affiliation with the 111<sup>th</sup> U.S.C.T. and the National Cemetery. Several veterans of the 111<sup>th</sup> remained after they were discharged in 1866 and formed the core of “Cemetery.”<sup>43</sup> As the name implies, the predominately African American community was centered near the National Cemetery. This ground was, of course, the scene of some of the heaviest fighting on the first day of the Battle of Stones River, including the Cottonfield and Round Forest on the Nashville Pike. A number of African American landowners settled in the Cedars. This rocky land was practically useless for agricultural purposes; many of the residents made homes there, but sharecropped or tended nearby tillable lands, ownership of which had often been retained by whites. This small, largely-barren area eventually saw a concentration of homes, small farms, and two churches (Figure 6).<sup>44</sup>

Records show that some of the residents of the community found work at the National Cemetery. A few locals worked as laborers on a long-term basis. The cemetery engaged several locals during the warm-weather months, sometimes over a period of

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<sup>43</sup> Lydia Simpson, “Settling In: Tracking the Formation of the Cemetery Community through Public Records” (M.A. thesis, Middle Tennessee State University, 2011), 12-13.

<sup>44</sup> See Rebecca Conard, “The Changing Face of the Country: Environmental History and the Legacy of the Civil War at Stones River National Battlefield,” *George Wright Forum* 28:2 (2011): 161-181.





Figure 6. Residents of the Cemetery Community. Photographed by Albert Kern, c.1896. Dayton History.

years. Still others could find short-term work with specific projects, such as repairing the cemetery wall, planting trees and shrubs, or cleaning headstones.

William Holland, one of these veterans of the 111<sup>th</sup> U.S.C.T., is particularly indicative of the relationship between the National Cemetery and the community. Holland was born a slave in Todd County, Kentucky, in 1834, but was sold to a slaveholder in Columbia, Tennessee as a young boy. In 1864 he joined the 111<sup>th</sup> and rose to the rank of sergeant. The regiment was assigned to guard railroad bridges in North Alabama, where he was captured by Nathan Bedford Forrest's Cavalry at Sulphur Trestle near Athens. Holland was put to work as a body servant for Forrest's chief surgeon (and

brother-in-law), Dr. James B. Cowan. He traveled with Forrest's cavalry for three months before he managed to escape and return to his unit.<sup>45</sup>

At the end of the war, Sergeant Holland was detailed along with others of the 111<sup>th</sup> U.S.C.T. to build Stones River National Cemetery and rebury the Union dead there. After he was discharged in April 1866, he took a job as a laborer with the National Cemetery and settled in the area. In November 1875 Holland became a landowner when he purchased three acres of land that bordered the Hazen Brigade Monument lot. He continued to work as "the most trusted employee" of the National Cemetery until he was forced to retire after being injured by a mule. When he died in 1909 he was laid to rest just outside the walls of the monument lot, on his own property.<sup>46</sup>

#### THE HAZEN CONTROVERSY

The Hazen Brigade Monument would gain some unfortunate national attention in 1879. In that year a long-brewing dispute between General William B. Hazen and General David S. Stanley came to a head in a highly publicized legal proceeding. As one newspaper reported, "the quarrel between these two men is of years standing and came to public notice in the rotten times of Grant's administration. Hazen was on duty in the

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<sup>45</sup> Harlan Cemetery File, Stones River National Battlefield; Michael Gavin, "A History of the 110th and 111th Infantry Regiments, United States Colored Troops," (Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area, 2004), 5-6. Holland's surname was often alternatively spelled "Harlan" or "Harland."

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.; Deed Book 21, 280-28, Office of the Register of Deeds, Rutherford County, TN.

extreme West and wrote to Congressman [James A.] Garfield of the corrupt practices at the post-traderships,” which were allegedly being “farmed out” by William W. Belknap, President Ulysses S. Grant’s Secretary of War. Hazen testified in Belknap’s ensuing impeachment and Stanley “picked out discrepancies between Hazen’s evidence and his letter to Garfield, and charged him with perjury” with added charges of cowardice and lying from their war days. Officials in Washington afforded little credibility to these charges, and did not order a court-martial of Hazen as requested by Stanley. Stanley pushed the issue when he wrote a letter repeating his charges to “every military man of prominence in Europe,” where Hazen was observing the Russo-Turkish War. Hazen requested a court-martial of Stanley upon his return, and Stanley renewed a request for a court-martial of Hazen based on his old charges. Washington granted both requests; Stanley would go on trial first.<sup>47</sup>

Stanley, defending himself, made several claims against Hazen, but he particularly singled out the Hazen Brigade Monument at Stones River as proof of Hazen’s untruthfulness. “There are several kinds of impostures,” Stanley argued, “there is the imposture which lasts for a day or a week. There is the imposture which lasts for a month, and . . . there is the imposture which lasts for eternity such as the erection of this monument.” At issue was whether the monument, “purported to have been erected by order of Gen. Hazen,” stood where his men fell as its inscription claimed. Stanley

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<sup>47</sup> *Springfield Daily Republican*, April 21, 1879, 4. Garfield, the future President of the United States, had replaced Garesché as Rosecrans’s Chief of Staff after the Battle of Stones River.

planned to “show that the monument does not mark the spot where the men of that particular brigade fought and fell.”<sup>48</sup>

To that end, Stanley called General Thomas J. Wood to testify. Wood, like Stanley, had commanded a division at the Battle of Stones River, and still limped from a wound he received there. When asked if the words on the monument were true, Wood replied, “I do not think they are,” and that when the Confederates “forced in” the Union right flank his division had held—“that being the case, Gen. Hazen’s brigade could not have lost any men on the ground occupied by the monument.” Wood added that when the monument was erected it “created a good deal of feeling among the soldiers who served under me; if any portion of Hazen’s brigade got on the ground occupied by the monument, it was, substantially, after the battle was over.”<sup>49</sup>

The news reports of Wood’s testimony received a quick rebuttal from Edward Crebbin. Crebbin, by then a resident of the National Military Home in Dayton, Ohio, fired off a letter to the editors of several newspapers. “Now, it has been stated by General Wood that none of General Hazen’s men fell where the monument is standing. In justice to the fallen brave I must say and do assert that on the spot, in and around the spot where the monument was erected, eleven men of my own company were killed and wounded, and to the best of my recollection one hundred and thirteen men of our regiment (9th Indiana) were killed and wounded there.” Crebbin added that he “commanded the

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<sup>48</sup> *New York Times*, April 17, 1879, 1.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

detachment of Gen. Hazen's brigade which erected the monument, and am and have been acquainted with every foot of ground on which the battle of Stone River was fought . . . envious officers may smirch Gen. Hazen, [but] they can not do it by the means used in regards to the monument." He concluded by stating that the "words on that monument record facts."<sup>50</sup>

The editor of one newspaper wrote that "Soldiering in peace is so much mock business that an army always has a tendency to become a school for scandal," and that the Hazen-Stanley affair was "intended to check this tendency. So far it has shown what astonishingly small spites can set men by the ears in a service presumably honorable." Their dispute divided some of the army establishment into factions that either supported or opposed each man.

As the court-martial progressed, the Quartermaster Department performed a routine inspection of the National Cemetery and Hazen Brigade Monument lot. As the report made its way through the bureaucracy, succeeding officers added their endorsements to the document. One officer wrote that he "questioned the propriety of our spending money on this monument. No one hears the names of the men who lie buried there. It is always called the Hazen monument, and it is not improbable that the uninformed traveler may imagine it was designedly erected to perpetuate the memory of Gen. Hazen!" He added the irony that the lot had been purchased "by order of Gen. Belknap," and that he thought it was unfortunate that the bodies of Hazen's men were not

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<sup>50</sup> *Cincinnati Daily Gazette*, April 24, 1879, 5.

“removed to the Stones River National Cemetery when other removals were made.”

There is little doubt where this officer’s allegiance stood. Likewise, when Edward Crebbin died at Pikes Peak, Colorado, on August 13, 1882, he was working for the U.S. Signal Service, then commanded by William B. Hazen.<sup>51</sup>

The court found Stanley guilty of “conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline” for writing the letters disparaging Hazen. He was sentenced to be “admonished in general orders” by William T. Sherman, the General of the Army. The army dropped Hazen’s court-martial because the charges Stanley brought against him were so old. Sherman returned Stanley and Hazen to their previous posts with a warning that “both parties will be careful that the service be not injured by a revival of this subject.”<sup>52</sup>

#### THE U.S. REGULARS MONUMENT

The monument to the U.S. Regulars, erected by brigade veterans at Stones River National Cemetery in 1883, was not without a controversy of its own. In late 1875, officers of the Regular Brigade held a meeting in New York City. At this meeting the attendees formed a committee to make arrangements for erecting the planned monument to the memory of their fallen comrades at Stones River. The committee members were Colonel Samuel B. Lawrence, Colonel Francis L. Guenther, and Captain Henry Keteltas.

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<sup>51</sup> *Springfield Daily Republican*; Brown, 27, referencing Report of James Ekin, April 22, 1879, RG 92; “Proceedings of the Sixth Annual Reunion of the Ninth Indiana Veteran Volunteer Infantry,” (Privately printed, 1889), 61.

<sup>52</sup> *New York Herald*, June 18, 1879, 6.

Lawrence had served with the U.S. Regulars in the eastern theater as an aide of General Lew Wallace. Guenther and Keteltas were both veterans of the Battle of Stones River, serving under Shepherd. Guenther had commanded Battery H, Fifth U.S. Artillery there, and Keteltas had led a company of skirmishers in the Fifteenth U.S. Infantry.<sup>53</sup>

The committee's first order of business was to secure the funds the soldiers had donated for the monument in 1863, entrusted to the care of Colonel Shepherd. Shepherd deposited the money with the National Newark Banking Company, which invested it in government bonds according to the original plan. Shepherd, who retired from the army in 1870, was involved in the New York City real estate market. At some point he had used the bonds as collateral to secure a loan, and in 1871 he sold the bonds to pay off that debt. Shepherd planned to recoup the monument fund by selling some of his property holdings.<sup>54</sup>

When Colonel Lawrence, the chairman of the monument committee, asked Shepherd to turn the fund over, he promised to deliver the money but did not. The two corresponded about the monument fund for over two years, with Shepherd "giving various excuses" for his delay. At one point he had even denied the committee's authority to take charge of the fund. In truth, Shepherd was simply stalling for time while he

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<sup>53</sup> "The Shephard Court-Martial," *New York Times*, February 28, 1878, 8; Lew Wallace, *Lew Wallace: An Autobiography* Vol. 2 (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1906), 679-680; *Association of Survivors, Regular Brigade, Army of the Cumberland* (Columbus, OH: Press of John L. Trauger, 1898), 116; Johnson, 277.

<sup>54</sup> *New York Times*, February 28, 1878.

desperately tried to raise the money in a depressed market. One of Shepherd's real estate brokers, Homer Morgan, said that the market was the worst he had seen in forty years—including the Panic of 1837. Morgan said that despite their best efforts, there “was a general disinclination to part with money, or to make any investment in real estate.” Increasingly frustrated, the committee appealed to Washington for help. Shepherd was soon at the center of a public scandal, accused of embezzlement before a court-martial.<sup>55</sup>

The prosecutor was Colonel Guido N. Lieber, who would become the Judge Advocate for the U.S. Army and the author of several important works on military justice. Elihu Root, who would one day serve as the U.S. Secretary of War, Secretary of State, and as a Senator, represented Shepherd.

Root's defense was that Shepherd “never had any intention of diverting the monument fund” from its original purpose. According to Root, Shepherd's New York real estate and Pennsylvania coal investments amounted “in the aggregate to at least ten times the amount of the monument fund,” and that he “had never denied it, never refused to surrender it to those duly authorized to receive it, and was still ready and willing to hand it over as soon as he could realize the amount from his property.”<sup>56</sup>

Lieber argued that it had been fourteen years since the fund had been created and entrusted to Shepherd. He stressed that if that fund was now gone, “upon whom should the blame rest for its misappropriation if not upon the accused?” The court convicted

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid.; “The Shephard Court-Martial,” *New York Times*, March 3, 1878, 12.

<sup>56</sup> “The Shephard Court-Martial,” *New York Times*, March 7, 1878, 2.



Shepherd of the charges in April 1878. His sentence was to “be confined within the limits of the post at Fort Adams for one year, and thereafter until the money . . . with interest from 1864, shall be paid.” Shepherd reimbursed the fund on February 28, 1881, when \$3,758 was deposited with the Union Trust Company in New York City. Shortly thereafter, General Sherman wrote that he was “personally and officially . . . deeply gratified” that Shepherd had made good on the debt, and that “so far as I am concerned wish that all officers of the Army to know that his good name is restored to him after the painful doubts and suspicions caused by his temporary misfortunes.”<sup>57</sup>

The sculptor who created the monument was Launt Thompson of New York. Thompson emigrated from his native Ireland in 1847 at the age of fourteen. The next year he began an apprenticeship with classicist sculptor Erastus Dow Palmer. He was well known in New York art circles, and was close with the theatrical Booth family, particularly Edwin Booth, the older brother of Abraham Lincoln’s assassin, John Wilkes Booth. Indeed, in the days following Lincoln’s death, Thompson escorted the assassin’s mother to the train station. Hearing a newsboy exclaim that soldiers had killed the fugitive Booth, he distracted her until he could confirm the story. It was Thompson that informed Mrs. Booth that her son was dead.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> “Court-Martial of Col. Shepherd,” *New York Times*, April 8, 1878, 1; Mark W. Johnson to Tammy M. Calvin, August 22, 1994, Cemetery Files.

<sup>58</sup> Theodore D. Woosley, et. al., *The First Century of the Republic: A Review of American Progress* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1876), 414; Mrs. Thomas Bailey Aldrich (Lillian Woodman Aldrich), *Crowding Memories* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, and Company, 1920), 75-76.

The finished monument was a sandstone column, fifteen feet in height. It included egg-and-dart molding and floral and laurel designs. The inscription noted that the monument was dedicated to the memory of the men of the Regular Brigade that had died at Stones River, with the dates of the battle and a list of the regiments of the brigade. The column sat on a three-tiered granite base, seven feet square (Figure 7).



Figure 7. The U.S. Regulars Monument. This is one of the earliest known photographs of the monument, taken shortly after it was erected in May 1883. Stones River National Battlefield.

In early 1883 the Regular Brigade monument committee made plans to finally complete the project. In January the Quartermaster Department granted Guenther's request to place the monument in the National Cemetery. On March 22 engineer James Gall, Jr. inspected the National Cemetery and selected a location for the monument. Gall reported that the site chosen was on the edge of the section devoted to the graves of the Regulars, which was "the only available spot . . . and fortunately . . . the best adapted for the purpose." Colonel Lawrence informed the Quartermaster on April 17 that the monument had been shipped and was on its way to Stones River.<sup>59</sup>

The monument was placed over the graves of the Regulars on May 12, 1883, apparently with no fanfare. There is no record of a dedication ceremony, nor do existing cemetery records show anything out of the ordinary on that day. James A. Ekin, the Assistant Quartermaster in Louisville who oversaw the cemetery, visited in early June, and Guenther visited on June 27. Curiously, they may have changed the distinctive eagle atop the monument. After Guenther's visit the superintendent of the cemetery wrote Ekin, "[Guenther] came here to inspect the Monument yesterday I told him of your wishes in regard to Eagle on top of monument the Colonel is entirely of your opinion and

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<sup>59</sup> Rufus Ingalls to James A. Ekin, January 30, 1883; James Gall, Jr. to R.N. Batchelder, March 25, 1883; Samuel B. Lawrence to James A. Ekin, April 17, 1883. Letters Received, 1881-1883, Cemetery Files.

said he would see about having it changed as he believed it would help the appearance very much.” What change, if any, they made to the bronze eagle and globe is not clear.<sup>60</sup>

## BATTLEFIELD TOURISM

The American public held a fascination with Civil War battlefields even before the war’s end. At Gettysburg, curious visitors came in great numbers to see the battlefield before all of the dead had been buried. Richard Sellars has pointed out that “a rudimentary tourism” evolved there. “As soon as they could,” he writes, “entrepreneurs . . . began to profit from the crowds, marketing such necessities as room and board, in addition to selling guided tours, battlefield relics, and other souvenirs.” At the time, the situation at Gettysburg was perhaps unique. Early preservation efforts by locals established the battlefield as a destination.<sup>61</sup>

As the South began to recover in the post-war years, “rudimentary tourism” began to appear on other great battlefields. In the last decades of the nineteenth century, veterans would revisit the old battlegrounds in droves to remember the exciting and tragic scenes of their youth. But they were not alone; a younger generation of Americans, simply enthralled with the history of these places, visited as well. Although there was no structure that could support a burgeoning tourist economy on the scale seen at

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<sup>60</sup> Frederick Phisterer, *The Regular Brigade in the Battle of Stones River* (Privately printed, 1883), 24; Thomas Frame to James A. Ekin, June 28, 1883, Letters Sent 1877-1883, Cemetery Files.

<sup>61</sup> Sellars, 26.

Gettysburg, locals realized that the Stones River battlefield presented an economic opportunity. Some began to press the advantage that a historic battlefield afforded them.

An 1882 newspaper item recounted that “visitors from the Northern States come to Murfreesboro nearly every day for the purpose of going over Stone River battle-ground. One of these visitors who was in town this week bought some cheap hickory pipes from a grocery store and said he was going to sell them at \$5 each to his Northern friends.” The astonished storeowner asked how that was possible. The visitor stated he would “tell them the hickory from which the pipes were made grew on the battlefield, and I will have no trouble in selling them at enormous prices.” The merchant exclaimed that “the wood of which the pipes were made did not grow within one hundred miles of the battle-field!” At that, the visitor “winked a wicked wink,” and said, “if I make the Michiganders believe the wood came from the battle-field it will be all the same with them. This relic business is all in the mind’s eye, anyway.” True or not, the very existence of this humorous article reveals that the battlefield held interest with the public, and that many people regularly visited the old battleground. Many newspapers and magazines of the period give accounts of tourists stopping at Stones River to “get some notion of how a battlefield looks” years after the war had ended.<sup>62</sup>

Railroads of the time advertised their lines as a way to see the historic battlefields of the Civil War. This was particularly true of the Nashville, Chattanooga, and St. Louis Railway (NC&StL). The NC&StL ran directly through or very near some of the most

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<sup>62</sup> “Interesting to Relic-Hunters,” *Omaha Herald*, January 18, 1882, 3; “Thumb-Nail Sketches In Dixie,” *Kalamazoo Gazette*, July 15, 1902, 7.

well known battlefields of the war, including Stones River, Chickamauga, Kennesaw Mountain, and, of course, Nashville and Chattanooga. One such advertisement offered an extensive list of these battles as proof that “the Nashville, Chattanooga, and St. Louis Railway is justified in announcing their line as the Battle-Field Route to Atlanta.”<sup>63</sup>

The proximity of southern railways to Civil War battlefields was no coincidence. Control of railroads had been strategic objectives for both sides during the war. The presence of railroads had been one of the reasons that so many battles, like Stones River, were fought where they were. But now, instead of moving soldiers and munitions, the railroad delivered armies of travelers and goods along the paths of the old campaigns.

Stones River National Cemetery was the focal point for battlefield visitation. Visitors invariably mentioned the National Cemetery and the nearby Hazen Brigade Monument in their accounts. These two sites were the two built structures for commemorating the battle, and were easily accessed from a railroad platform behind the cemetery. But visitors also mentioned other points of the battle; McFadden’s Ford was a popular destination, as was the site near the Harding house and brick kiln where General Sill died.

In some cases, visitors simply walked the old battlefield themselves, while some were given tours by local acquaintances. For example, a Union veteran from Fort Smith, Arkansas, wrote to Bromfield Ridley, a local attorney, to express his gratitude for

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<sup>63</sup> NC&StL advertisement, *Confederate Veteran* 6:6 (June 1898): 287.

“showing him over the battlefield.” But there was at least one local person in this period who specialized as a guide for battlefield tourists.<sup>64</sup>

One northern visitor, Dr. G.R. Vanhorne, wrote that “if any of our Illinois people desire to visit the battlefield of Stone river, and see it as it should be seen, and to be informed as to the location of the troops, and how they maneuvered, and how and where the battle began, and how and where it closed, they must engage the services of Sam A. Hunt.” He went on to describe Hunt as a “genuine ‘Johnny Reb,’ who was born near this place.” Hunt was a teenager at the time of the battle and had helped care for the Confederate wounded and dead after the first day. “He is a veritable walking cyclopaedia on this particular battle,” Vanhorne wrote.<sup>65</sup>

Alec Miller, another northern visitor, also hired Hunt to guide him over the battlefield. He called Hunt his “rebel guide,” who “knew every foot of ground.” Hunt took Miller to the site of General Sill’s death and the Harding house, which was used as a hospital during the battle. The original house had burned shortly after the war, but had been rebuilt. The family piano had one of its legs broken by a cannonball during the battle, but had survived both the war and the fire. Miller not only saw the relic, which had

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<sup>64</sup> Untitled, *Confederate Veteran* 3:11 (November 1895): 338. Ridley was a Rutherford County native who had served on the staff of Confederate General A.P. Stewart, and the author of *Battles and Sketches of the Army of Tennessee*.

<sup>65</sup> “Dr. Vanhorne’s Letters,” *Rockford Daily Register-Gazette*, November 18, 1897, 8.

gained some notoriety, but Mrs. Harding allowed him to play it. Miller admitted, “Since its leg was shot off, my playing may have been a little lame.”<sup>66</sup>

However, not all visitors were as pleased with their tour guide. Novelist Charles Theodore Murray was a veteran of the Battle of Stones River, “where in the Thirtieth Indiana I had fought, bled and came nearer dying than my grade of patriotism seemed to call for.” Visiting the battlefield for the first time more than thirty years later, he “was not surprised to find the aspect of the country considerably changed.” Murray enlisted an unnamed local to help him find his way around the battlefield.<sup>67</sup>

“My ex-Confederate guide was ignorant and obstinate,” Murray recalled. “Seated on the small of his back, with his foot over the dashboard and occasionally expectorating tobacco saliva through his whiskers, my guide rapidly unrolled the panorama of the great battle as we went along.” Murray explained that his guide had been giving tours of the battlefield for over thirty years, but “if his information as to the affair can be measured by the details given me of that particular part in which I participated he is the rugged, unvarnished romancer of the age.” Murray’s memories of the battle did not match what his guide was telling him: “By some curious accident he came within a couple thousand yards of locating the spot where General Sill was killed. I could place it within fifty feet, so vividly did the scene of that December morning come back to me.” If Murray’s account is to be believed (after all, he *was* a writer of fiction), and his guide was Sam

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<sup>66</sup> *Kalamazoo Gazette*.

<sup>67</sup> “A Relic From His Neck,” *Indiana State Journal*, May 26, 1897, 8.



Hunt, then perhaps Hunt only seemed a “walking cyclopaedia” to those who knew nothing of the battle; if it was not Hunt, then some “entrepreneurs” preferred taking the money of unsuspecting tourists rather than giving an accurate survey of the battlefield.<sup>68</sup>

However, the battlefield provided another opportunity for locals to make a profit from tourists. Decades after the battle, residents were still finding relics of all sorts. According to Alec Miller, Sam Hunt was owner of a “bus line.” He noted that Hunt had found a bayonet on the battlefield shortly before Miller’s visit and that “he prized it so highly that he was using it to clean the mud from the wheels of his ‘bus.’” An amazed Miller wrote that, “every time a rain comes after the fields have been plowed, the children . . . go out and pick up hundreds of the messengers of death [bullets] that went wide of their mark . . . Pieces of cannon and guns and canteens and harness and saddles and buttons are found every week.” Miller added that there were “a great many negro cabins on the old battlefield. They all have relics to sell and it is suggested by some that possibly they manufacture relics.” If that was true, then the Michigan pipe seller was not the only one to realize that “this relic business was all in the mind’s eye, anyway.”<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> *Kalamazoo Gazette*. This quotation follows the original text, in which “negro” was not capitalized.

## CHAPTER II:

### STONES RIVER IN THE GOLDEN AGE, 1895-1899

#### THE GOLDEN AGE OF BATTLEFIELD PRESERVATION

A new concept was born in the early 1890s—the creation of national military parks, supported by the United States government, to preserve all or most of the land on which important battles throughout American history had been fought. The idea of a national park was an American innovation that had only recently emerged. The first national park, Yellowstone, was established in 1872, followed by Yosemite, Sequoia, and General Grant, all authorized in 1890. All of these lands were set aside because of their unique natural qualities and scenic beauty. The battlefields were different in that Congress preserved them because of their intrinsic historical value to the nation.<sup>1</sup>

There had been a movement to mark some of the battlefields of the Revolutionary War in the years leading up to the nation's centennial in 1876. In the wake of the Civil War, people sought to highlight the common heritage of all the sections of the country, a budding form of reconciliation. These modest efforts called for the erection of single monuments rather than the preservation of entire battlefields, although many debated whether funding such projects was an acceptable use of public money. Ultimately, the federal government did not fund these projects during this period.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ronald F. Lee, *The Origin and Evolution of the Military Park Idea* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1973), 11.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 6-10.

There had been a private effort to acquire and preserve segments of the Gettysburg battlefield while the war still raged. The federal government became involved in Gettysburg and other projects in the 1890s, the “golden age” of battlefield preservation. The promotion of Civil War battlefield parks was greatly enhanced in the golden age due to the large numbers of Union and Confederate veterans serving in Congress, and the influence of large and powerful veterans’ groups. During that decade, Congress authorized four battlefields as national military parks: Chickamauga and Chattanooga (1890), Shiloh (1894), Gettysburg (1895), and Vicksburg (1899). Congress also authorized marking the Antietam battlefield following a limited preservation model rather than encompassing thousands of acres as with the other parks. These battlefields were not selected randomly; they were preserved “for historical and professional study and also to serve as lasting memorials to the great armies of the war on both sides . . . Gettysburg memorialized the Union Army of the Potomac and the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia; the field of Chickamauga honored the Union Army of the Cumberland and the Confederate Army of Tennessee; and the field of Shiloh served as a memorial to the Union Armies of the Tennessee and Ohio and to the Confederate Army of the Mississippi.”<sup>3</sup>

The first military park established by Congress was at Chickamauga and Chattanooga. The idea for the park was born when General Henry Boynton and General Ferdinand Van Derveer visited the old battlefield in the summer of 1888. During the trip,

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 11-13.

the two decided that the battlefield should be “a Western Gettysburg—a Chickamauga memorial.” However, they wanted to mark the lines of both sides. (At Gettysburg only the Union positions were marked.) Veterans’ organizations and a local committee headed by Chattanooga newspaper publisher Adolph S. Ochs endorsed their proposal. Boynton wrote the legislation creating the park. Congress passed the bill, and President Benjamin Harrison signed it into law on August 18, 1890.<sup>4</sup>

Soon after, the Secretary of War appointed a commission composed of veterans of the battles who went about the work of acquiring land, marking the lines of battle, constructing roads, and overseeing the erection of state monuments. Vice President Adlai Stevenson and tens of thousands of veterans, dignitaries, and other interested participants dedicated the park on September 18-20, 1895, “an impressive national observance.”<sup>5</sup>

#### THE CHICKAMAUGA DEDICATION

The dedication ceremonies of the Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park in September 1895 brought a heightened interest in the Stones River battlefield. In the days leading up to the ceremonies, trains carrying thousands of veterans, relatives, and friends to Chattanooga for the festivities passed through the Stones River battlefield. Many of these travellers stopped to pay respect to fallen comrades buried in the National Cemetery and to get a hurried look at the old battlefield.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 22-25.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 25.

The cemetery had always seen a steady stream of visitors, but the number increased exponentially over the course of the month. Entries in the register of visitors to the cemetery averaged about twenty per month in 1895, but in September there were over six hundred entries. Superintendent Edwin P. Barrett estimated that there were more than two thousand visitors to the cemetery that month. In most cases, visitors listed a regiment they had served with during the war, or a Grand Army of the Republic post of which they were a member, in the register. The entries show that the influx of cemetery visitors in September 1895 was largely Union veterans from Ohio, Illinois, and Indiana.<sup>6</sup>

The Association of Survivors of the Regulars Brigade, Army of the Cumberland, was one of the groups traveling to the Chickamauga dedication. Over forty members and guests of the survivors association left Columbus, Ohio on September 16 aboard a special train that “consisted of four Wagner sleepers, two day coaches, and one baggage car . . . decorated with flags and streamers, announcing to all that the survivors of the Regular Brigade and their friends were aboard.”<sup>7</sup>

One of the veterans wrote, “As we left Nashville every comrade could see some object that carried his mind back to the days of the great war. The point of interest, however, soon came into view, namely, Stone River Cemetery, where sleep so many of

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<sup>6</sup> Stones River National Cemetery Register of Visitors, 1877-1925, Stones River National Battlefield; Edwin P. Barrett to John L. Clem, January 1896, Stones River National Cemetery Letters Sent, 1890-1912, Stones River National Battlefield.

<sup>7</sup> *Association of Survivors, Regular Brigade, Army of the Cumberland* (Columbus, OH: Press of John L. Trauger, 1898), 30.

our comrades.” The train stopped at the cemetery and the group walked the short distance to the monument erected to their brigade, where they conducted a formal remembrance ceremony. The president of the association called the assembly together, and the group’s chaplain gave an address of “the highest order” before placing a large laurel wreath at the monument. The ceremony ended with the singing of “America.” The veteran recalled, “soon after this ceremony the comrades and their wives assembled in a circle in front of the monument, where they had a photograph taken. After which we again joined our train, and proceeded on our way still further south.” (Figure 8)<sup>8</sup>



Figure 8. Veterans of the U.S. Regulars Brigade. This photograph was made at Stones River National Cemetery, September 1895, while the veterans were on their way to the dedication ceremonies at Chickamauga. From *Association of Survivors, Regular Brigade, Army of the Cumberland* (Columbus, OH: Press of John L. Trauger, 1898), 31. Stones River National Battlefield.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 31.

The Chickamauga dedication ceremonies were a “national affair” covered by newspapers throughout the country. One article stated that there was “an extraordinary degree of enthusiasm . . . not merely among the veterans of the North and South, but among all classes of people in all parts of the country.” The three-day observance included numerous monument dedications, veterans’ reunions, and patriotic speeches.<sup>9</sup>

One historian has described the dedication ceremonies as a “spectacle of reconciliation.” Each of the park’s combined battlefields represented a victory for the Confederacy and a victory for the Union; speakers also represented both North and South. Former Confederate General John B. Gordon described the Civil War as “an onward march that vastly enhanced the respect of each for the opposite section, and finally reunited them in more enduring bonds than before.” Likewise, Indiana Governor Claude Matthews stated that “the American people, whether from the North or from the South, are brothers in sympathy and heart and purpose, marching steadily on, hand in hand, to achieve that greater destiny that awaits us as a nation.” The reconciliation rhetoric was common for the time, reflecting a “great need deeply felt in the 1890s, to further reestablishment of national unity,” disregarding the causes of the war and emphasizing the shared valor and sacrifice of the war’s participants.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> “A National Affair,” *Boston Daily Advertiser*, September 16, 1895, 8.

<sup>10</sup> “Park at Chickamauga,” *Idaho Statesman*, September 20, 1895, 1; David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (New York: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), 205; “Chickamauga Dedication,” *Charlotte Observer*, September 19, 1895, 2.

But the dedication was also a spectacle in commerce. The event brought in an estimated fifty thousand people to Chattanooga, almost double the host city's resident population. The city's hotels were filled, and attendant services, from restaurants to transportation, thrived. One observer noted that "the throng goes from one place of pleasure to another, and dollars go as easily as dimes."<sup>11</sup>

Certainly, local political and business leaders of Murfreesboro had to take notice of the large numbers of travelers passing through on their way to the Chickamauga dedication. Many of these leaders being Civil War veterans themselves, some surely attended the nearby celebration. The veterans' motives for seeing a military park established were driven greatly by local pride and patriotism, but, as one historian has noted, "the movement to protect and develop the great battlefields of the war found willing partners in communities hoping to attract tourists." Locals would also have been motivated by the national attention that could be gained by the establishment of a military park at Stones River and the boon that a constant flow of tourists would bring to the local economy. It seems little coincidence that the first efforts to create a national military park at Stones River began in earnest immediately after the Chickamauga dedication.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Timothy B. Smith, *The Golden Age of Battlefield Preservation: The Decade of the 1890s and the Establishment of America's First Five Military Parks* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2008), 66; Blight, 205; "Greeting is Hearty," *Chicago Daily Inter Ocean*, September 17, 1895, 3.

<sup>12</sup> James Marten, *Sing Not War: The Lives of Union and Confederate Veterans in Gilded Age America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 133.



## THE FIRST PARK BILL

The most prominent leader in Murfreesboro at the time was James Daniel Richardson, who represented Tennessee's Fifth District in the United States Congress. Richardson was a native of Rutherford County, born in 1843. At the age of eighteen, in 1861, he enlisted as a private in the Confederate Forty-fifth Tennessee Infantry. He participated in most of the major western battles of the Civil War, including Stones River. Richardson received an officer's commission after the Battle of Shiloh and served as adjutant of the regiment. His left arm was permanently incapacitated from a wound received at Resaca, Georgia. Richardson studied law after the war and he established a practice in Murfreesboro. A Democrat, Richardson was elected to the Tennessee General Assembly in 1870, and was chosen to be Speaker of the House at the age of twenty-eight. Voters sent him to Congress in 1884, and he maintained that office for the next twenty years. He was highly regarded locally, "among those that know him best, and of which community he has done much to advance the material interests."<sup>13</sup>

The first official effort to create a national military park at Stones River was a bill introduced in Congress by Richardson in December 1895. The congressman apparently saw no need to try to improve on success—his bill was virtually identical to the enabling legislation that created the Chickamauga and Chattanooga Military Park. Richardson used the Chickamauga bill as a template. The term "Stones River" replaced "Chickamauga and Chattanooga" where necessary, and obvious particulars, such as

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<sup>13</sup> "Hon. Jas. D. Richardson, M.C.," *Murfreesboro Free Press*, May 12, 1899.

acreage and names of roads were changed. In one section of the bill Richardson mistakenly left “Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Park” in the document.<sup>14</sup>

Like the Chickamauga legislation, the purpose of H.R. 1996 was for “preserving and suitably marking for historical and professional military study the fields of some of the most remarkable maneuvers and most brilliant fighting in the war of the rebellion.” The proposed legislation called for the acquisition of one thousand acres of land adjacent to the Stones River National Cemetery. The bill described the proposed thousand-acre tract as “all the grounds occupied by the Union and Confederate armies” during the battle. In reality, one thousand acres was only about one-quarter of the original Stones River battlefield.

Richardson’s bill stated that the affairs of the park would be conducted by a three-man commission. The Secretary of War would appoint the commission, which would be composed of veterans who had “actively participated” in the Battle of Stones River. The Secretary would select two commissioners from “civil life” and the third would be an active-duty officer of the Army, who would serve as secretary of the commission. At other military parks the established protocol called for commissions to include both Union and Confederate veteran members. The enabling legislation for the parks at Shiloh and Vicksburg required this balance. Interestingly, the Chickamauga bill (and therefore the Stones River proposal) did not make that stipulation.

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<sup>14</sup> See H.R. 6454, 51st Cong., 1st sess., the bill creating the Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park; H.R. 1996, 54th Cong., 1st sess., 6.

In addition to appointing the commissioners, the Secretary of War was authorized to employ an “assistant in historical work” to aid the commission in the preliminaries of establishing the park and ascertaining and marking troop positions. The assistant was to be a “person recognized as well informed in regard to the details of the battle of Stones River, and who shall have actively participated in that battle.” The bill also provided office space for the commission at the War Department building in Washington, D.C.<sup>15</sup>

Richardson included provisions in the Stones River bill (again echoing Chickamauga) apparently meant to assuage local concerns about the creation of the park. The park would incorporate the Nashville Pike, Franklin Road, and Wilkinson Pike for a distance of four miles from Murfreesboro. The bill stated that these roads would “remain open as free public highways,” and that the park would not disturb any existing rights of way. The commission would be required to improve and maintain these roads, taking that burden and expense off of state and county government. The bill also allowed landowners who wished to remain on the land to “occupy and cultivate their present holdings” on condition that they “preserve the present buildings and roads, and the present outlines of field and forest . . . and assist in caring for and protecting all tablets [and] monuments” that may be erected.<sup>16</sup>

The bill required the commission to specifically mark the positions of U.S. Regular troops and raise monuments to them, with Congress appropriating the funds for

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<sup>15</sup> H.R. 1996, 4.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 3-4.

that effort. States could erect tablets and monuments to honor their troops, pending approval of the commission and Secretary of War. The bill also delineated fines for anyone that might “willfully destroy, mutilate, deface, injure, or remove any monument, column, statue, memorial structure, or work of art” on park grounds. Removal or destruction of trees, bushes, shrubbery, earthworks, and battle relics was also punishable by fine.<sup>17</sup>

Lastly, Richardson’s bill carried an appropriation of \$125,000 for the “condemnation and purchase of the necessary land, marking the boundaries of the park, opening or repairing necessary roads, maps and surveys, and the pay and expenses of the commissioners and their assistant.” This was the same amount initially appropriated for the creation of Chickamauga and Chattanooga, although the proposed Stones River park would be substantially smaller.<sup>18</sup>

#### POLITICS AND PUSHBACK ON NEW PARKS

The timing of Richardson’s bill would seem to have been advantageous with the heightened interest of the public, especially veterans, for the creation of battlefield parks. But there were political and economic forces at play that worked against the effort to create a park at Stones River in 1895.

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 6-7.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 7-8.

As a Democrat with ten years of service, Richardson enjoyed considerable influence in the House and was a close associate of Speaker Charles Crisp of Georgia. President Grover Cleveland, also a Democrat, was in his second term, having defeated Benjamin Harrison in the election of 1892 to reclaim the presidency he had lost to Harrison in 1888. In the election of 1892, the Democratic Party also regained control of the Senate and held on to a majority in the House of Representatives. With control of both the executive and legislative branches of the federal government, Democrats held the advantage in passing their proposals into law.<sup>19</sup>

But, shortly after Cleveland's new term began, the Panic of 1893 hit. Over a six-month period, runs on the nation's currency led to the closure of several banks and many businesses that were strapped for cash to meet their payrolls and purchase supplies and materials. The stock market and investments declined, and unemployment soon reached record levels. Strikes by railroad workers and coal miners added to the chaos. The nation fell into the worst economic depression in its history up to that time, and would remain in that depression for the remainder of the 1890s.<sup>20</sup>

Voters blamed Cleveland and the Democrats for the nation's woes, and punished them in the mid-term election of 1894. The Republican Party narrowly took control of the Senate and defeated the House Democrats in a landslide, taking one hundred and thirty

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<sup>19</sup> See Douglas O. Steeples and David Whitten, *Democracy in Desperation: The Depression of 1893* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998), 145-167.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 27-41.

seats. The Republican success in 1894 remains the largest mid-term election victory in American history. The situation for Democrats like Richardson was quite bleak with the convening of the Fifty-fourth Congress. Having lost and lost badly, members of the minority party found their ability to get legislation passed by personal influence greatly diminished.<sup>21</sup>

In addition to the loss of political influence, there was also some pushback from the Cleveland administration for the creation of new military parks on the scale of Chickamauga and Gettysburg. In his annual report to Congress, released just prior to Richardson's introduction of H.R. 1996, Secretary of War Daniel S. Lamont called for Congress to adopt a more limited policy for battlefield preservation.

Although Lamont was a strong proponent for memorializing Civil War battlefields, the expense, especially with the nation's economic downturn, was a great concern. "If the plan of creating battlefield parks is to be impartially pursued," Lamont reported, "it must embrace fifty places where important actions were fought, and will involve an expenditure of at least \$20,000,000, with additional expenditures for maintenance that may reach \$1,000,000 yearly." The Secretary of War did not favor the continuation of land acquisition policies like those at Chickamauga and Gettysburg, which called for the purchase of most, if not all, of the land on which battles had occurred. Lamont noted that, up to that point, the federal government had "purchased approximately 6,000 acres of land at Chickamauga, and owns 1,000 acres at Gettysburg."

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 145-167.

The money expended for acquisition and development of the two battlefields at the time of Lamont's report was just under \$1,000,000. His preference for future battlefield preservation was the much more modest policy pursued at Antietam.<sup>22</sup>

Lamont had become personally involved with the work at Antietam, which had fallen desperately behind expectations. The board overseeing the project was fraught with delays and disputes with landowners. Lamont took responsibility for oversight of the board's work himself. Lamont's feeling was that the "duty of preserving the field was best accomplished by letting landowners remain in control of the vast majority of the battlefield and letting them continue to cultivate the land." Land acquisition at Antietam would therefore follow a plan in which Lamont would "buy parcels of land where he could, marking troop positions there, and tell the story of the battle primarily from that land," rather than try to purchase the entire battlefield.<sup>23</sup>

Lamont noted that "the work [at Antietam] was practically begun and finished" in one year. The government had purchased "about seventeen acres of land . . . in strips, conforming closely to the actual battle lines, and embracing the principal features." The government had built about five miles of roads and installed two hundred iron tablets so as to "enable even the layman to read accurately the story of the shifting changes of the battle." Lamont added, "the field, instead of being converted into a park, is substantially

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<sup>22</sup> Annual Report of the Secretary of War (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1895), 31.

<sup>23</sup> Smith, *Golden Age*, 94-95.

in the same condition as when the battle was fought, and is likely to remain so for years. The total cost of this completed work has been about \$40,000, including purchase of lands and construction of roads. Omitting the latter, the total cost would have been approximately \$10,000.” The Secretary felt that the maintenance cost at Antietam would be small.<sup>24</sup>

Lamont’s advice was that “Congress authorize the marking of remaining important battlefields in the manner adopted at Antietam, which can be completed in a few years at a moderate cost, while the project of more national military parks, of thousands of acres bought by the Government, involves the expenditure of millions of dollars and an indefinite lapse of time before completion.” Lamont opined that if the Antietam policy were adopted, “it is believed that an expenditure of \$100,000 would suitably and permanently mark all the remaining fields of importance and provide for the early completion of a work of national interest.”<sup>25</sup>

A newspaper article of the time reported on Lamont’s recommendation and took the issue further, questioning the creation of new battlefield parks altogether, and specifically mentioning Stones River. “How easily a commendable thing may be overdone,” the article began, “there was an evident propriety in making a national park of Gettysburg, which was the turning point of the rebellion. Chickamauga and Chattanooga mark another critical struggle and the national park there well deserves all that has been

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<sup>24</sup> Annual Report of the Secretary of War, 31.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.



spent upon it. Congress is committed to the Shiloh battlefield park and there is a strong movement to establish a park that shall include the ground occupied in the important movements that resulted in the fall of Vicksburg.”<sup>26</sup>

However, referencing Richardson’s bill to establish a national military park at Stone’s River, the article questioned the significance of the battle. “The forward movement of which [Stones River] was a part and a feature culminated within a year in the battle of Chattanooga. The same troops to a large extent fought at Chickamauga and Chattanooga that were engaged at Stone River. We do not understand the importance of Rosecrans’ great victory, but if Tennessee is to have three national parks commemorative of the battles of Shiloh, Stone River, and of Chickamauga and Chattanooga, how can the claims of at least a score of the great battles of the civil war be denied a like commemoration?”<sup>27</sup>

The article went on to acknowledge the desire of veterans to see the old battlefields preserved, as well as the boon that a park could serve for local economies, but gave the opinion that these factors alone should not determine if any more military parks would be created. “Those who fought in those battles on either side are, or course, anxious to have the fields set aside as parks. . . . The location in which they are situated all want the local advantage of a national park established among them. But their interested persuasions ought not to weigh. Congress should take into consideration the

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<sup>26</sup> “Parks on Battlefields,” *Rockford Republic*, February 17, 1896, 2.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

whole scene of the late civil strife and decide which, if any more, battlefields shall be specially distinguished by being taken under national care. The relative importance of the battle and the tactical interest of the struggle should determine the question of the dedication of the battlefield as a park and not the pressure of localities and the importunities of the survivors of particular battles.”<sup>28</sup>

Perhaps Richardson, in the excitement surrounding the opening of the Chickamauga park, rushed his bill before an adequate case could be made for Stones River. The bill’s similarity to the Chickamauga legislation would indicate as much. The House Committee on Military Affairs took no action on H.R. 1996. This, however, did not end the effort to create a military park at Stones River. Indeed, the movement to preserve the battlefield would greatly accelerate in 1896.

#### STONES RIVER BATTLEFIELD AND NATIONAL PARK ASSOCIATION

When Richardson introduced his bill there was no dedicated organization supporting the battlefield’s preservation. Such organizations were the norm with successful preservation movements at other battlefields. The Gettysburg Battlefield Memorial Association was chartered by Pennsylvania in 1864. Veterans formed the Chickamauga Memorial Association in September 1889. The Antietam Memorial Association followed in 1890, the Shiloh Battlefield Association in 1893, and the

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

Vicksburg National Military Park Association, the most recent, had been organized in October 1895.<sup>29</sup>

There were some obvious trends and commonalities among the battlefield associations, though there were some notable exceptions with the Gettysburg Association. All of the organizations were founded with the intent to acquire battlefield lands, mark lines of battle, and erect monuments to the figures and units that participated in these conflicts. The later associations at Chickamauga, Antietam, Shiloh, and Vicksburg also formed with the expressed intent to lobby Congress to establish each as military parks supported by the federal government, a concept that did not exist at the time the Gettysburg Association started.

The later groups were largely joint ventures of both Union and Confederate veterans and reconciliatory in nature. The much older Gettysburg Association, established while the war still raged, was different in this regard. Local community members initially organized it, although it eventually included many Union veterans of the battle. Not surprisingly, given its early date of inception, the Gettysburg Association's activities were primarily "non-Confederate, and non-reconciliatory." But the anti-Confederate tenor at Gettysburg would change by the establishment of the national military park in 1895, falling in line with the reconciliatory order of the times.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Smith, *Golden Age*, 22, 55, 87, 116-117, 181.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 145-149.

Veterans formed the Chickamauga Association during the annual reunion of the Society of the Army of the Cumberland in Chattanooga. The board of directors consisted of twenty-eight Confederate and Union veterans, with former Union General John Wilder as president, and Alabama congressman and former Confederate General Joseph Wheeler as vice-president. Wheeler also served as an honorary vice-president of the Shiloh Association. Union veterans in Indiana established that association, but sought out prominent former Confederates for membership and support. Former Confederate General Stephen D. Lee was president of the Vicksburg Association and other officers represented northern states. In each case, the leadership of these battlefield associations were well-recognized veterans who had served as high-ranking officers of the two armies during the war, and the activities of the associations were national in scope.<sup>31</sup>

No doubt realizing that creating a national military park was going to require significant work, Murfreesboro citizens formed the Stones River Battlefield and National Park Association shortly after Richardson introduced his bill in Congress. The State of Tennessee incorporated the Association on April 28, 1896. At the onset, the group was comprised of about twenty-five members; most of the officers and directors were Union and Confederate veterans, almost evenly divided between the two. There were no nationally known figures among the officers and members of the Association, like other

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 55, 117, 181.

battlefield associations. However, the Stones River Association included the most prominent businessmen and politicians of Murfreesboro and Rutherford County.<sup>32</sup>

The president of the Association was lawyer Charles A. Sheafe. A native of Maine, Sheafe had been a captain in the Fifty-ninth Ohio Volunteer Infantry during the war, and served on the staff of General Rosecrans during the Battle of Stones River. After the war, he had returned to Murfreesboro and ran for Congress in the election of 1868. The election was marred with allegations of voter fraud and Ku Klux Klan intimidation of African American voters. William “Parson” Brownlow, Tennessee’s Reconstruction governor, declared Sheafe’s opponent, Lewis Tillman, the winner, a result that Sheafe unsuccessfully challenged in the House of Representatives.<sup>33</sup>

One of the two vice-presidents of the Association was Sheafe’s close friend, Carter B. Harrison. Harrison had also fought at Stones River as an officer in the Fifty-first Ohio Infantry and had served on General Van Cleve’s staff. During the war, he married wealthy Murfreesboro widow Sophia Lytle and remained in Rutherford County, managing a large plantation. A friend wrote “it was a time of intensely bitter feeling against those whom our people regarded as the aggressors in an unjust war” when Harrison had moved to Murfreesboro, “yet Capt. Harrison at once identified himself with the community; and, while loyal to his own convictions, he was so genial, kind, and

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<sup>32</sup> “Stone’s River Battlefields,” *Murfreesboro Free Press*, May 12, 1899; Untitled, *Confederate Veteran* 4:7 (July 1896): 212.

<sup>33</sup> “Stones River Battlefield and National Park Association,” *Confederate Veteran* 5:1 (January 1897): 32; *House Documents*, 41st Cong., 2nd sess., Mis. Doc. 53.

sincere, so true a gentleman, that he won all hearts and the confidence of all.” Carter Harrison was also the younger brother of President Benjamin Harrison.<sup>34</sup>

The other vice-president was William S. McLemore, the former colonel of the Confederate Fourth Tennessee Cavalry, who operated a law firm with his son-in-law, John E. Richardson, the younger brother of Rep. Richardson.<sup>35</sup>

Richard Beard, a native of Mississippi, was the Association’s secretary. Beard had served as a captain in the Fifth Confederate Regiment at Stones River. After the war, he briefly published a newspaper in Murfreesboro and later sold insurance and practiced law. Innkeeper Frank McClure, a veteran of the 124th Indiana Infantry, was the Association’s treasurer. David D. Maney, scion of one of the town’s most prominent families, was the Association’s historian. He had served in the Confederate First Tennessee Infantry in the brigade of his father’s cousin, General George Maney. The Association’s corresponding secretary was lawyer Jesse W. Sparks, Jr. Although he was not a Civil War veteran, his late father had been the adjutant of the Confederate Eighth Texas Cavalry.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> “Confederates Bury a Federal Veteran,” *Confederate Veteran* 14:1 (January 1906): 36.

<sup>35</sup> *Confederate Veteran* (January 1897): 32; Barry Lamb, *Rutherford County’s Civil War* (Franklin, TN: Familystories Press, 2011), 79-80.

<sup>36</sup> Charles W. Bennett, *Historical Sketches of the Ninth Michigan Infantry* (Coldwater, MI: Daily Courier, 1913), 57; *Confederate Veteran* (January 1897): 32; 1900 U.S. Census, Rutherford County, TN; Lamb, 21.

The directors of the Association also included merchant Charles O. Thomas, a captain in the Ninth Michigan Infantry who had been wounded in Nathan Bedford Forrest's Murfreesboro Raid in July 1862; Flemmon Hall, a Methodist minister who had been an officer in the Ninety-ninth Ohio Infantry; Murfreesboro mayor James O. Oslin, who had served in the Confederate Second Tennessee Infantry and had lost a leg at Chickamauga; and banker Asbury M. Overall, a veteran of the Confederate Eighteenth Tennessee Infantry. The president of the board of directors was Judge Horace E. Palmer, who had been the town's mayor and a state legislator. Like Sparks, Palmer was not a veteran, but his father, Joseph B. Palmer, led a Confederate brigade at Stones River, and had also served as mayor of Murfreesboro before the war.<sup>37</sup>

The charter members of the Association that were not officers or directors included Union veterans Byron C. Knapp, a carpenter who had served in the Sixteenth U.S. Regulars and James F. McClure who, like his brother Frank, had served in the 124th Indiana. Confederate members were Reuben W. Couch and former constable James McKnight Witherspoon, both of the Twenty-third Tennessee; farmer William A. Hoskins, Eighteenth Tennessee; and Richard Ransom, chairman of the county court and veteran of the Twenty-fourth Tennessee.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> *Confederate Veteran* (January 1897): 32; 1900 U.S. Census, Rutherford County, TN; Lamb, 87-89.

<sup>38</sup> "Battlefields," *Murfreesboro Free Press*; 1900 U.S. Census, Rutherford County, TN; Lamb, 92.

The Association played up its non-partisan composition in *Confederate Veteran* magazine. A January 1897 article stated that “The enterprise has been set on foot by a number of the old soldiers of Rutherford County . . . in the spirit of the broadest patriotism, we have proposed a work worthy of a generous and great people. We are survivors of both armies. Having long since dismissed from our hearts all the antagonisms of the past and honoring the brave men of both sides.”<sup>39</sup>

How well the members of the Association had truly put away any animosities from the past is open to conjecture, but it would seem that they had managed to bond over the common goal of establishing a park at Stones River. The Association met regularly at Mason Court, an office building that included “club rooms” just off of the courthouse square, on the corner of Spring Street and East Main. One account of these meetings stated that “almost every week, after business has been attended to, some old Yank or Johnny Reb will tell an anecdote or an incident that is always worth repeating.” The account went on to say that “even if no park is secured, the association has done more to blend the wearers of the Blue and Grey into one common brotherhood . . . and so far as the old soldiers of this county are concerned, the hatchet and handle are buried forever.”<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> *Confederate Veteran* (January 1897): 31.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*; “Battlefields,” *Murfreesboro Free Press*; Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Murfreesboro, TN, August 1897 (ProQuest Digital Sanborn Maps 1867-1970, online at [www.proquest.com/pdpq/sanborn](http://www.proquest.com/pdpq/sanborn)). The Mason Court site is the present-day location of the Bank of America building.



The “old Yanks and Johnny Rebs” engaged in a flurry of activity from the beginning. They began a campaign to enlist the support of national veteran organizations, secure options from landowners, and mark important sites on the battlefield.

#### GATHERING NATIONAL SUPPORT

The Association sought to gain the support of national veterans’ organizations for the effort to create a national park at Stones River. The leading national organizations for Civil War veterans were the Union Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) and the United Confederate Veterans Association (UCV). In their heyday, the combined membership of these two groups reached almost 600,000 Civil War veterans, with GAR “posts” and UCV “camps” in every corner of the nation.

Dr. Benjamin F. Stephenson, a former Army surgeon in Decatur, Illinois, formed the GAR in 1866. Ostensibly a fraternal, benevolent organization, the GAR grew to become a major force in late-nineteenth century politics. The GAR reached the zenith of their power in the 1880s and 1890s, with a membership of over 400,000 former soldiers. The organization served as a fraternal association for honorably discharged Union veterans, provided relief for widows and orphans of former soldiers, fought for—and won—extension of pension rights from the federal government, promoted patriotism in schools, and maintained veteran homes. The GAR became a major player in Republican Party politics; five members were elected President of the United States and no Republican candidate for the presidency won the party’s nomination without GAR support in that era.

Individual GAR members affiliated with local "posts." Posts within a state formed "departments." A "commander-in-chief" led the GAR at the national level. (William Earnshaw, former superintendent of Stones River National Cemetery, was the GAR commander-in-chief from 1879-1880.) GAR members usually met at a "post room," and conducted meetings based on Masonic rituals. Departments held annual "encampments," as did the national organization.<sup>41</sup>

Several small organizations merged as the United Confederate Veterans Association (UCV) in New Orleans in 1889. Though the UCV could not match the GAR in numbers or political power, the leadership of the organization included some of the most prominent ex-Confederates, such as Joseph Wheeler, Stephen D. Lee, Wade Hampton, and John B. Gordon. The UCV Constitution and By-laws described their purpose as being "strictly social, literary, historical, and benevolent." Like the GAR, the UCV served as a fraternity for ex-Confederates, and sought state support for widows, orphans, and veteran homes. The UCV also expended a great deal of effort to have their perspective of the war taught in schools, and maintained an approved list of history texts, all written by southerners.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> See Stuart McConnell, *Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 18-52.

<sup>42</sup> *Constitution and By-Laws of the United Confederate Veterans* (United Confederate Veterans, 1909), no pagination.

Members of the UCV gathered in local “camps” (also called “bivouacs”). Camps within a state organized “departments,” like the GAR. The national leader presided over the annual “reunion” of the membership as the “commander-in-chief.”

Members of the Stones River Battlefield and National Park Association were also members of the GAR and UCV; Union veterans met with Stones River Post #23, GAR, and their Rebel counterparts with the Joseph B. Palmer Camp #81, UCV. The Association sought to enlist broader support for the preservation of the battlefield through their affiliations with these two national organizations.

Both the GAR and UCV had unofficial publications that catered to their membership. The *National Tribune* was a weekly newspaper, based out of Washington, D.C., whose readership was primarily members of the GAR. Likewise, the monthly *Confederate Veteran* magazine, published by Sumner A. Cunningham out of Nashville, catered to members of the UCV. The Association submitted material to both in order to publicize their work at Stones River.

Soon after Richardson had introduced his bill for the Stones River military park, Sumner Cunningham wrote an editorial in the *Confederate Veteran* endorsing the effort. Cunningham wrote that the idea “ought to meet with universal approval if any other National Parks upon the battlefields of the South are to be established. The historic worth of the place, to the arms of both sides, the accessibility, the natural advantages and the evident economy to the government in the purchase, argue well for this patriotic movement.” *Confederate Veteran* announced the formation of the Association a few

months later. “Enterprising patriotic gentlemen . . . are taking steps to present the merits of the battleground . . . for a Military Park,” the article began, and quickly highlighted the non-partisan nature of the Association: “Capt. C.A. Sheafe who fought through the war for the Union, is President of the Association. Captain Sheafe never forgot that the war ended in 1865.”<sup>43</sup>

The camaraderie between Union and Confederate veterans was also evident in an article Association treasurer Frank McClure tendered to the *National Tribune*. In the article, McClure described the Battle of Stones River as he saw it as a Union participant. He also briefly described locations on the battlefield and their current ownership. He mentioned that the “farm on which the terrible slaughter took place,” at McFadden’s Ford “now is the property of . . . Samuel Mitchell, a friend of mine, and as clever an old Johnny that can be found anywhere.” McClure closed his article with an invitation to fellow Civil War veterans: “All old soldiers of both sides should visit the battlefield this summer.”<sup>44</sup>

The Association began a national campaign to petition Congress for the establishment of a military park at Stones River. The Association sent out petitions—“at great expense”—to GAR and UCV camps throughout the nation with instructions to send the signed copies directly to Richardson in Washington. Richardson would then be able

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<sup>43</sup> Untitled, *Confederate Veteran* 4:1 (January 1896): 17; *Confederate Veteran* (July 1896): 212.

<sup>44</sup> “Fighting Them Over,” *National Tribune*, July 1, 1897, 3.

to present these petitions to members of Congress as proof of the national support for the preservation of the battlefield.

The petition, addressed to “the Senators and Representatives of the United States,” called for “speedy enactment” of Richardson’s bill to establish the park “as a memorial for all time to come of the valor, patriotism, and devotion of the American people.” The petition asked Congress to consider that the Battle of Stones River was “one of the greatest of the conflicts which occurred in the war between the States,” and that the high percentage of casualties sustained by both armies “mark this battle as unsurpassed in the heroism and unyielding valor of the American soldier” deserving of a “lasting memorial.”<sup>45</sup>

The petition noted the battlefield’s location as a harbinger of its popularity: “This battlefield is easily accessible to all parts of our country. It is within less than thirty miles of Nashville, and a great thoroughfare, the Nashville, Chattanooga, and St. Louis Railway, runs through its center,” as a military park “this now neglected battleground would be annually visited by thousands of our people,” and “reinspire their patriotism.” The petition closed with the appeal that “the lessons of exalted patriotism . . . can in no way be better taught than by setting apart the field . . . preserved as a national military park by the generosity of a grateful people.”<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> *Senate Reports*, 69<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., S. Rept. 1517, 7. This report includes an example of a “typical petition,” and a list of all of the GAR posts and UCV camps that petitioned Congress.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

One-hundred GAR posts responded to the Association's call for support, and sixty-two camps of the UCV also sent petitions in favor of creating a national military park at Stones River. Altogether, these posts and camps represented twenty-five states and the District of Columbia. The GAR petitions came from Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Kentucky, Tennessee, Vermont, Maryland, the District of Columbia, Colorado, South Dakota, Ohio, Montana, New Hampshire, Missouri, and Oklahoma. UCV petitions came from camps in Texas, Tennessee, Kentucky, South Carolina, Arkansas, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Missouri, Indiana, West Virginia, Maryland, and Oklahoma.<sup>47</sup>

The annual encampments and reunions of the GAR and UCV were major events in the 1890s. Thousands of veterans attended the 1896 national reunion of the UCV in Richmond. The GAR encampment at Buffalo the following year had an estimated attendance of 45,000. These annual meetings gave veterans a chance to meet and reminisce over their past exploits, as well as to conduct the business of their organizations. Part of this business included throwing their political strength in favor of legislation that met with their approval.

The UCV endorsed a "memorial from Murfreesboro" at the Richmond Reunion calling for "the conversion of the battlefield of Stone's river into a national park." The membership unanimously carried a resolution to "commend this undertaking to our comrades throughout the Union and to the favorable consideration of the Congress of the

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

United States.” Likewise, the GAR passed a similar resolution at their Buffalo encampment.<sup>48</sup>

The Association’s preservation effort also found support among the highest ranking officials in both the GAR and UCV. In 1897, Thaddeus S. Clarkson, commander-in-chief of the GAR, visited the Stones River battlefield while touring different departments of the Grand Army in the South. In Murfreesboro, Clarkson was the guest of George and Tempe Darrow. The Darrows entertained Clarkson at “Oak Manor,” their opulent Italianate mansion that had been the former home of the prominent Maney family. Members of the Association visited with Clarkson there, and he later inspected the battlefield. The party visited McFadden’s Ford, where Clarkson was “presented with several relics of the battle.” A newspaper account of the visit stated, “nothing would give greater evidence that the bad feeling between the north and south is at an end more than the cordial welcome given General Clarkson.”<sup>49</sup>

John B. Gordon, commander-in-chief of the UCV, also planned to inspect “the work already and to be done by the association” in 1898. The Association described Gordon, a former governor and U.S. Senator from Georgia, as an “enthusiastic sympathizer.” He had issued a “General Order” in March of that year supporting the

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<sup>48</sup> *Proceedings of the Sixth Annual Meeting of the United Confederate Veterans, 1896* (New Orleans: Hopkins Printing Office, 1897), 128. Resolutions favoring the establishment of military parks at Fredericksburg and Vicksburg were also adopted at the Richmond reunion; “Battlefields,” *Murfreesboro Free Press*.

<sup>49</sup> “Clarkson,” *Omaha World Herald*, March 13, 1897, 12; “Battlefields,” *Murfreesboro Free Press*. The Darrow’s “Oak Manor” is now the Oaklands Historic House Museum in Murfreesboro.

Association's goals. "The General Commanding desires to give all the aid possible to the efforts now being made to establish a National Military Park upon . . . the historic battlefield of Stone's River," his order began. "This consecrated but neglected spot . . . is now, practically, uncared for and almost unmarked." Gordon's order insisted that "patriotism, honor, and duty" required the preservation of the battlefield.

#### OPTIONS ON BATTLEFIELD LAND

The Association's primary purpose, as described in its charter, was to secure options for purchase from the owners of the land that comprised the old battlefield as well as the roads and approaches leading into it. The group would obtain options in favor of the federal government who would hopefully establish a park and purchase the land.

The Association was essentially a real estate corporation with a notable difference: the charter stipulated that the "general welfare of society, not individual profit, is the object for which this charter is granted." The members of the Association were not stockholders in the traditional sense; they were not entitled to dividends or profit from their activities. The charter provided for the Association to purchase the land outright and then donate it to the government once a park was created, as the Gettysburg Battlefield Memorial Association had done. However, the Association clearly preferred purchase by the federal government due to the large sum the effort would require.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Application for Incorporation, Stones River Battlefield and National Park Association, Trust Deed Book GG, 60-63, Office of the Register of Deeds, Rutherford County, TN; Charter of Incorporation, Stones River Battlefield and National Park Association, Record Book OO, 137, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.



Options have historically been a way for developers to acquire a large amount of land from individual owners of adjacent plots. A developer secures the right to purchase a parcel from the owner at a pre-arranged price, usually for some monetary consideration. If the option holder cannot acquire all of the parcels, they are not obligated to follow through on the purchase. The developer's initial investment is lost if the sale is not made by an expiration date. It is not uncommon that the landowner agrees to a minimal fee in order to hold the property in cases in which the purchaser makes no profit, and the sale benefits the common good—such as the Association's battlefield preservation movement. Typically in these situations the landowner agrees to a token fee, such as one dollar. The amount the Association paid for options is not known.

Within a year, the Association reported that it had obtained options on all the land on which the important military operations had occurred. These options, the Association claimed, embraced an area “something like three thousand acres.” They also reported that the options had been obtained with the help of “land owners within the battlefield,” and “in most cases the prices asked have been reasonable, and a very liberal disposition has been shown by owners favorable to the formation of the park.” The Association stated that the locals looked upon the proposed park with a “hearty sympathy and favor” and felt a strong sense of pride in the “familiar ground” made “forever famous.”<sup>51</sup>

There is no record of these option agreements in the Rutherford County trust deed or deed books from the period. However, official recording of these types of agreements

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<sup>51</sup> *Confederate Veteran* (January 1897): 31.

is not required. The fact that the Association never reported an exact acreage for which they had acquired options, or a total amount agreed upon for purchase, tends to suggest that no significant money, if any, had actually changed hands between the Association and landowners.

One can also question the extent of landowner's "liberal disposition" to selling their property for the establishment of a park. After all, the proposed park was the project of the wealthiest and most influential men in the county, backed by the potential support of the United States government. It may have been difficult for landowners to show any real resistance to the idea, particularly since there was no guarantee that it would actually come to fruition. At that stage in the process, it may have been advantageous for landowners to agree in principle to selling their property at "reasonable" prices, and then wait to see if anything actually came of the proposal.

#### BATTLEFIELD MARKERS

The Association was also busy with the more visible project of erecting markers on the battlefield. The group announced that "numbers of wooden tablets, appropriately painted and lettered, have been placed upon different historic parts of the field." These "substantial" signs marked "points of special interest and importance, such as headquarters of Federal and Confederate commanders, McFadden's ford on Stone's

River, places where distinguished officers were slain, and many other important localities.”<sup>52</sup>

We do not know who the Association commissioned to create the markers, though it appears from period photographs that they were professionally done. Contrast in the images suggests that they were multi-colored. The photographs also show that some of the signs gave directions from major thoroughfares to places of interest (such as the Nashville Pike to McFadden’s Ford). Existing images show a marker for the point where Garesché died in the battle (Figure 9), and a written account mentions a marker showing where a Federal battery was positioned on the first day. The total number of markers is not known, though it must have been significant since the position of one artillery battery was given specific attention.<sup>53</sup>

The photographs reveal that the signs were quite large and mounted on sizable wooden posts. A letter from Association president Charles Sheafe to the Quartermaster General gives a clue as to how large the signs were. Sheafe wrote for permission to erect one of the markers at the National Cemetery, stating that the sign was six feet wide and eight feet tall. This marker was meant to give an overview of the battle, acknowledging the importance of the cemetery as the focal point of visitation to the Stones River

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<sup>52</sup> “Battlefields,” *Murfreesboro Free Press*; “Battlefield of Murfreesboro,” *Confederate Veteran* 5:6 (June 1897): 264.

<sup>53</sup> Photographs of the Association’s battlefield markers can be found in the Albert Kern Collection of Dayton History, Dayton, Ohio; “Kentucky Confederate Visits Scenes of Battle,” *Lexington Herald*, July 7, 1912.

battlefield. The Association wanted to place the marker “inside the Cemetery wall, fronting the pike near the main entrance, and in a position that will face the outside, as to be read by passersby.” Cemetery Superintendent Edwin P. Barrett affirmed that the marker would not “interfere with anything connected with labor or appearance of the cemetery,” and expressed the Association’s fear that the marker may be defaced if it was placed outside of the wall.<sup>54</sup>

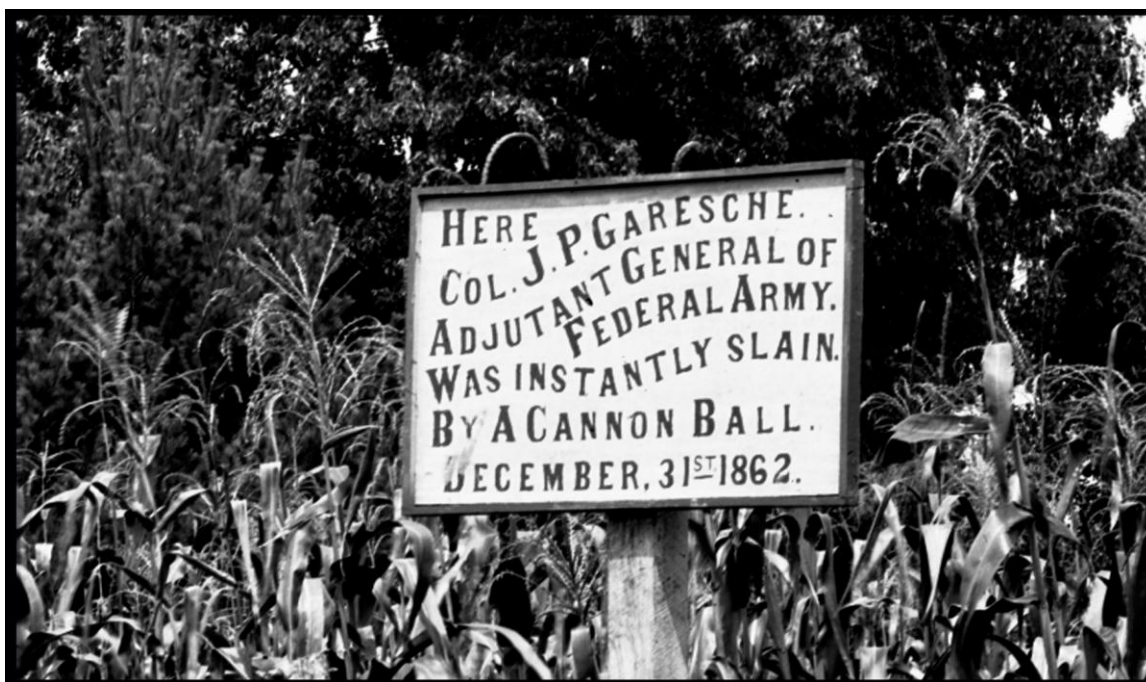


Figure 9. Marker Erected by the Battlefield Association. Photographed by Albert Kern, c.1900. Dayton History.

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<sup>54</sup> Edwin P. Barrett to J.W. Scully, February 21, 1898, C.A. Sheafe to Quartermaster General, June 9, 1898, Stones River National Cemetery Letters Sent 1890-1912.

Fear of vandalism to the markers led the Tennessee legislature to pass a law for their protection. The General Assembly made it a misdemeanor “for any person to willfully destroy, mutilate, deface, abuse or injure in any manner, or remove any slab, monument, tomb, grave stone, marker, or any other structure, or any fence, railing, or other work for protection or ornament placed upon or adjacent to any battlefield in this state, by individuals or by any battlefield association.” The act imposed a fine “not exceeding one hundred dollars,” for violators, and jail time “not exceeding thirty days.”<sup>55</sup>

#### THE SECOND PARK BILL

The election of 1896 saw the Democrats recoup some of the seats they had lost in the mid-term election of 1894. The Populist Party reached the peak of their influence in that election, as well as a small group of “Silver Republicans.” The Republican Party retained control of the House, and regained the presidency with the election of William McKinley. Perhaps thinking that the new political climate in Washington would be more receptive, Richardson re-introduced his bill to create a national military park at Stones River on March 20, 1897. The bill was identical to the one that he had introduced in December 1895 (although the mistaken reference to the Chickamauga park found in the earlier bill had been corrected). The second bill also called for the acquisition of one

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<sup>55</sup> House Bill No. 719, *Acts of the State of Tennessee, 1899* (Nashville: Marshall and Bruce Company, 1899), 839.

thousand acres of the battlefield adjacent to the Stones River National Cemetery and an appropriation of \$125,000 for the purpose.<sup>56</sup>

Two days prior, the Tennessee Senate passed a joint resolution in favor of Richardson's bill. The resolution stated that the "patriotic action proposed to be taken in said bill meets with our hearty approval, and that we earnestly request our Senators and Representatives in the Congress of the United States to use their best efforts to carry forward to completion an undertaking honorable to every part of our common country, and which will preserve for the use and instruction of future generations the classic soil of a great and memorable conflict of arms." The resolution also appealed to the people and leaders of other states, "especially of those whose soldiers participated in the battle of Stones River, to join with us in the purpose and effort to rescue this field from ordinary uses."<sup>57</sup>

A bill to create a park at Appomattox Courthouse, Virginia, was introduced in the same session of Congress as Richardson's Stones River bill, and, again, the prospect of new military parks received some adverse reaction in the press. A newspaper article citing the expense of preservation called for a "halt to be declared upon the battlefield-park fad." In explaining that position, the article noted the increasing number of battlefield parks and lamented the tendency "to overdo the thing in true American

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<sup>56</sup> H.R. 1647, 55<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess.

<sup>57</sup> Senate Joint Resolution No. 20, *Acts and Resolutions of the State of Tennessee, 1897* (Nashville: Franc. M. Paul, 1897), 717-718. The resolution specifically mentions the earlier bill, H.R. 1996, but Richardson's re-introduced bill was H.R. 1647.

fashion,” especially at sites that did not carry the undisputed importance of a Gettysburg or a Chickamauga. “There are bills now before the house of representatives for the establishment of Appomattox and Stone River Parks, the necessary outlay for both being urged on patriotic grounds. It is well enough to preserve the place of Lee’s surrender as nearly true to its appearance in 1865 as possible, but this can be done without creating much of a park for the purpose. The battle of Stone River, or Murfreesboro, was one of the bloodiest and most stubbornly contested of the war, though in the matter of decisiveness of result and general importance its claim to recognition by the establishment of a park is not greater than at least half a dozen other battles.” The article’s author was concerned that “a multitude of commemorative national parks” would dilute the purpose of creating battlefield parks in the first place. “Common things are proverbially uninteresting,” it stated, “and too frequent repetition weakens the power of emphasis.”<sup>58</sup>

Like the earlier bill, H.R. 1647 languished in the House Committee on Military Affairs. The committee made arrangements, however, to “visit the battlefield and be entertained by the citizens of Murfreesboro.” The committee planned to visit in April of 1898, but the outbreak of the Spanish-American War forced them to cancel the tour. Congress took no further action on Richardson’s bill during that session.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> *Portland Morning Oregonian*, April 13, 1897, 4.

<sup>59</sup> “Battlefields,” *Murfreesboro Free Press*.

## TENNESSEE CENTENNIAL EXPOSITION

The 1897 Tennessee Centennial Exposition provided another opportunity for the Association to call attention to the Stones River preservation movement. The Nashville event ran from May to October 1897 in celebration of the one-hundredth anniversary of Tennessee's statehood. Expositions were all the rage in the 1890s and early 1900s, the most famous being the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago, on which the Tennessee exposition was modeled. During that period there were a number of expositions throughout the southern states, highlighting the industrial and scientific progress of the New South, as well as the "spirit of reconciliation" with the North. The Tennessee Exposition was one of the largest and most important of the era. An estimated two million people viewed exhibits on agricultural improvements and commercial advancement, as well as educational and cultural achievements of Tennessee and the South in general.<sup>60</sup>

Of course, the Civil War was an enduring element of the event. Both the Confederate Memorial Association, a women's group, and Union veterans with the Grand Army of the Republic displayed exhibits and artifacts from both sides of the war. The United Confederate Veterans Association held their annual reunion in conjunction with

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<sup>60</sup> Don H. Doyle, "Tennessee Centennial Exposition," *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture* (Nashville: Tennessee Historical Society, 1998), 921-922. For more on Progressive-era Nashville as well as the Tennessee Centennial Exposition, see Doyle's *Nashville in the New South, 1880-1930* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985) and *New Men, New Cities, New South: Atlanta, Nashville, Charleston, Mobile, 1860-1910* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990).



the Exposition, and on Confederate Veterans Day, some sixteen thousand old soldiers were on hand to “honor the Lost Cause and celebrate the South's new place within the Union.” An editorial in a northern newspaper suggested that travelers “take-in Chattanooga, Lookout Mountain, Chickamauga, Murfreesboro, and other battlefields,” while making their way to the event. The strong interest in the Civil War and the close proximity of Murfreesboro to Nashville gave the Stones River Battlefield Association a chance to gain exposure and support for their work to create a military park.<sup>61</sup>

One group of travelers presented the potential to be very advantageous for the Association. In late May, a party of over fifty congressmen and their families left Washington D.C. on a special train bound for the Tennessee Centennial Exposition. Their route took them southward through Asheville, Knoxville, and Chattanooga. From Chattanooga the train would take them north to Nashville and through Murfreesboro. The itinerary of their week-long excursion gave them time to make side trips to places of interest along their route. Several congressmen visited Murfreesboro, where they were entertained by Richardson at his home, and they also toured the battlefield.

The visit of the congressmen coincided with the annual Memorial Day observance at Stones River National Cemetery. Although white GAR posts conducted ceremonies of remembrance at the site, for several years African Americans represented the

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid.; “Tennessee Centennial,” *Trenton Evening Times*, June 22, 1897, 4. For more on the Lost Cause movement, see Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause and the Emergence of the New South, 1865-1913* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

overwhelming majority of attendees at the event. Many of the African Americans traveled to the event by special trains from Nashville. While more formal ceremonies were held within the cemetery walls, many African Americans (sometimes thousands) “created their own space for celebration on the lands surrounding this site.” In general, white and older African American attendees preferred a reverential style of commemoration; younger African Americans tended to observe emancipation and victory in a more celebratory style. These differing styles had been the source of some conflict in the past, but particularly so in 1897.<sup>62</sup>

As Congressman George W. Prince of Illinois spoke on “citizenship, chivalry, and devotion” at the memorial service, an observer reported that over 1,500 African Americans remained outside the wall. He alleged that these celebrants were drinking alcohol, gambling, and engaged in selling food and beverages. “This shows how much interest in the decoration services proper is taken by the negroes,” the observer wrote, “and how much respect is shown by them for the dead.” He suggested that Congress permit Confederate burials at the cemetery, implying that locals with Confederate sympathies would never allow this “disrespectful” behavior. This highlights the white community’s view of the cemetery. The cemetery was the focal point for battlefield visitors; as a symbol of Union victory surrounded by a post-emancipation community,

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<sup>62</sup> Fraley, “The Politics of Memory,” 96-97.

many locals objected to its “Union” or “black” identity as representative of the event that occurred on that ground.<sup>63</sup>

The Association reported that the congressmen “were all most favorably impressed” with the idea of creating a military park at Stones River. In true reconciliatory fashion, Representative Daniel Ermentrout of Pennsylvania said that he would support the creation of the park on condition: “We must take care of the ashes of the brave Confederates who also sleep on this memorable field. If not I will not support the measure. They and their children are paying the taxes. They bear the burdens, and they and their dead should receive some of the benefits bestowed by a generous government. We are all one people, and we all love the same flag.”<sup>64</sup>

However, the level of influence these members of Congress could have exerted in favor of the battlefield proposal may have been minimal. Cemetery records show that eleven congressmen visited the battlefield on May 29. Of these eleven, six were freshmen members of the House. As a reflection of the tumultuous politics of the day, three of the representatives, Charles A. Barlow of California, and Edwin R. Ridgely and Jeremiah D. Botkin of Kansas, were Populists, and William C. Jones was a Silver Republican from Washington. None of these four would be re-elected to a second term. The remaining seven included Democrats Hugh A. Dinsmore of Arkansas; James M. Robinson from

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 99-101.

<sup>64</sup> “On a Trip to Nashville,” *Boston Herald*, May 26, 1897, 2; “Battlefields,” *Murfreesboro Free Press*; *House Documents*, 56th Cong., 1st sess., H. Doc. 754, 20.

Indiana; Mississippian William F. Love; and Ermentrout. Republicans included Samuel G. Hilborn from California, and Prince and Joseph V. Graff of Illinois. None of these men held committee assignments that would have been especially beneficial to the creation of the Stones River park.<sup>65</sup>

Many Tennessee cities and counties viewed the Centennial Exposition as a chance to draw attention to themselves, and Murfreesboro was no exception. Throughout the exposition's buildings were rooms that promoted different communities. The "pretty red cedar Murfreesboro room" was in the Woman's Building, which highlighted domestic arts and home economics. The Association promoted their preservation effort by exhibiting twenty-five photographic images of the Stones River battlefield in the Murfreesboro room. The Association framed these images in red cedar from the battlefield.<sup>66</sup>

#### KERN PHOTOGRAPHS

Albert Kern, a successful attorney and amateur photographer from Dayton, Ohio, made the images. Born in 1846, he was too young to serve in the Civil War, but had avidly followed the battles and movements of the troops in newspapers. A biographer has said that the war "made a deep impression on Albert," and that "stimulating discussions of daring military maneuvers, weaponry, geography, history and other subjects . . . held great appeal for his

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<sup>65</sup> Stones River National Cemetery Register of Visitors, 1877-1925.

<sup>66</sup> Doyle, 921-922; "Battlefields," *Murfreesboro Free Press*.

inquisitive mind.” He turned eighteen as the war ended, and instead of finding himself in the army, Albert enrolled at the University of Michigan to study law. His success as a lawyer in Dayton allowed Kern the time and financial wherewithal to pursue his varied interests and hobbies. Kern founded an archery club, and was a member of the local horticultural and rifle clubs. He was on the board of trustees for the library, and helped found the Dayton Historical Society. He accumulated a large private collection of firearms and militaria from all periods of history with emphasis on the Civil War. Because of his knowledge of military history, many considered him something of an expert on the subject.<sup>67</sup>

Kern’s other great hobby was photography. He founded the Dayton Camera Club about 1890. The dry plate negative process, which came into popular use in the 1880s, facilitated his interest in photography. Prior to this, photographers had to travel with portable darkrooms and develop their negatives immediately. The new technology made it possible for laymen to enjoy and experiment with photography.<sup>68</sup>

Kern was able to combine his interests in history with his new hobby. He and his family traveled extensively throughout the eastern United States in the 1890s and early 1900s, visiting and photographing all of the major battlefields of the Civil War as well as many other historic sites. He eventually amassed a collection of over 5,000 glass plate negatives that, among many

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<sup>67</sup> Claudia Watson, *Seizing the Light: The Photography of Dayton’s Albert Kern* (Dayton, OH: Montgomery County Historical Society, 2004), 9-13.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.



Figure 10. The Nashville Pike at Van Cleve Lane. Photographed by Albert Kern, c.1900. Dayton History.

other topics, documented the battlefields of Chickamauga, Chattanooga, Resaca, Kennesaw Mountain, Gettysburg, Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Shiloh, Franklin, Vicksburg, and Perryville. Kern's collection also included almost one hundred and fifty images of the Stones River battlefield.<sup>69</sup>

Kern visited Murfreesboro at least four times between 1896 and 1904. With each visit he photographed people and places around the town and battlefield. Kern's Stones River photographs are the most extensive record of the landscape in the period (Figures 10, 11).

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 13.

Kern photographed numerous views of McFadden's Ford, the Nashville Pike, the Hazen Brigade Monument, and the National Cemetery, as well as other points on the battlefield, such as the site of the Harding house and brick kiln.<sup>70</sup>

Kern's images were not solely landscapes and built features; most included local people. Some document groups visiting the cemetery and many depict the African American residents of the Cemetery community, especially Jim Williams, who apparently acted as a



Figure 11. McFadden's Ford. Photographed by Albert Kern, c.1900. Dayton History.

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<sup>70</sup> Stones River National Cemetery Register of Visitors, 1877-1925. Kern and his son, Walter, signed the register in the summer of 1896; "Battlefields," *Murfreesboro Free Press*.

guide for Kern. One of Kern's photographs shows the home of Association secretary Jesse Sparks, another is of the "clever old Johnny," Sam Mitchell, who struck up a long-lasting friendship with Kern. Several of the images show the markers that the Association placed at significant sites on the battlefield.<sup>71</sup>

*Confederate Veteran* used Kern's images to illustrate some of the articles describing the Association's efforts to preserve the battlefield. In one issue, Sumner Cunningham wrote that the "beautiful illustrations in the June number of the *Veteran*," were "selected from a most excellent collection made by Albert Kern . . . who does amateur photographic work just for the love of it." Apparently Kern's images were available for sale from the Association as a means for raising funds. Cunningham mentioned that "those interested in this battle-ground will be satisfied with any selection made from these views." The magazine did not report the price of the photographs.<sup>72</sup>

#### THE OSCAR JONES MAP

One of the first tasks of any of the battlefield commissions at the existing parks was the creation of maps showing the terrain and troop positions during the battles. These maps were crucial for determining the locations of the most important military actions, and therefore what parcels of land commissions should acquire for monuments and markers. The Association also wanted a topographical survey of the Stones River

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<sup>71</sup> "Battlefields," *Murfreesboro Free Press*; Watson, 21.

<sup>72</sup> Untitled, *Confederate Veteran* 5:7 (July 1897): 390.



battlefield to present to Congress. The map would expedite the process of establishing a national military park—as well as to show local commitment for the project.<sup>73</sup>

In early April 1899, the Tennessee Senate adopted a joint resolution that offered support for the battlefield project. The resolution made note of the work that the Association had already done in placing markers at historic points of the battlefield, as well as circulating literature urging the Federal government to establish a national military park there. The resolution also noted that the Association had “expended and exhausted its funds” in these earlier efforts and was in need of a battlefield map to present to Congress. The Senate resolved that “the state should encourage and aid such a setting apart of said historic battlefield . . . in every way possible.”<sup>74</sup>

The Tennessee House responded to this call for assistance by providing funding for the Stones River map. In late April, the House approved a general appropriations bill that provided \$300 for “making a topographical map and accurate survey of the entire field and approaches thereto, and presentation of the same to Congress.” The Association reported in May that “negotiations to that end are now pending.”<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Senate Joint Resolution No. 38, *Acts of the State of Tennessee, 1899* (Nashville: Marshall and Bruce Co., 1899), 1176. Who advised the Association to make the map is not stated, but presumably it would have been Rep. Richardson.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> House Bill No. 859, *Acts of the State of Tennessee, 1899*, 1065; “Battlefields,” *Murfreesboro Free Press*.

The Association selected Oscar Jones, a thirty-year old Murfreesboro native, to create the map of Stones River. Jones had received a degree in engineering from the University of Tennessee in 1891. After graduation he began a “varied and successful” career in civil engineering on railroads and public works in Tennessee, the Indian Territory (Oklahoma), and West Virginia. Much of his experience had come with his employment with the United States Geological Survey.<sup>76</sup>

Jones came by his profession honestly; he was the son of William Rucker Jones, who had been the county surveyor before the Civil War, a position he resumed after serving in the Confederate Eighteenth Tennessee Infantry. William Jones became wealthy via the real estate market and was active politically. He had won a term in the Tennessee House of Representatives in the early 1880s, and had also served as a Murfreesboro city alderman. William Jones’s status in the community and experience as a surveyor, as well as being a veteran of the Stones River battle, would have made him an excellent choice for making the battlefield map. His reputation certainly provided an advantage for his son’s selection for the work.<sup>77</sup>

Jones completed the Stones River map in a comparatively short amount of time. The map making process at other parks had sometimes been slow and controversial endeavors. At Antietam the map was first the responsibility of Jed Hotchkiss, who had

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<sup>76</sup> “What Some of Our Graduates Are Doing,” *University of Tennessee Record* (November 1898): 393.

<sup>77</sup> Lamb, 61-62.

served as the topographical surveyor for “Stonewall” Jackson during the war. Hotchkiss was exceedingly slow in producing his map and, after months of waiting, the Antietam board eventually handed the task over to another topographer. A team of full-time engineers produced the map of Shiloh, completing it in roughly eight months. There is no indication that Jones had such help—and with such a small budget any staff would have been unlikely. Jones would have started his surveying no earlier than late May, yet the Association had his completed map in hand before the end of the year (Figure 12).<sup>78</sup>

The area Jones surveyed began where the battle commenced, the intersection of Franklin Road and Gresham Lane at the six-acre parcel of George Butler. It progressed just north of the site of Rosecrans’ field headquarters on the Nashville Pike, a four-acre plot owned by William Windrow. The plat continued east to Sam Mitchell’s tract of 105 acres near McFadden’s Ford, and then south to the site of Bragg’s headquarters where the railroad crossed the Nashville Pike, on the property of John Wade. Jones’s map encompassed an area of 3,772 acres, covering the sites of the most significant fighting during the battle, but also “including a small area which was occupied simply as ground over which moving lines were carried but upon which no actual engagements took place.”<sup>79</sup>

Jones marked troop positions broadly; simple lines (blue for Union, red for Confederate) showed the arrangement of the armies at different times during the battle.

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<sup>78</sup> Smith, *Golden Age*, 94, 96-97, 127-128.

<sup>79</sup> *House Reports*, 56<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., H. Rept. 606, 1-2.

His map gave the position of both armies early on the morning of December 31, again at noon, and at the cessation of fighting on the evening of that first day. It also showed the location of troops before and after Breckinridge's ill-fated assault at McFadden's Ford on the afternoon of January 2. Jones generally drew the lines to represent divisions, but in some cases (particularly Breckinridge's assault) he drew them to the brigade level.

Jones drew the property lines for fifty tracts ranging in size from William Holland's three acres adjacent to the Hazen Brigade Monument to Association member Asbury Overall's 392 acre farm. There were also twenty-five to thirty "small lots" whose owners were not listed. These lots were primarily in the Cemetery community, and totaled about fifty-two acres.

#### VALUE OF BATTLEFIELD LAND

A comparison of Rutherford County tax records for 1899 and the list of tracts and property owners noted on Jones's map provides an opportunity to estimate the value of battlefield land. However, this comparison can be problematic. The tax records list landowners by civil district and include acreage owned and the assessed value of each property. Most of the battlefield lay within the Ninth and Thirteenth districts. In many cases, the amount of land credited to each landowner in the tax records does not neatly correspond with the acreage listed on Jones's map. This is probably because some of the tracts that Jones surveyed were only a portion of the total land held by some property owners. It is impossible to make an exact match of the tax records with all of the parcels on Jones's map. Fortunately, a rough estimate can still be ascertained when comparing

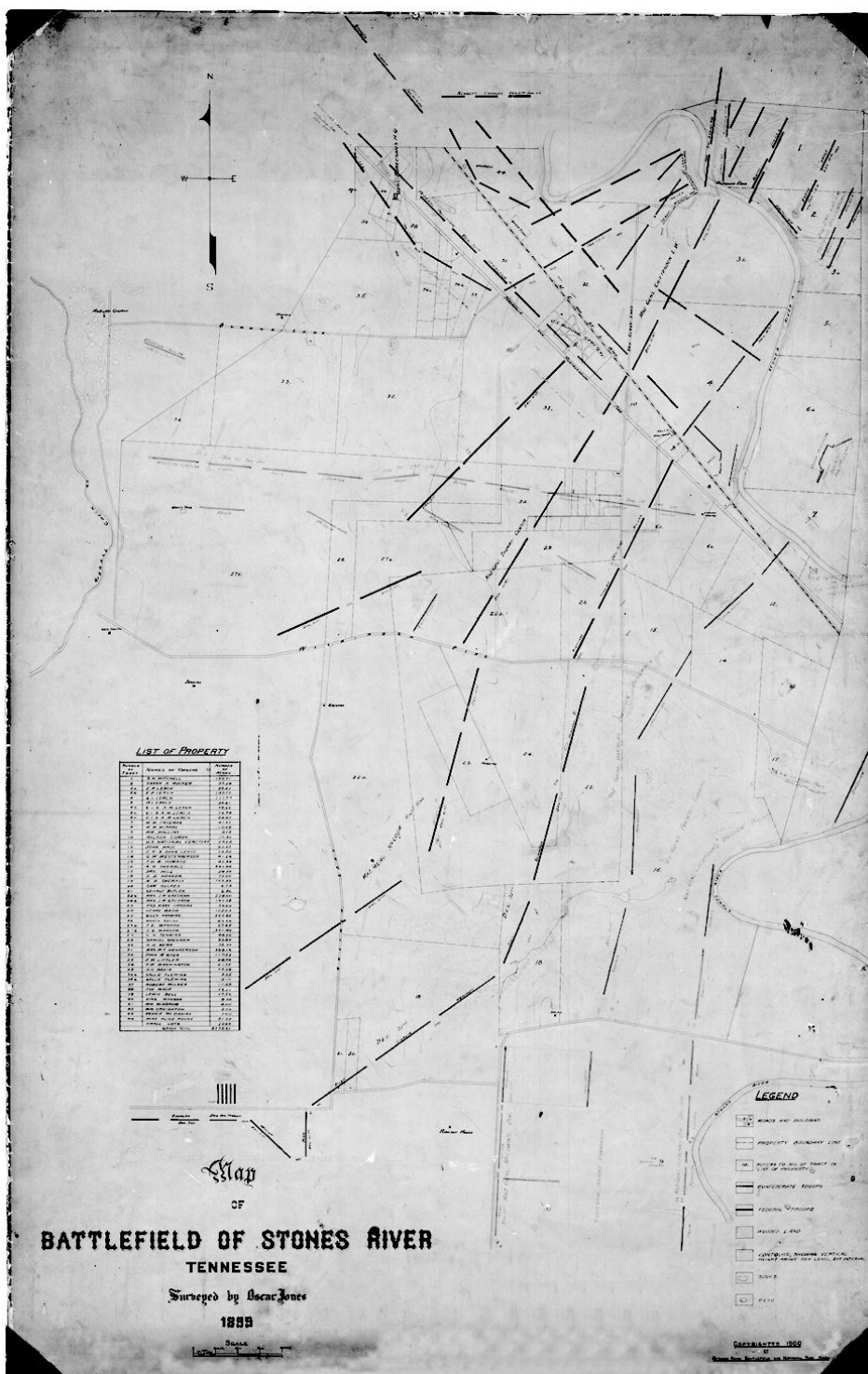


Figure 12. Battlefield Map by Oscar Jones, 1899. Stones River National Battlefield.

the tracts that do closely match the tax records—about forty percent of the tracts surveyed.

These tracts represent almost 1,800 acres at an assessed value of over \$30,000. Comparing land values is akin to comparing apples and oranges; some land is improved with houses and outbuildings and therefore worth more than unimproved properties of similar size. Other properties were simply better suited for farming and other purposes—for a variety of reasons—with premium locations going for a higher rate. For example, W.M. Freeman’s forty-three acres were assessed at \$35 an acre, while G.M. Westenberger’s forty-three acres were valued at just under \$20 each. Most of the tracts were valued between \$10 and \$25 per acre.

Removing outliers that were obviously higher or lower than the norm, the average value for the identifiable tracts was \$16.50 per acre.<sup>80</sup>

Given the race consciousness of the times, the tax records listed a “c” for “colored” after the name of each African American landowner. The tracts with lower value per acre tended to be those owned by African Americans—not surprising since African Americans were generally not in position to afford premium land, if white landowners were willing to sell to them at all. However, William Holland’s improved three-acre plot was assessed at almost \$27 per acre, on the high end of the range, and white landowner Virginia Henderson’s three-hundred acres of unimproved farm land (located a half mile up the Nashville Pike from Holland) was valued at only \$11 per acre.

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<sup>80</sup> 1899 Tax Record Book, Rutherford County Archives, Murfreesboro, TN.

It would appear that the value assessed for battlefield land was dependent more on the quality and condition of the property rather than the owner's race.<sup>81</sup>

The Association reported that they had acquired options "at rates per acre not greater than the lowest market price for lands in that section of the country," and that most of the options were for "prices far less than are usually received for lands for ordinary purposes" in the area. If that were the case, an estimate of the total value of the land would be toward the low end. Since it is not possible to determine the value of all of the tracts from available records or the total amount of the options, the average of \$16.50 per acre is the only real basis for an estimate. Therefore, the thirty-seven hundred acres surveyed by Oscar Jones carried a value of just over \$62,000, roughly half of the appropriation Richardson requested from Congress.<sup>82</sup>

As the 1800s came to a close, the prospect for a military park was in its best position for success. The Association had gathered considerable national support for the preservation effort and had been successful in publicizing their project. They had secured options from landowners, and had gained the support of the Tennessee legislature for their work marking historic points and commissioning a map of the battlefield. Armed with these achievements, Richardson was prepared to reintroduced the bill to create a military park at Stones River.

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> H. Rept. 606, 2.

### CHAPTER III:

#### STONES RIVER IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY, 1900-1925

##### THE THIRD PARK BILL

Events at the turn of the century suggested a more favorable climate to the creation of the park. The Spanish-American War had ended quickly in 1898, although American troops were still engaged in the Philippine Insurrection. The Populist movement and free silver debate were waning, and Congress could focus more attention elsewhere. An encouraging sign was a bill establishing the military park at Vicksburg that had passed in February 1899. Although the battlefield association behind the creation of the park at Vicksburg had been more national in scope, the actions they had taken were very similar to the approach taken by the local Stones River group. For example, the Vicksburg association had been incorporated by the State and had acquired options from landowners for most of the proposed park, as the Stones River association had done. The Association must have been encouraged that Congress was once again willing to establish a military park.<sup>1</sup>

The political climate was also more favorable. The mid-term Congressional election of 1898 saw the Democrats make significant gains, adding thirty-seven seats in the House, although the Republicans maintained a majority. Richardson was now more

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<sup>1</sup> Timothy B. Smith, *The Golden Age of Battlefield Preservation: The Decade of the 1890s and the Establishment of America's First Five Military Parks* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2008), 181-184.



influential than ever—when Congress re-convened they elected him to the newly-created position of Minority Leader, only the second person to hold that distinction.

The bill also had a potentially important ally on the House Committee on Military Affairs: Republican Walter P. Brownlow of East Tennessee's First Congressional District. Brownlow, the nephew of Tennessee's controversial Reconstruction-era governor, "Parson" Brownlow, proved to be one of the most effective congressmen of that period in terms of securing federal appropriations for his constituency. One of his great accomplishments was the establishment of the National Soldiers' Home (for Union and Spanish-American War veterans) in Johnson City.<sup>2</sup>

Richardson introduced the third park bill on December 11, 1899. It was identical to the first two, calling for the acquisition of 1,000 acres of the battlefield and an appropriation of \$125,000 (by comparison, the Vicksburg enabling legislation had allowed for 1,200 acres and an appropriation of \$65,000).

Perhaps believing that their objective was closer to a reality at this time, several members of the Association traveled to Washington to advocate for a military park at Stones River before the House Committee on Military Affairs. Led by Richardson, the delegation consisted of seven other men from Murfreesboro. Association president Charles Sheafe, secretary Richard Beard, the Congressman's brother John E. Richardson, corresponding secretary Jesse W. Sparks, and Judge Horace E. Palmer were accompanied

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<sup>2</sup> "Brownlow, Walter Preston, (1851-1910)," Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, online: <http://bioguide.congress.gov/>.

by George Darrow and Albert G. Tompkins, a produce wholesaler and veteran of the Confederate Eighteenth Tennessee Infantry.<sup>3</sup>

The hearing took place on Saturday morning, February 17, 1900. There is no record of the Association's comments before the committee, but the meeting was brief; the hearing was called to order at 10:30 to consider two bills (the Stones River bill being second) and was adjourned at noon. However brief, the effort was not without reward. The bill achieved a greater level of success than its predecessors when the committee reported favorably back to the House with a recommendation for passage.<sup>4</sup>

Brownlow wrote the committee's favorable report, which loosely quoted the delegation's testimony. Brownlow wrote that "Gentlemen representing the State and association and residing in the vicinage, consisting of ex-Confederate and ex-Union soldiers, have appeared before your committee and have laid before it in detail all the information the committee desired."<sup>5</sup>

Ever mindful of the cost of establishing a military park, the Association had defended the proposal for its supposed economy. The report noted that the Association had secured options on the land at rates at or below what was typical for the area, and that "the nature of the ground is such as to be easily beautified and improved at a minimum

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<sup>3</sup> Minutes of the Committee on Military Affairs, 56<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., February 17, 1900, 19, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.; *Goodspeed's History of Tennessee: Maury, Williamson, Rutherford, Wilson, Bedford and Marshall Counties* (Nashville and Chicago: Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1887), 1067-1068.

<sup>4</sup> Minutes of the Committee on Military Affairs, 19.

<sup>5</sup> H. Rept. 606, 2.

cost.” The report repeated assurances from the Association that “necessary easements” for the Nashville Pike and “other improved highways crossing these lands will be acquired . . . without expense.” They had also suggested to the committee that the superintendent, “regularly stationed there to look after the cemetery . . . could also give attention to the park.”<sup>6</sup>

The Association had highlighted the support that the proposed park had received from the state of Tennessee and from national veteran organizations. The report noted that the state legislature had “passed an act looking to the necessary preparatory steps to making this appeal to Congress,” and money appropriated for that purpose had been “expended legitimately and with best possible effect.” The Association acknowledged the petitions and support of the GAR and UCV for the proposed park, which they had endorsed “in the strongest possible terms.”<sup>7</sup>

Perhaps smarting from editorials that questioned whether the Battle of Stones River was deserving of a military park, the Association had stressed that the “importance of this engagement to the Union campaign in that section of the country during the war can not be overestimated.” They noted the heavy casualty rate and that “every foot of ground . . . was stubbornly and bravely contested. The results of the engagement were of

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 2-3.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 2.

inestimable value to the Union cause [and it] . . . ranks in importance with Gettysburg, Chickamauga, Shiloh, and Vicksburg.”<sup>8</sup>

Lastly, the Association had noted their work to mark the battlefield, erecting “a large number of tablets and markers which are of wood, and which will not in the nature of things be permanent.” They had stated a concern that “it is important that the Government . . . take hold [of marking the battlefield] that accuracy shall be assured.”<sup>9</sup>

Based on the Association’s testimony, the Committee on Military Affairs recommended amendments to the bill—an increase in the acreage and a reference to the Association’s battlefield map. The committee amended the acreage to thirty-one hundred acres from one-thousand and offered the possibility for thirty-seven hundred, “if desired.” The thirty-one hundred acre addition reflected the total acreage over which the battle had been fought; thirty-seven hundred acres was more in line with the total surveyed by Oscar Jones. The report concluded with the committee’s recommendation that the bill “should be passed at once.”<sup>10</sup>

Over the course of four years the Association had made great strides toward their goal and the proposal for a military park at Stones River was on its best footing to date. The Association had gained support nationally and from the Tennessee state government. They had followed the example of other successful battlefield preservation movements by acquiring options on the land and having the battleground professionally surveyed,

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 1.

mapped, and marked. The Murfreesboro delegation's trip to Washington and presentation before the House Committee on Military Affairs had gone well. Yet, despite all of their efforts, H.R. 3363 would ultimately suffer the same fate as Richardson's previous two bills. Although the committee reported favorably for passage of the bill, it never made it to the House floor for a vote. There were a number of bills to create battlefield parks pending in Congress. Given the expense that establishing any of these parks would entail, Congress took no action.

#### THE BATTLEFIELD ASSOCIATION AFTER 1900

Although their latest and best effort to have Congress establish a military park at Stones River had stalled, the Association continued to promote the battlefield. Treasurer Frank McClure once again wrote to the *National Tribune*, touting a recent meeting to commemorate the thirty-eighth anniversary of the battle.

McClure explained that after the war he "traveled over a large portion of the United States in search of a location and finally settled in Rutherford County." He operated a tavern and eventually secured a three-hundred acre farm, "a part of it being the ground fought over in the bloody battle of Stone River." Also involved in the real estate business, his Murfreesboro office "in the Barton Block ... is headquarters for all old soldiers and their friends who visit this country." This fraternity of "old veterans of this county, both those who wore the blue and those who wore the gray" were determined to "keep alive the memory of those who lost their lives in this battle."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> "Stone River Battlefield," *National Tribune*, March 21, 1901, 2.

Around the 1900-1901 anniversary of the battle (the exact date was not given), the Association conducted “a very interesting meeting” at the Sam Davis Opera House in Murfreesboro. Carter B. Harrison presided over the meeting, which included Association President Charles A. Sheafe and Dr. John B. Murfree as principal speakers. “The house was crowded from floor to gallery,” McClure wrote, as each man spoke of their recollections of the battle. Sheafe presented the Union view, giving “a full and complete history of ... the three days fighting.” Murfree, also a veteran of the battle, “followed with a very able and appropriate discourse describing the battle from a Confederate standpoint.” McClure stated that both speakers “gave in detail the movements of each army from beginning to end and while mentioning the heroic deeds performed by each army, due respect was paid to the bravery and heroic deeds performed by the opposite side.” He continued with the reconciliatory tone, stating that the meeting was “enjoyed by all, which goes to prove that the war of the rebellion is no longer fought over in this country.”<sup>12</sup>

Time was beginning to take its toll on the old veterans of the Association. The group’s historian, David D. Maney, passed away in March 1899, followed the next year by James McKnight Witherspoon and Murfreesboro mayor James O. Oslin. Sheafe’s health was declining, “suffering greatly from neuralgic headaches and sciatic rheumatism.” He filed for a pension in 1899 but the claim was rejected because he could not show that his ailments were contracted during the war. He petitioned Congress in

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid. The Sam Davis Opera House was located at the corner of College and Depot (now Spring) Streets, the present site of the Pinnacle Bank Building.

1902 for a private act to award a pension, with Carter B. Harrison testifying on his behalf. Harrison stated that Sheafe, like himself, had not previously applied for a pension “not because he felt he was not entitled to it, but from a commendable pride.” Carter B. Harrison and Charles O. Thomas would both pass away in 1905. Rev. J.H. McNeilly, a Confederate veteran, conducted Harrison’s funeral. The local UCV turned out in force, and the majority of pallbearers for the Union veteran and brother of a President of the United States were Confederate veterans.<sup>13</sup>

The loss of leadership in the Association due to death and the aging membership did not end the effort to preserve and commemorate the battlefield, but there was a noticeable drop off in the Association’s activity after 1900. Although the Association’s activity may have decreased in this period, other individuals worked to commemorate the battle.

#### THE MURFREESORO CONFEDERATE MONUMENT

The plan to erect a Confederate monument in Murfreesboro had been thirty years in the making. A “Monumental Association” began the effort soon after the war, raising about \$800 dollars toward their goal, but then “passed out of existence.” A ladies’ group, the Murfreesboro Memorial Association (MMA), and the local chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC), later revived the project. The UDC raised another \$800 “by constant and persistent effort.” In the spring of 1901 a dozen members of the

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<sup>13</sup> *House Reports*. 57<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., H. Rept. 344; “Confederates Bury a Federal Veteran,” *Confederate Veteran* 14:1 (January 1906): 36.

local UCV met in the law office of James Richardson and “subscribed \$25 each, and pledged themselves that the year should not close” without the monument being erected. The UCV eventually accumulated another \$1200 to complete the monument.<sup>14</sup>

There was apparently a great deal of conflict between the ladies’ organizations and the UCV over control of the monument. The MMA had originally planned to place the monument at “Confederate Circle,” the mass grave of Confederates killed at the Battle of Stones River in Murfreesboro’s Evergreen Cemetery. The MMA gave their funds to the UCV to complete the work, and then asked that it be returned—which the UCV did not do. A committee representing the UCV and UDC, as well as the local camp of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, decided to place the monument on the courthouse square.<sup>15</sup>

That a committee dominated by men chose to place the monument on the courthouse square, like scores of others throughout the former Confederacy, is a reflection of the times. Earlier monuments had been placed in cemeteries or at the sites of significant events of the war; though the monument was intended to honor the Confederates that fell at Stones River, the statue was not placed on the field where they

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<sup>14</sup> Bromfield L. Ridley, *Battles and Sketches of the Army of Tennessee* (Mexico, MO: Missouri Printing and Publishing Co., 1906), 582; Miranda L. Fraley, “The Politics of Memory: Remembering the Civil War in Rutherford County, Tennessee” (Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 2004), 134-136; “Murfreeseboro Confederate Monument,” *Confederate Veteran* 9:11 (November 1901): 494. The monument remains as a prominent feature of the courthouse square in Murfreesboro.

<sup>15</sup> Fraley, “The Politics of Memory,” 134-136. For more on Civil War memory and public sculpture see Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth-Century America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997).



died or where they were buried. The MMA's original plan to place the monument in Evergreen Cemetery was in keeping with the "culture of mourning" that was the hallmark of Confederate commemoration in the years after the war. Strict gender roles of the period dictated that women were the caregivers for the family, care which extended beyond the home and into the community. This included the more "feminine" act of remembering the dead, often in quiet, secluded cemeteries. Men were expected to take the lead in political matters, of which the courthouse was a loud, public symbol of power. This separation of gender roles was also true of the battlefield preservation movement. Although women, particularly the UDC, were involved in monument projects at established military parks, battlefields were "masculine" spaces. Preserving battlefields as exemplars of martial valor and the "manly" defense of home and country was almost exclusively the work of men. Although women were involved in other commemorative activities in Rutherford County, there is no evidence of women being active in the Battlefield Association's preservation effort at Stones River.<sup>16</sup>

The finished memorial was a copy of the Tennessee Infantry monument at Chickamauga, and was positioned in front of the courthouse facing down East Main Street (Figure 13). The dedication of the monument took place on November 7, 1901,

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<sup>16</sup> For more on the Confederate "culture of mourning" in Rutherford County, see Fraley, "The Politics of Memory," 124-149. For more on the role of women in Civil War commemoration, see Caroline E. Janney, *Burying the Dead but Not the Past: Ladies' Memorial Associations and the Lost Cause* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), Karen L. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003), and Cynthia Mills and Pamela H. Simpson, eds., *Monuments To The Lost Cause: Women, Art, And The Landscapes Of Southern Memory* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2003).

witnessed by an audience estimated at 3,000. “As trains rolled in from the South and the North,” the crowd was “largely increased by arrivals from McMinnville, Tullahoma, and Shelbyville, and by a large delegation from Nashville.” Dignitaries attending the event included Gov. Benton McMillin and U.S. Senator William Bate. If the many Union veterans who were Battlefield Association members were present at the event, they were not mentioned.<sup>17</sup>

In this period of southern history, the “Lost Cause” vision of the Confederate past was front and center at the heart of public life and seats of local power. True to form, the dedication ceremony was an example of Lost Cause pageantry. Battlefield Association secretary Richard Beard, master of ceremonies for the event, presided from a speaker’s stand adorned with United States and Confederate flags. He remarked that the monument was to be “consecrated to the memory of the heroes of McCown’s and Withers’s Divisions who fell in the great battle of December 31, 1862; and of those of Cheatham’s and Cleburne’s Divisions who on that day struck the right wing of the Federal army . . . and swept it like a cyclone . . . and those who fell in the gallant but disastrous charge of Breckinridge . . . against the heights at McFadden’s Ford.” Beard’s remarks echoed the monument’s inscription: “In commemoration of the valor of Confederate soldiers, who fell in the great battle of Murfreesboro, Dec. 31, 1862, and Jan. 2, 1863, and in minor engagements in this vicinity, this monument is erected.” There was no reconciliatory tone

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<sup>17</sup> Ridley, 585-586; *Confederate Veteran* 9:11 (November 1901): 494.

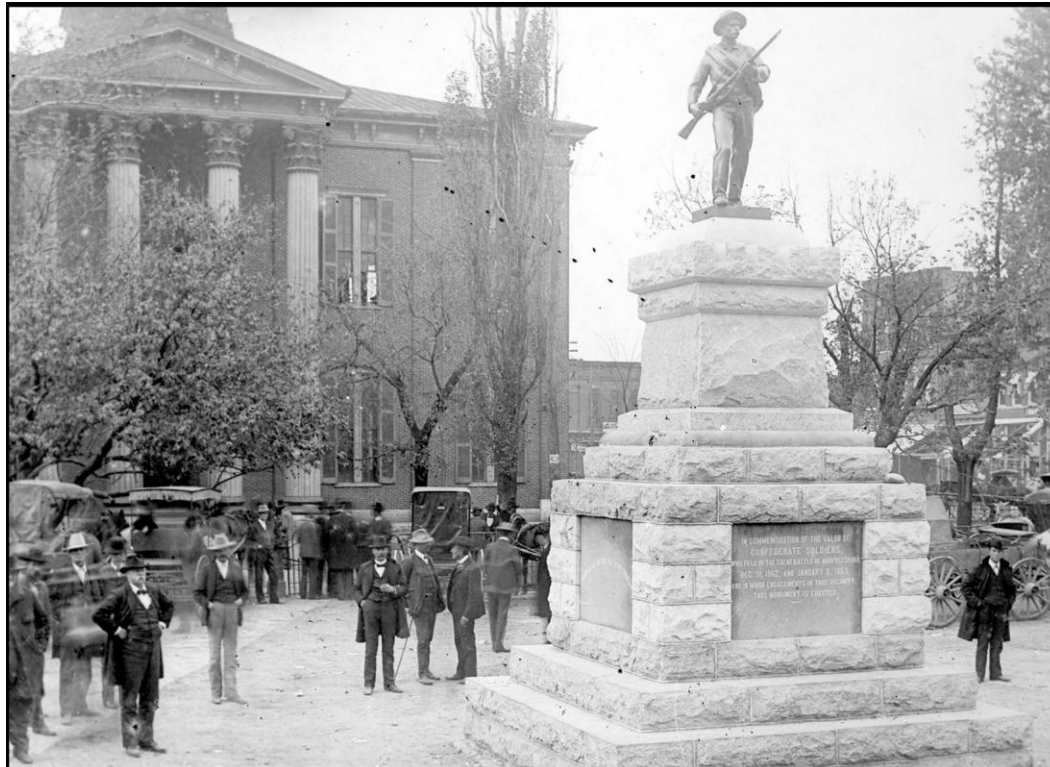


Figure 13. The Murfreesboro Confederate Monument. The monument is pictured in its original position facing down East Main Street. It was later moved to a corner of the courthouse lawn to accommodate automobile traffic around the square. Stones River National Battlefield.

present at the dedication. No mention was made of the valor or sacrifice of Union soldiers as could often be found at monument dedications at military parks in this period, and the inscription contained the Confederate name for the battle rather than the more common Union name, Stones River.<sup>18</sup>

The main orator for the event was Bennett H. Young, a prominent lawyer from Louisville, Kentucky. As a Confederate officer during the war, Young had led the famous St. Albans raid in Vermont. That raid, just across the Canadian border, was the

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<sup>18</sup> Ridley, 584; *Confederate Veteran* 9:11 (November 1901): 494.

northernmost action of the Civil War. Young gave a rousing oration to the assembled onlookers, his remarks often “punctuated with violent outbursts of applause.” At one point Young exhibited the uniform jacket he had worn during the war, exclaiming that he “would rather have it known that he had worn the gray than to be the greatest king on earth.” His speech did not give the slightest nod to the customary reconciliation rhetoric.<sup>19</sup>

The event, like the Lost Cause movement as a whole, could be seen as an exercise in “civil religion.” As historian Charles Reagan Wilson has explained, civil religions are ways that a nation or political entity validates itself; the Lost Cause movement “possessed well-defined elements—mythology, symbolism, theology, values, and institutions—which combined to make a religion,” with the unusual quality of relating to a nation that no longer existed.<sup>20</sup>

To be sure, this monument, and this event, was wholly one-sided; the monument honored only those who died in defense of the Confederacy, and the dedication ceremony and speakers reflected that purpose. However, many of the people that worked to erect the monument, and participated in the dedication ceremony, were members of the Battlefield Association. The lack of reconciliatory language at the dedication or in the monument inscription calls into question the Association’s commitment to “prove that

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<sup>19</sup> Ridley, 588.

<sup>20</sup> Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1980), 14.

the war of the rebellion is no longer fought over in this country,” as Frank McClure had stated in his *National Tribune* article earlier that year.

The contrast of their rhetoric is indicative of the complicated relationship between the Union and Confederate veterans of the Battlefield Association. A generation earlier, these men had fought one another in a bloody civil war. They had lost friends and family and some had suffered physically debilitating wounds they carried for the rest of their lives. Veterans of both sides had fought and suffered for causes they believed to be right. It is understandable, even expected, that they would also carry lingering animosities into their old age. Confederate veterans’ strong partisan passions came to the forefront at events like the dedication of the Murfreesboro monument, but that is not to say that their cooperation with Union veterans of the Battlefield Association was disingenuous. Despite all of the reasons that the veterans could have remained bitterly at odds with one another, they had come together for a common goal—the preservation of the Stones River battlefield.

Members of the Battlefield Association, whether Union or Confederate, shared common motives for the establishment of a park. Like the organizations that led preservation movements at other battlefields, they shared a strong patriotic zeal, although they may have interpreted patriotism differently. As veterans of a war that largely defined their lives, they wanted to commemorate the great deeds of their youth for future generations. But they also shared a sense of community. Most of the Confederate veterans were natives of Rutherford County, and the Union veterans had chosen to make Murfreesboro their home regardless of the difficulties that entailed in the aftermath of the

war. There was a sense of pride that an important historical event had occurred in their backyards and a national park would promote the community to the rest of the nation.<sup>21</sup>

Surely, the degree of camaraderie felt by individual veterans toward their former foes varied. But there is no evidence that they subscribed to different agendas based on their war-time allegiance. To the contrary, members of the Battlefield Association had worked in concert to mark the battlefield, secure national support, and had traveled together to Washington to lobby Congress for the establishment of the park. On a personal level, Frank McClure had described an ex-Confederate as “a friend of mine,” and the local UCV bivouac had honored Union veteran Carter B. Harrison as pallbearers at his funeral. The relationship between the former enemies was as complicated as the war itself.<sup>22</sup>

#### THE MISSING MONUMENT

A May 1903 article in *Confederate Veteran* magazine announced that John H. Savage, who commanded the Sixteenth Tennessee Infantry at Stones River, planned to erect a monument to his regiment on the battlefield and had purchased land for that purpose. The monument, “white marble, thirty feet high,” was expected to cost Savage

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<sup>21</sup> For a different interpretation of Confederate veterans’ motives for supporting the establishment of a park on the Stones River battlefield, see Fraley, “The Politics of Memory,” 151-152.

<sup>22</sup> *National Tribune*, July 1, 1897; *Confederate Veteran* 14:1 (January 1906): 36.

“some \$1,300 or \$1,500.” Inscribed upon it were over two hundred names of men of the Sixteenth Tennessee who were killed or mortally wounded in battle during the war.<sup>23</sup>

Savage had a long history in the military and Tennessee politics. As a young man he served as a private in the Seminole War. Afterwards, he was admitted to the bar and practiced law in Smithville. He served as a colonel of the state militia, and as a major of the Fourteenth United States Infantry during the Mexican-American War, subsequently being promoted to lieutenant colonel. He served four terms in the U.S. Congress, first from 1849 to 1853, and again from 1855 to 1859. After the Civil War, he was a member of the Tennessee House of Representatives from 1877 to 1879 and again from 1887 to 1891, and the Tennessee Senate from 1879 to 1881.<sup>24</sup>

The land where Savage planned to erect the monument was described as being “eighty feet of ground ... extending from the railroad to the Nashville turnpike.” The monument was going to be placed “about one hundred yards south” of the Hazen Brigade Monument, “facing the railroad.”<sup>25</sup>

This was the location of the Sixteenth Tennessee’s attack on the Round Forest as part of the assault made by General Daniel Donelson’s brigade. Donelson’s attack was the second of four assaults on the Union left flank on December 31, 1862. Savage’s

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<sup>23</sup> “Monument to the Sixteenth Tennessee,” *Confederate Veteran* 11:5 (May 1903): 203; “Savage’s Monument to the 16<sup>th</sup> Regiment,” *McMinnville New Era*, March 10, 1904.

<sup>24</sup> “Savage, John Houston, (1815-1904),” Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, online: <http://bioguide.congress.gov/>.

<sup>25</sup> “Monument,” *Confederate Veteran* 11:5 (May 1903): 203.

regiment was pinned down for hours in front of the Hazen Brigade, “unable to advance and determined not to retire,” until the third Confederate assault, by Adams’s brigade, was repulsed and the Sixteenth Tennessee finally left the field with that brigade as they retreated.<sup>26</sup>

Savage reported that he carried about 400 officers and men into the battle, of whom 208 were killed, wounded, or missing. Savage’s brother, Capt. Lucien Napoleon Savage, was severely wounded. When the Confederates withdrew toward Tullahoma, he was among the wounded that could not be moved. He died from his wounds while a prisoner of war in Murfreesboro.<sup>27</sup>

In 1903, this position would appear to have been on the property of William Holland, the former slave and Union soldier who was employed at the National Cemetery. Regardless of what the article reports, there is no record in the Rutherford County deed books of Savage purchasing land on the battlefield. It is probable that Savage was planning on purchasing this land but never completed the transaction. Savage was eighty-eight years old and in failing health. Realizing that his time was limited, he may have felt that placing it at the Warren County courthouse in McMinnville (his hometown) would be his best opportunity to see the monument erected

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<sup>26</sup> Report of Brig. Gen. Daniel S. Donelson, January 20, 1863, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (hereafter *OR*), Series 1, Vol. XX, 712.

<sup>27</sup> Report of Col. John H. Savage, January 8, 1863, *OR*, Series 1, Vol. XX, 717-718.



in his lifetime. Also, many of the men who had served in the Sixteenth Tennessee were from that area, and the relative ease of travel for them and their families to see the monument may have been a consideration.

On March 26, 1904, Savage petitioned the Warren County Court for permission to place the monument on the courthouse lawn in McMinnville, and died less than two weeks later. The court granted Savage's request at their next meeting, and the monument was erected and dedicated in May 1904 (Figure 14).<sup>28</sup>



Figure 14. The Sixteenth Tennessee Monument. Warren County Courthouse, McMinnville. Photograph by J. Stephen Conn.

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<sup>28</sup> Quarterly Court Minute Book, Oct. 1903-Jan. 1909, Warren County, TN, 51-52; "Sixteenth Tennessee Regiment," *Warren County Times*, May 6, 1904. Savage's monument to his regiment still stands on the courthouse lawn in McMinnville.

## THE RAILROAD AND BATTLEFIELD COMMEMORATION

The Nashville, Chattanooga, and St. Louis Railway provided the most tangible achievements toward commemoration of the Stones River battlefield in this period. The railway had long advertised itself to tourists as a means to see the historic battlefields through which it ran. As early as the 1890s the railway published impressive travelers' guides to these battlefields for the use of their passengers. These guides gave fairly accurate descriptions of the battles, along with photographs of monuments and other sites of interest. The earliest known existing example of these booklets, *Southern Battlefields*, included a section on Stones River along with images of the U.S. Regulars and Hazen Brigade Monuments as well as a photograph of the train depot at Murfreesboro.

John W. Thomas, the President of the NC&StL, knew Murfreesboro well and was a veteran of sorts of the Battle of Stones River. He had gotten his start with the company as the railroad's agent at Murfreesboro prior to the Civil War. Born in Nashville in 1830, Thomas graduated from Murfreesboro's Union University in 1851. For the next three years he served as a tutor at the University, before ill health forced him to resign. Afterwards he established a successful hotel in Murfreesboro where he gained the attention of the management of the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad (as it was then known), who hired him to run their hotel in town. This position had the "effect of familiarizing him with many of the details of railroading, as well as acquainting the public and the management of the road with his fitness for higher duties." In 1858 he

became the railroad's agent in Murfreesboro, and held that position at the outbreak of the war.<sup>29</sup>

During the Battle of Stones River, Thomas oversaw the movement of Confederate troops and supplies and transporting many of the wounded out of Murfreesboro. Finally, railroad management "determined to send all of the rolling stock and records of the road beyond the reach of Federal forces." As custodian of this effort, Thomas concentrated the rolling stock, "together with all available property of value . . . and all records of the road," and re-established operations in Augusta, Georgia and Wilmington, North Carolina.<sup>30</sup>

In the last two years of the war, Thomas was "in the service of the ever shifting lines of the Confederate railroad systems and also assumed considerable responsibility for the railroad's equipment." When the war ended, Thomas returned the railroad's property, "or so much of it as had not of necessity been destroyed by the exigencies of war," to Nashville. The dedication that he displayed in his war-time work "recommended him to the management of the road for promotion in its service," and he soon after took the position of Auditor and Paymaster for the line. Thomas steadily rose in the ranks of the expanding railway, becoming President of the railroad in 1884, a position "justly

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<sup>29</sup> Nashville, Chattanooga, and St. Louis Railway, *John W. Thomas: A Memorial* (Nashville: Ambrose and Bostelman Company, 1906), 7-8.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

earned by long service, varied experience and fidelity to every trust, as well as by financial integrity and ability.”<sup>31</sup>

It was this reputation and Thomas’s prominence as a business leader that led the Tennessee Centennial Exposition Company to elect him as their president in 1895. In his address at the opening of the Exposition on May 1, 1897, Thomas stated that: “While this celebration is prompted by reverence to the past, it is also prompted by a desire to so advertise and proclaim our advantage that thousands . . . will come to see what we have accomplished, and realize the marvelous wealth of our undeveloped resources.” Like other business leaders in the South, Thomas realized that there was no profit in lingering animosities, at least public in nature. While no one could completely ignore the recent past, the potential for the present and future required a reconciliatory tone. Although Thomas had served the Confederacy and actively supported Confederate veterans and commemoration, he was not one for partisan rhetoric. The publications promoting Civil War tourism produced by the NC&StL reflected that same caution. The booklets stated facts and battle statistics broadly and did not overtly favor one side or the other; they could be read by Union or Confederate alike without re-opening old wounds.<sup>32</sup>

There can be little doubt that John W. Thomas was personally responsible for the NC&StL’s commemorative and promotional activities. Thomas held a deep and abiding interest in remembrance of the Civil War. In the 1890s he had donated money toward the

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<sup>31</sup> Miranda L. Fraley, “Industry, War, and Memory: An Exploratory Essay” (Unpublished paper, Indiana University, 1998), 12; *John W. Thomas: A Memorial*, 9-10.

<sup>32</sup> *John W. Thomas: A Memorial*, 16-17.

erection of a monument to Confederate hero Sam Davis (a Rutherford County native), and offered space for it on the grounds of the Murfreesboro depot. He was an honorary member and active supporter of the UCV, often providing reduced rates or even free passage for veterans traveling to reunions on the NC&StL.<sup>33</sup>

Under Thomas's direction, the NC&StL went far beyond publishing guides that told passengers to look to their left or right when passing battlefield landmarks. A *Confederate Veteran* article pointed out "All along the line, through Tennessee, Alabama, and Georgia, markers and monuments were set under the direction of Major Thomas." At Stones River, the railway erected large markers that passengers could be read as the trains passed, announcing places of particular interest ("Garesche Fell Here" or "Hazen Monument") and directions to sites further from the tracks for those who disembarked to tour the larger battlefield. These markers were heavy cast iron, produced in the NC&StL's shops and set on high poles. They were far more permanent than the wooden tablets erected by the Battlefield Association in the 1890s. It is a testament to the seriousness of Thomas's interest in commemoration and promoting the "Battlefield Route to Atlanta," that the railroad expended its resources and manpower to produce and erect the markers (Figure 15).<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Untitled, *Confederate Veteran* 4:2 (February 1896): 37; *John W. Thomas: A Memorial*, 125. The Sam Davis Monument would eventually be placed on the grounds of the capital in Nashville.

<sup>34</sup> "The John W. Thomas Memorial," *Confederate Veteran* 14:2 (February 1908): 55.



Figure 15. Battlefield Marker Erected by the Railroad. Stones River National Battlefield.

#### REDOUBT BRANNAN

But the railroad went beyond marking prominent sites along its line; the NC&StL purchased Redoubt Brannan, one of the remaining portions of Fortress Rosecrans.

Brannan was one of four interior redoubts, forts within the fort, that were intended to be fall back positions in case the walls of the fortress were breached. An artillery piece and crew was stationed inside. From its position atop a steep hill, the redoubt provided defense for both the Nashville Pike and railroad bridges that traversed the river nearby.

By the turn of the century, much of Fortress Rosecrans had already been lost to erosion and leveling by landowners to reclaim the area for agricultural and commercial

uses. It is not known if there was an impending threat to the redoubt that prompted the railroad to purchase the lot, but on July 21, 1904, the NC&StL paid H.L. and Bettie Fox \$250 for 4.66 acres that encompassed the remains of the redoubt. The railroad later acquired three bronze Napoleon cannons of Civil War vintage, which they placed on the outer walls so that they would be visible to their passengers as the train passed over Stones River.<sup>35</sup>

Like erecting markers along the railroad, purchasing the redoubt was also a testament to Thomas's commitment to commemoration. The expenditure was not necessary to promote the railroad or its battlefield route; one would think that a simple marker would have sufficed. Thomas may have been concerned that landowners would eventually destroy the redoubt to make way for new development. Although the Union army had constructed the redoubt after the Battle of Stones River, and no action took place in the area where it stood, it was nonetheless an important part of Murfreesboro's Civil War history. By taking control of the earthwork, the NC&StL protected that history. In this case, the railroad did not stop at simple commemoration—ownership of the redoubt was preservation for preservation's sake (Figure 16).

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<sup>35</sup> Deed Book 44, 597-598, Office of the Register of Deeds, Rutherford County, TN.



Figure 16. Redoubt Brannan. Photographed by Albert Kern, c. 1900. Dayton History.

#### ARTILLERY MONUMENT

Civil War commemoration was John W. Thomas's pet project—he could justify the expense of that project by using it to attract tourists to his railroad. Not coincidentally, the railroad's commemorative activities fell off dramatically after Thomas's sudden death in February 1906. Yet the railroad's grandest commemorative gesture on the Stones River battlefield came about shortly thereafter. As was reported at the time, "it was discovered that [Thomas] contemplated marking the really pivotal point of the battle of Murfreesboro or Stones River—viz., the location of the masked battery of fifty-eight guns placed near McFadden's Ford." This was the site where Union artillery repulsed Breckinridge's ill-fated assault on the afternoon of January 2, 1863. It was on this high ground overlooking the river that the NC&StL constructed a thirty-four foot white



obelisk that could be seen from the train as it passed the National Cemetery about one-half mile away (Figure 17).<sup>36</sup>

A *Confederate Veteran* article implied that Thomas's wish to erect a monument on the site was unknown to those around him until "numerous plans and suggestions and an inscription for the monument were found among [his] papers." This is doubtful because Thomas, as agent of the railway, had actually purchased 1.55 acres on the ridge from E.P. and Lutie B. Leach for \$155 on November 24, 1905, three months before his death. It seems unlikely that he made the purchase without the knowledge of his

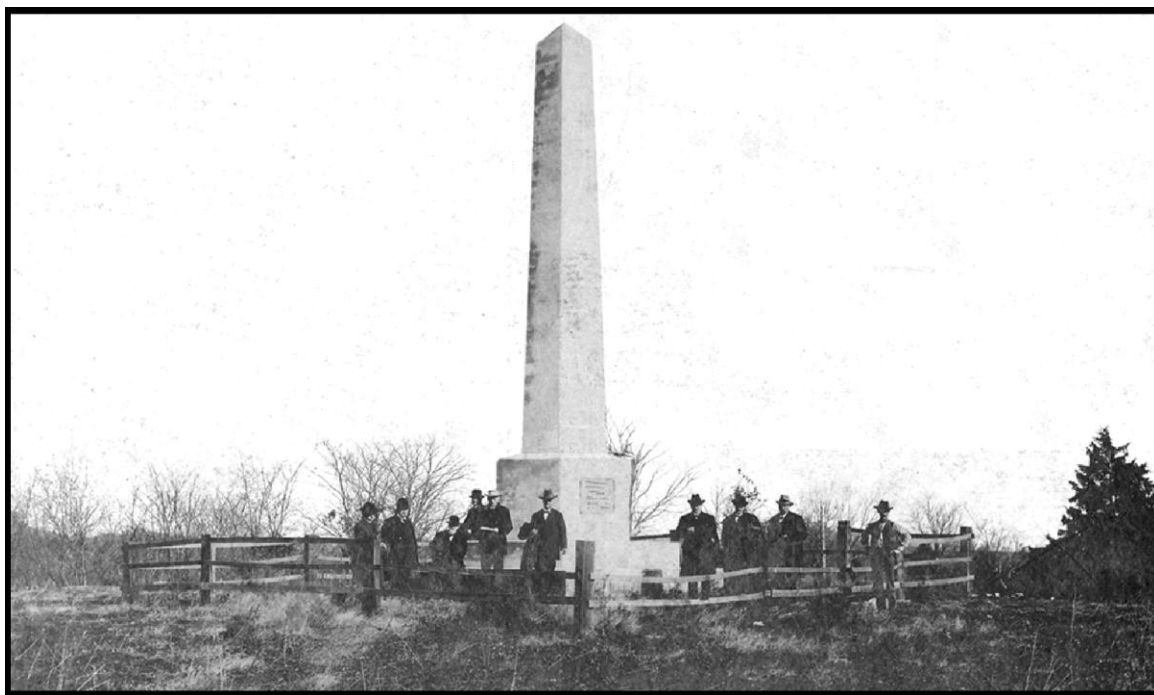


Figure 17. The Artillery Monument. This is the earliest known photograph of the monument, taken in December 1907. Stones River National Battlefield.

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<sup>36</sup> *Confederate Veteran* 14:2 (February 1908): 55.

family or other railroad officials, or that they were unaware of his intent for the property.<sup>37</sup>

Regardless, the monument, composed of Portland cement with a “granite-dust” finish, was soon placed on that parcel at the direction of the NC&StL’s Chairman, E.C. Lewis. The monument was designed by W.H. Burk, “an expert and bold engineer in reinforced concrete,” and NC&StL engineer Hunter McDonald. A later railroad official would report that the construction of the monument cost \$859.02. On one side of the base, a bronze tablet contained the inscription supposedly written by Thomas: “On January 2, 1863, at 3:00 p.m. there were stationed on this hill, fifty-eight cannon, commanding the field across the river, and as the Confederates advanced over this field, the shot and shell from these guns, resulted in a loss of eighteen-hundred killed and wounded in less than an hour.” Like the railroad’s battlefield tourism publications, the inscription was neutral, stating cold facts and favoring neither side except in the point of view of the reader.<sup>38</sup>

Thomas’s wish to place the monument on the position occupied by the Union artillery rather than in the field where Breckinridge’s men had advanced was a matter of practicality. The ridge was the highest ground, allowing the monument to be visible from some distance, particularly from the railroad. Had the railroad placed it in the field on the

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., Deed Book 46, 348-350, Office of the Register of Deeds, Rutherford County, TN.

<sup>38</sup> H.H. Cartwright to Ewin L. Davis, August 31, 1927, War Department Files, 1926-1933, Stones River National Battlefield; *Confederate Veteran* 14:2 (February 1908): 55. The bronze tablet was dated July 1906.

opposite bank of the river, which was significantly lower, it could only have been seen by those who were nearby. Additionally, had the site been closer to the railroad, there would have been no need to construct such a large obelisk. Placement of the monument was not intended to commemorate the Union victory more than the Confederate loss, although the structure would become commonly known as the “Artillery Monument” as opposed to something more neutral.

#### MILITARY PARK LEGISLATION

Congress was less willing to create more battlefield parks after the establishment of the Vicksburg park. In 1902 there were fourteen bills pending in Congress to create new military parks. In addition to Stones River, bills had been introduced to reserve Petersburg, Valley Forge, Atlanta, Perryville, Brandywine, Wilson’s Creek, Franklin, Fort Frederick, Ticonderoga, Yorktown, Fort Stevens, and Jamestown. Another bill called for the establishment of a “memorial park” in Virginia of over 6,500 acres, encompassing the Civil War battlefields of Fredericksburg, Salem Church, Chancellorsville, the Wilderness, and Spotsylvania Courthouse.<sup>39</sup>

The House Committee on Military Affairs recommended passage of the Fredericksburg bill in a favorable report written by committee member James Hay, a Democrat from (not surprisingly) Virginia. However, there was strong dissent by a few of the committee members, who voiced their concerns in a minority report questioning the creation of the park. The minority report was written by New Jersey Republican Richard

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<sup>39</sup> *House Reports*, 57th Cong., 1st sess., H. Rept. 771, 1, 8.

Parker, the acting chair of the committee, and endorsed by Republicans John H.

Ketcham, a Civil War veteran from New York, and Minnesotan Frederick C. Stevens.<sup>40</sup>

Parker and the others were not opposed to the Fredericksburg park *per se*. Their concerns were with the way in which Congress chose battlefields for preservation, and the commission system that oversaw their creation. “These bills call for an aggregate appropriation of at least \$1,800,000 for beginning the acquisition of the lands alone,” Parker wrote, “each with peculiar merit and points of excellence.” He noted that “in at least one case options are presented upon land in an improving situation—options which will expire and cannot be renewed,” likely referring to the Association’s acquisition of options on the Stones River battlefield. He stated that it was impossible for the committee to “report favorably all of the many parks that are proposed,” and that “it is not thought fair . . . that a report should be made on a single park without considering it in connection with the other parks that are proposed and without determining which shall be selected.” The minority’s opinion was that all of the park bills before them should be reviewed “before deciding which exhibits the greatest excellence and which would promise the greatest benefits to the public and warrant the expenditure of the large sums necessary,” and that it “would be wise to consider . . . the various points of historical interest, natural beauty, surroundings, location, means of communication, and opportunity for study of

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<sup>40</sup> H. Rept. 771, 1, 5.

military movements, and then finally determine upon some plan that should harmonize and complete a system of national military parks.”<sup>41</sup>

Parker went on to write that “there have been thus far established five national military parks . . . governed by four separate commissions, each of which has its own plan and theory of utilizing, improving, embellishing, and maintaining their respective charges.” He noted that “These four commissions have each three commissioners, drawing large salaries, and a corps of clerks, messengers, superintendents, and other subordinates,” at an annual cost of almost \$145,000. The minority opinion was that a “single system of control should be adopted that will avoid the haphazard plan of separate commissions, each of which booms its own park, and all of which work at cross purposes,” and that Congress “should go slowly as to any new park and compare the advantages of the various projects.” They felt that “the whole system of parks” should be “examined and a definite and comprehensive plan of extension and improvement adopted,” including a single, national commission that would oversee all of the existing and potential military parks.<sup>42</sup>

Parker did not stop with offering an opinion in the minority report. Two months later, he authored a favorable report in support of H.R. 14351, a new bill drafted by the Military Affairs committee with assistance from the War Department. They designed this

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 8-9.

new bill to reform the way military parks were selected and governed, as outlined by Parker in his report, and an earlier version of the bill written by Rep. Stevens.<sup>43</sup>

“This is a bill to establish a single national military park commission, in which the present commissions shall be merged,” Parker wrote, adding that “separate commissions were necessary to prepare” the original parks. But, “the system is too cumbrous to be continued . . . nor was it intended by the statutes which established these parks.” The bill abolished the “power of the present park commission of Chickamauga, Shiloh, Gettysburg, and Vicksburg at the end of two years, or earlier, if their work is done,” and transferred their duties to “a national military park commission, subject to the supervision of the Secretary of War.” The legislation called for this commission to consist of “five commissioners, and for the next ten years shall be veterans of the battles commemorated. It shall have an office in Washington, and the first members shall include one of each of the existing commissions and an officer of the army, active or retired.”<sup>44</sup>

H.R. 14351 stipulated that “no military parks are to be established except by the action of Congress after report of the commission, but the commission has the power to go immediately upon the work of marking our battlefields and buying separate points of interest, such as defensive works and points of view.” It required that “No one purchase

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<sup>43</sup> Ronald F. Lee, *The Origin and Evolution of the Military Park Idea* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1973), 34-36.

<sup>44</sup> *House Reports*, 57<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., H. Rpt. 2043, 2.

is to cost more than \$5000 and no moneys will be spent unless appropriation has been made for the purpose of the commission.”<sup>45</sup>

“Many other parks are now urged upon Congress, each by a bill creating a new commission,” Parker wrote, and “patriotism demands the preservation of these spots. But it is plain that they will not be preserved if a salaried commission has to be created for every spot and the surrounding country bought in and changed into a park for the benefit of some neighboring town, or for the glorification of its creators.” He strongly suggested that the plan followed at Antietam was the most feasible course of action for future battlefield preservation. “The work ought to be done as it was done at Antietam, by acquiring narrow roadways, maintaining the general condition of the country, setting up proper monuments and marks, and thus enabling the student and patriot to see how the battle was fought. All this will be comparatively inexpensive.”<sup>46</sup>

Parker also noted that “one great good result” expected with the Antietam plan was that the price of land should be more reasonable. He stated, “the moment that a statute orders such a purchase at any particular spot, values go up many fold.” The new commission, with only a limited and set sum at their disposal, would be forced to be more selective in choosing land to acquire. The “points of interest” selected would be “those which can be acquired most reasonably.”<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 2-3.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 4.

As Ronald F. Lee has noted, H.R. 14351 “marked a significant step forward in congressional awareness of the need for a national historic preservation policy.” However, the “determined opposition of the battlefield commissions, which had tremendous influence, caused the House to reject the recommendations” of the committee. Parker resubmitted amended versions of the bill five more times during his career, to no avail. Nonetheless, the “Antietam Plan” that Parker advocated, “remained an important feature of War Department and congressional thinking on battlefield preservation” for the next three decades.<sup>48</sup>

Clearly, Congress was unwilling to expend the enormous funds necessary to create new military parks on the scale seen in the 1890s; the “golden age” had come to a close. Despite this reluctance, Rep. Richardson dutifully continued to reintroduce the Stones River park bill in each new Congress until he retired in 1905, none of which made it out of committee. One of the first acts of his successor, William Cannon Houston, was to reintroduce the identical bill that Richardson had pursued before him. Houston had a personal connection to the Battlefield Association: he was the son-in-law of the group’s vice-president, William McClemore. Houston’s attempts met with no more success than Richardson’s, although he would persistently submit that bill with each new session of Congress in 1907, 1909, and 1911. He was joined by Tennessee’s U.S. Senators in these efforts, who also introduced identical bills in the Senate in 1908, 1909, and 1911. Regardless of these efforts, legislation to create any new military parks seemed to be a dead issue.

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<sup>48</sup> Lee, 33.



## THE ASSOCIATION OF THE SURVIVORS OF THE BATTLE OF STONES RIVER

Another organization was interested in promoting the preservation of the Stones River battlefield in this period. A group of Union veterans formed an organization in the late 1890s called the Association of the Survivors of the Battle of Stones River. The Survivors Association was made up almost entirely of residents of Indiana, and most had served in regiments from that state. The members held their first annual reunion on the anniversary of the battle in 1899, ringing in the new century reminiscing about their shared battle experience. The organization's purpose, as outlined in its constitution, was "to secure and maintain a closer communication between those whose ties of friendship were welded in the fires of a great battle," and to lobby the government to erect markers and monuments to "honor the sacred memory" of their fallen comrades."<sup>49</sup>

The membership of the Survivors Association included some of the more prominent veterans in Indiana. Three of the members, Edwin Nicar of South Bend, Argus D. Vanosdol of Madison, and Gilbert R. Stormont of Princeton, had served as the commander-in-chief of the Indiana Division of the GAR. A fourth, Orlando A. Somers, would serve in that capacity in 1909, and as national commander-in-chief of the organization in 1916, the first man to lead the GAR who had never attained a rank higher than private during the war.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> *Constitution and By-laws of the Association of the Survivors of the Battle of Stone's River* (Privately printed, 1907), 1-2.

<sup>50</sup> "Program of the Eight Annual Meeting of the Association of the Survivors of the Battle of Stones River" (Privately printed, 1907), back cover; J.P. Dunn, *Memorial*

Somers had served with the Thirty-ninth Indiana at Stones River, and after the war had a varied career as a teacher and superintendent of schools, deputy sheriff, hardware salesman, postmaster, and state legislator. He was particularly active within the Survivors Association, serving as an officer within the group over several years. At the group's annual meeting held in January 1908 in Kokomo (Somers's hometown), he presented a map that he had made of the battlefield to the assembled membership.<sup>51</sup>

The map "was the subject of much good-natured discussion" at the gathering. Somers explained that "there are a great many things about the battle that I do not know; but so far as I do know, the Somers map is the best map of Stone's River battlefield that there is in existence." He based his map on official reports, and there is no indication that he was aware of the map created by Oscar Jones nine years earlier. Somers told the group that he had made the map "because I wanted it in my library" and that "if I could, I would make every man who participated in the Battle of Stone's River acquainted with every movement during that battle," so that he "could tell the story to his children . . . and speak of it with pride."<sup>52</sup>

The pride that Somers felt and shared with his comrades explains why there was such a continued interest in recounting and preserving events and places of the past.

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*and Genealogical Record of Representative Citizens of Indiana* (Indianapolis: B.F. Bowen & Company, 1912), 513-518.

<sup>51</sup> Dunn, 513-518.

<sup>52</sup> *Proceedings of the Eighth Annual Session of the Survivors of the Battle of Stones River* (Privately printed, 1908), 3, 23.

Somers told the members, "I am one of the originators of this Association," Somers told the members, "neither by birthright nor by acquirement have I any great legacy to bequeath to those who bear my name." He felt that his greatest accomplishment had been his service in the Civil War. He added, "all I can say for myself is that I did the best I could." Somers's sentiment was shared by veterans North and South, and no doubt was a major motivation for the members of the Battlefield Association in Murfreesboro as well.<sup>53</sup>

#### THE JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE INDIANA LEGISLATURE

There is no record of the Survivors Association and the Battlefield Association in Murfreesboro working together for the preservation of the battlefield, although interaction would have certainly been beneficial to both groups. From its inception, the Survivors Association maintained a standing committee whose purpose was to lobby for the creation of a national military park at Stones River. The group's by-laws established a committee of one member "from each congressional district in the State of Indiana who may act independently or in conjunction with like communities from other States whose duty it shall be to memorialize congress through its members to procure the lands and create a National Park upon the site of the battlefield." The by-laws also stipulated that the Park Committee was "to stand until congress shall have taken favorable or adverse action."<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> *Proceedings of the Eighth Annual Session*, 23.

<sup>54</sup> *Constitution of the Survivors Association*, 5.

The committee was composed of fourteen members, one from each of Indiana's thirteen Congressional districts, plus an additional member from the Seventh District, which included Indianapolis. Their lobbying effort was most effective in 1907, due primarily to the work of David H. Olive, one of the two committee members from Indianapolis. Olive had entered the Union army as a sergeant in the Eighty-sixth Indiana Infantry and was promoted to lieutenant during the war. In the 1870s, he served as a clerk and Principal Secretary of the Indiana senate. By 1907, he was the land clerk in the State Auditor's office, and his son, thirty-one year old lawyer Frank C. Olive, was a representative in the state legislature.<sup>55</sup>

Olive reported that he had learned that a bill to create a military park at Stones River was going to be put before Congress in 1907, but "would not come up ... unless recommended." Getting a copy of the bill, Olive had hastily drawn up a resolution, which his son introduced to the legislature. The resolution instructed the Senators and Representatives of Indiana to support and "use their influence" to get the bill passed. It also asked that "provision be made to mark the location of all Indiana regiments participating in this battle." The resolution easily passed both houses of the General Assembly in February 1907. As soon as the resolution passed, Olive sent copies to each

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<sup>55</sup> *Journal of the Indiana State Senate, 1872* (Indianapolis: R.J. Bright, 1872), 4, 6-7; "Frank C. Olive," *Legislative and State Manual for Indiana, 1907* (Indianapolis: William B. Burford, 1907), 160.

of Indiana's representatives in the U.S. House and Senate. The park bill was introduced, "but it was too late in the session to do anything" and Congress adjourned.<sup>56</sup>

Olive urged his comrades to make a push to get the park bill passed, telling them "if we undertake to get that bill through, we must do the work." His years in the political arena showed when he told them that "there must be a little politics used in this ... go to your Congressman and tell him what you want ... unless your congressman is backing it up and is told what you expect him to do, he won't do it. And it is a pretty good time to tell them now, because an election is coming on after awhile." Despite the efforts of David Olive and the Survivors Association, the timing did not prove to be right as, once again, a bill to establish a military park at Stones River failed in Congress.<sup>57</sup>

#### EFFORT TO MARK THE BATTLEFIELD

By 1912, any hope of establishing a national military park at Stones River like the ones at Chickamauga or Shiloh was practically gone. But those who supported the park were looking at other ways to commemorate the battlefield. The idea that emerged was very much in keeping with the more limited Antietam Plan favored by both the War Department and Congress. On January 25, 1912, Rep. Houston introduced legislation to

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<sup>56</sup> *Proceedings of the Eighth Annual Session*, 20-21; House Concurrent Resolution No. 2, *Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Indiana*, Vol. I (Indianapolis: William B. Burford, 1907), 435.

<sup>57</sup> *Proceedings of the Eighth Annual Session*, 21.

create a system of markers on the Stones River battlefield under the direction of the Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Park Commission.<sup>58</sup>

The bill called for the Chickamauga Commission “to establish an accurate system of markers on the battle field of Stones River.” The Commission was to review the official records and other battle accounts to establish the correct placement of the markers. The bill allowed the Commission to “employ expert service” and to “be paid their own expenses while actually engaged.” The bill carried an appropriation of five thousand dollars to finance this work. The abandonment of the effort to create a large military park on the scale of Chickamauga or Shiloh was replaced with a more limited, cost-effective, and reasonable alternative.<sup>59</sup>

The War Department forwarded a copy of the bill to Charles H. Grosvenor, chairman of the Chickamauga Commission, on January 30, 1912. Grosvenor wasted no time in voicing his opinion on the matter. On February 1, Grosvenor replied to the War Department that “he has no personal knowledge of the situation at the Stones River Battlefield and doubts very much whether it is possible to comply with the terms of the bill.” He went on to state that “he does not know that the Government owns any land or property outside of the burial places on that battlefield and he doubts very much whether any intelligent information can be given or any markers satisfactorily placed.” He noted that as a “preliminary to any kind of inspection of this matter would require the printing

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<sup>58</sup> H.R. 18713, 62<sup>nd</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

of all the official reports of the battle and then doubtless it would be ascertained that there had been invoked a great number of disputes about trivial matters.” Grosvenor feared that “a movement of this character might not result in anything that would be beneficial to the Government or satisfactory to the armies that fought on the battlefield.”<sup>60</sup>

Grosvenor’s immediate opposition to the effort of marking the Stones River battlefield was surprising. He had served as an officer in the Eighteenth Ohio Infantry during the war, seeing action at Stones River, leading the regiment at Chickamauga, and a brigade at Nashville. After the war he served as an influential Ohio Republican in Congress. As such, he had been a sponsor of the legislation to create the Chickamauga and Chattanooga park, as well as the legislation for the dedication ceremonies. Timothy Smith has been written that, when Grosvenor was made chairman of the park’s commission in 1910, “there was perhaps no living individual more dedicated to Chickamauga.” As a veteran of Stones River and a proponent of battlefield preservation, Grosvenor’s stance against the plan to mark the battlefield seems at odds with his own history.<sup>61</sup>

Soon after Rep. Houston’s bill was introduced, Jesse Sparks of the Stones River Battlefield and Park Association sent a letter to Grosvenor, seeking the support of the Chickamauga Commission. The letter presents telling evidence as to how diminished the

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<sup>60</sup> Robert E. Parker to Richard B. Randolph, June 10, 1912, Central Files Collection, Folder H30, Stones River National Battlefield.

<sup>61</sup> Timothy B. Smith, *A Chickamauga Memorial: The Establishment of America’s First National Military Park* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2009), 114.

Association's activity had become; the letterhead included the names of the Association's officers, several of whom had long since passed away.

"I beg to advise you," Sparks wrote on February 16, "that we have a chartered organization, and for several years past have been endeavoring to get the government to buy this field as they did Chickamauga, but not succeeding in that we have hit upon the above plan to have it marked, and hope that we will have your hearty co-operation in getting this bill through Congress." Sparks asked Grosvenor and the Chickamauga Commission to "render us all the assistance you possibly can, and will be very glad to hear from you with suggestions that you may see proper to make to assist in bringing about this work." Sparks was obviously unaware of Grosvenor's opposition to the idea.<sup>62</sup>

Grosvenor's reply to Sparks was short and non-committal, offering none of the support or advice that was sought. "I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of February 16th in reference to the bill recently introduced in regard to the battlefield of Stones River. I beg to advise that we shall await any action by Congress or the War Department and will execute whatever orders come to us," was the extent of his answer to Spark's inquiry.<sup>63</sup>

Grosvenor let the matter linger for a few months before making his official reply. He sent his opinion (and therefore the official stance of the Chickamauga Commission) to

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<sup>62</sup> Jesse W. Sparks to the Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Park Commission, February 16, 1912, Central Files Collection, Folder H30, Stones River National Battlefield.

<sup>63</sup> Charles H. Grosvenor to Jesse W. Sparks, February 20, 1912, Central Files Collection, Folder H30, Stones River National Battlefield.



the Secretary of War on June 7. Grosvenor wrote that “the Commission had careful consideration of the proposition involved in the bill and are satisfied that it is impossible to arrive at any accurate compliance with the order therein made. More than fifty years have elapsed since the battle of Stone’s River and the marks, locations, earth works, or whatever else there was there are entirely obliterated.” Grosvenor added that “so far as we are advised, the Government owns no property there and could not carry into effect the proposition of this bill without the purchase by agreement or condemnation of the land on which the battle took place.” Grosvenor concluded by stating that “the Commission is of the opinion that the bill should not pass.”<sup>64</sup>

Grosvenor’s assertion that “careful consideration” was given to the bill is not supported by evidence. His opinion against the bill in June was not materially different than the argument he had made in February, within a week of the legislation’s introduction. There is no record of Grosvenor or anyone from the Chickamauga Commission visiting the Stones River battlefield to see the situation for themselves, and the report relies on the “advice” of parties unknown. Grosvenor’s fear that land would have to be purchased to mark the battlefield belies a belief that a significant, and expensive, amount of land would be necessary for the purpose. More likely, marking the battlefield would have only necessitated the acquisition of small parcels, and those would not necessarily have been large in number.

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<sup>64</sup> Charles H. Grosvenor to the Secretary of War, June 7, 1912, Central Files Collection, Folder H30, Stones River National Battlefield.

Perhaps Grosvenor's chief motive for opposing the bill was the idea that Civil War military parks should be reserved as one representative battlefield commemorating each of the major armies engaged in the war. The opposing armies at Stones River, the Union Army of the Cumberland and the Confederate Army of Tennessee, were essentially the same armies that had fought one another at Chickamauga and Chattanooga and were therefore already well represented. Although the bill called for a very limited marking of the Stones River battlefield rather than a military park on the scale of those created during the 1890s, any action by Congress to set aside the battlefield in any form may have seemed redundant and unnecessary to Grosvenor and the Chickamauga Commission.

The Committee on Military Affairs did not report Rep. Houston's bill back to the House of Representatives favorably or unfavorably. The Association's last substantial effort to have the Stones River battlefield set aside in some fashion died in committee.

#### EFFORT TO ACQUIRE DONATED LAND FOR PARKS

Soon after Houston's bill stalled, one of Tennessee's U.S. Senators became involved in the preservation effort, but with a different approach. In August 1914, Senator Luke Lea introduced a bill that authorized the Secretary of War "to accept deeds of gift or conveyance from the State of Tennessee, or any county or counties thereof, or any citizen, person, or association, of lands in Davidson County, Rutherford County, and Williamson County ... embracing the battle fields ... where were fought the battles of Nashville, Stones River, Murfreesboro, and Franklin." In addition to the battlefields, the "Hermitage," President Andrew Jackson's home in Nashville, was also included. Once

accepted, these lands were to be “forever dedicated for the purposes of national military parks . . . to be developed and maintained as such by the United States of America.” This plan would have circumvented the great expense of acquiring battlefield lands, which was the largest obstacle for the establishment of any new military parks. There is no evidence that the remaining members of the Stones River Battlefield and Park Association or other Rutherford County citizens were involved with Lea’s legislation, although it was an opportunity for the local community to benefit from the creation of a park, provided the lands were acquired privately and then donated to the government.<sup>65</sup>

Once the legislation was referred to the Senate Committee on Military Affairs, Lea himself wrote the favorable report recommending passage of the bill. In regard to Stones River, he wrote that “it is believed that if this bill passes, the magnificent body of land, admirably adapted to park purposes, would be acquired and donated to the Federal Government.” He argued that if the bill passed and “the tracts of land upon which these battles were fought are not donated to the Government, no responsibility or liability is incurred,” but if the lands were conveyed the government would “acquire most valuable properties,” with only the “obligation . . . to maintain them as military parks.”<sup>66</sup>

Lea’s bill was passed by the Senate in October 1914 and sent to the House where it was referred to committee, but apparently was not acted upon. Lea reintroduced the same bill in December 1915, and again in February 1917, when Congress set a precedent with Kennesaw Mountain.

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<sup>65</sup> S. 6384, 63<sup>rd</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess.

<sup>66</sup> *Senate Reports*. 63rd Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., S. Rept. 788.

The Kennesaw Mountain Battlefield Association had acquired sixty acres of that Georgia battlefield on which Illinois troops had been heavily engaged. In 1914, they unveiled a monument to those soldiers during the observance of the fiftieth anniversary of the battle. By 1916, the Kennesaw Association had come to the realization that the costs for restoring and maintaining the site were more than they could afford. They offered the property to the Secretary of War, who could not accept it without approval from Congress. To that end, powerful Illinois Rep. Joseph G. Cannon introduced legislation to accept the parcel as a gift, which was passed on February 8, 1917. Nonetheless, Lea's bill, reintroduced nineteen days later, did not get approved.<sup>67</sup>

#### THE DIXIE HIGHWAY

The early twentieth century was an era of great technological change, and one of these developments would directly impact the Stones River battlefield. From 1910 to 1920, the popularity of automobiles increased exponentially. At first automobiles had been the plaything of the wealthier class. Mass production led to cheaper vehicles and expanded the market to those of lesser means. Automobile touring grew in popularity as a recreational activity. The popularity of automobiling created a demand for better roads and more accessible services and accommodations for travelers. Local governments and

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<sup>67</sup> Michael A. Capps, *Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park Administrative History* (National Park Service, 1994), Appendix 1. Capps notes that "problems establishing a clear title to the property delayed its transfer" until the mid-1920s.

business leaders realized that automobile tourism “presented unprecedented opportunities for making money,”—better roads would generate new business for their communities.<sup>68</sup>

A number of automobile clubs worked with local leaders to develop good roads during this period. These systems were unlike the Interstate highway system the federal government created a half-century later; these highways did not involve the construction of entirely new roads. Highway proponents called for the improvement of existing roads up to a higher, and uniform, standard. This insured that travelers would find similar road conditions along these routes.

Many Tennesseans were concerned that their state had become what has been called a “detour state,” meaning that poor road conditions caused travelers to avoid the state altogether. The potential loss of an important revenue stream united communities in support of the proposed “Dixie Highway.” The Dixie Highway would stretch from Michigan to Miami and would wind through Tennessee. At question was what part of Tennessee would play host to the highway.<sup>69</sup>

In 1915, proponents of this road system came together to form the Dixie Highway Association. Representatives of seven midwestern and southern states met in Chattanooga to determine the route. Naturally, there was a great deal of competition

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<sup>68</sup> Howard Lawrence Preston, *Dirt Roads to Dixie: Accessibility and Modernization in the South, 1885-1935* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991), 39-40.

<sup>69</sup> See Leslie N. Sharp, *Tennessee’s Dixie Highway: Springfield to Chattanooga* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2011), 7-8.

between cities and towns to ensure that this route would pass through their communities.<sup>70</sup>

Local leaders in Middle Tennessee promoted a Nashville to Chattanooga route that would encompass Murfreesboro, as opposed to a course that would go through East Tennessee. Congressman Joseph W. Byrns and Major E.B. Stahlman of Nashville made the case for this route at the meeting. They noted that Nashville had been included in the proposal from the beginning and a great deal of road improvements had already been made in that area, “much of it being hard surfaced highway.” One of their main selling points was that this route would encompass a number of sites of historical interest, such as the Hermitage and Civil War battlefields, specifically referencing Stones River.<sup>71</sup>

These major highways often ran through or near many of the major battlefields of the Civil War. Like railroads, this was no coincidence. Because these highways did not consist of purpose-built roads, but rather a system of improvements to existing roads, they generally followed the path of major roads that had existed for decades, like the Nashville Pike. During the Civil War, these thoroughfares were the same routes used by both armies. For example, the Dixie Highway combined routes that passed through Chattanooga, Chickamauga, Tunnel Hill, Resaca, and Atlanta.

In the end, the representatives decided that the Dixie Highway would have two branches in Tennessee. The western branch came through Kentucky south to Springfield,

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<sup>70</sup> Preston, 55.

<sup>71</sup> “East Coast Sure to Get Highway Route From Dixie,” *Tampa Morning Tribune*, May 22, 1915, 1.

through Nashville, Murfreesboro, and Tullahoma to Chattanooga. Supporters of a national military park at Stones River had always cited the battlefield's ease of access by the railroad and Nashville Pike as an advantage. The proposed Middle Tennessee route would encompass the old pike that ran directly through the battlefield, the scene of the Union's determined final stand on the first day of the Battle of Stones River. Local boosters were solidly behind the proposal; an article in a local newspaper stated that the improved highway would drive tourism and commerce in Murfreesboro and Rutherford County and "accrue all the advantages" that Chattanooga and Nashville enjoyed.<sup>72</sup>

As Howard Preston has noted, "Tourist camps, auto courts, service stations, and private homes open to the public for overnight accommodations were all new to the roadscape in the south during the 1920s . . . They were expression of the thriving new national car culture and symbolic of the new wave of modernization engulfing the region." One local businessman capitalized on the expanding tourist trade soon after Rutherford County completed a major portion of the improved road in the early 1920s. Floyd Overall owned the Winter Garden Filling Station, a "tourist camp" catering to travelers. The camp was on the Dixie Highway near Murfreesboro "just north of the underpass." (Presumably the newly-constructed underpass that took the highway underneath the railroad and near the site of General Bragg's headquarters during the battle.) Overall's camp, managed by Bob Thurston, was "patterned after those found in the West" and included space for "six tourist parties . . . under one roof with a private

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<sup>72</sup> See Sharp, 7-8.

garage adjoining each room.” Overall provided travelers with beds, running water, electricity, heaters, and a community kitchen, along with an attached sandwich shop. Reportedly, the camp was so popular that Overall was planning to add sixteen new rooms by 1929. The Dixie Highway provided the infrastructure for increased tourism and local development for Murfreesboro, driven in part by interest in the Stones River battlefield.<sup>73</sup>

### CHANGING TIMES

As the new century progressed it was evident that there was little support in Congress for creating new military parks. Indeed, during the period from 1900 to 1925, only five battlefield commemorative bills were passed. Two of these called for monuments at King’s Mountain, South Carolina, and New Orleans, Louisiana, though there were two separate authorizations for a small park at Guilford Courthouse, North Carolina, and the acceptance of the donated Kennesaw Mountain tract (the only Civil War site among the five). The declining political sway of Civil War veterans was among the causes for congressional inattention. Organizations such as the GAR and UCV, with their membership diminished by old age and death, did not carry the weight they had in the past. The old soldiers themselves had become something of a novelty.<sup>74</sup>

A half-century removed from the Civil War, the nation was a very different place. In 1913 one of the last great reunions of the Blue and Gray was held to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg, described as the “exclamation mark of the

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid.; Preston, 41; “Tourist Camp On Nashville Highway Plans to Enlarge,” *Murfreesboro Home Journal*, January 29, 1929, 1.

<sup>74</sup> Lee, 37.



American reunion.” That event demonstrated just how much the nation had changed; as David Blight has pointed out, it would have “warmed the hearts of even the most compulsive advocates of Taylorism, the [recent] popular theory of industrial and management efficiency.” The camps for an estimated 50,000 veterans included miles of avenues, hundreds of electric lights, and “ninety modern latrines.”<sup>75</sup>

The world in which men and women of the Civil War generation found themselves had evolved into something very different from the one of their youth. America in the mid-nineteenth century has been described as a “society of island communities,” restricted by weak communication and interaction with other communities. By the early twentieth century, technology had transformed “the personal, informal ways of the community,” into a “new scheme . . . derived from the regulative, hierarchical needs of urban-industrial life.”<sup>76</sup>

One historian has written that “industrial development changed the nature of work and daily life and gave rise to an extensive network of corporations that integrated the country into a national economy.” That national economy allowed the United States to become a world power, acquiring an empire “through diplomatic negotiations and the Spanish-American War . . . a position confirmed by its role in World War I.”<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (New York: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), 383-385.

<sup>76</sup> Robert H. Weibe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), xiii-xiv.

<sup>77</sup> Lynn Dumenil, *The Modern Temper: American Culture and Society in the 1920s* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995), 4-5.

The technological advances that had created so much wealth and power also led to the great carnage of that war. In turn, that carnage created doubt among many, including the sons and grandsons of Civil War veterans returning from Europe, in the notions of valor and sacrifice that had sustained the Civil War generation for decades. In a nation preoccupied with rapid societal change and an overseas war, the thinning ranks of Civil War veterans were not forgotten, but their role and influence in public and institutional life declined significantly.

In the 1890s, most of the political and business leaders of Murfreesboro and Rutherford County had been veterans of the Civil War. As more and more of these men retired from public life or passed away, a new generation took their place at the forefront of the community. Old organizations like the UCV and GAR, which had once been fraternities of local leaders, gave way to new “fraternities,” such as the Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs. These new leaders were interested in a military park at Stones River as well. On one hand, their interest was rooted in honoring the old veterans and the great battle that took place in their hometown. But, on the other, like other business-savvy groups around the nation, they could also see the great economic advantage that a site of historical interest to tourists could provide. It was this new generation that would have to champion the establishment of a military park at Stones River in the 1920s.

## CHAPTER IV:

### CREATING STONES RIVER NATIONAL MILITARY PARK, 1926-1932

#### THE SECOND WAVE OF BATTLEFIELD PRESERVATION

In the 1920s Congress was once again interested in preserving and marking the nation's historic battlefields. Victory in the World War fueled a sense of patriotism among Americans similar to what the nation had experienced during the centennial in 1876. Having gone through the great crucible of a horrific war, there was a desire to highlight those things that brought the nation together instead of the doubt that threatened cohesiveness. In the 1870s the threat had been divisiveness and mistrust in the wake of civil war. In the 1920s anxiety over modernity and societal change threatened traditional values that many wanted to reaffirm. The 1920s were prosperous times; expendable income and the automobile made travel more popular than ever for a greater number of Americans. As the War Department concluded its work documenting the battlefields of Europe and establishing the many national cemeteries there, the interest in creating more military parks at home increased.<sup>1</sup>

The result of this interest would be the "Second Wave" of battlefield preservation that would see military parks in the United States double in number. All of these parks would follow the Antietam Plan of limited scope, unlike the huge parks established in the

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<sup>1</sup> See Ronald F. Lee, *The Origin and Evolution of the Military Park Idea* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1973), 38-39; Timothy B. Smith, *The Golden Age of Battlefield Preservation: The Decade of the 1890s and the Establishment of America's First Five Military Parks* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2008), 211-212.

1890s. By the mid-1920s, there were twenty-eight bills for battlefield commemoration pending in Congress. Of these, fourteen called for the authorization of full-scale military parks. The appropriations requested for these parks totaled almost \$6,000,000. The long-standing opposition to the high cost of establishing new military parks in the style of a Gettysburg or Chickamauga remained a concern of both Congress and the administration of President Calvin Coolidge. The House Committee on Military Affairs worked to establish a broad policy for historic preservation to deal with the backlog. Congress needed some system to assist them with determining which sites they would preserve and to what extent that preservation would take—rather a military park or a single monument or markers.<sup>2</sup>

Republican Rep. Noble Johnson of Indiana, a member of that committee, introduced a bill in February 1926 that revived the national military park commission idea championed by Rep. Parker in 1902. H.R. 9765 called for a commission of “seven members, to be appointed by the President, to make a study of all the battle fields of various wars in which the United States or the thirteen colonies have been engaged.” The bill intended that the commission would then submit a commemoration plan to Congress.<sup>3</sup>

Johnson requested that Secretary of War Dwight F. Davis give his opinion on the bill. In his reply, Davis stated that the “legislation appears to me to be objectionable and unnecessary.” His objections included creating a separate body rather than using existing

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<sup>2</sup> Lee, 39; *House Reports*, 69<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., H. Rept. 1071, 1.

<sup>3</sup> H. Rept. 1071, 9.

agencies, and that the cost of travel was “unnecessary expense under the existing program of economy.” Davis believed that the same results would be achieved by legislation that gave the Secretary of War the authority to make a battlefield study and provide Congress with a plan for commemoration.<sup>4</sup>

Johnson agreed with Davis and requested that the Secretary draft the legislation as he suggested. Davis’s draft authorized the Secretary of War to make “studies and investigations” of all of the battle sites within the nation’s borders, for all wars, and to suggest a plan for commemoration for each. The Secretary would submit a preliminary plan to Congress detailing how the act could be “most economically carried out,” and stipulated that “hereafter no real estate shall be purchased for military park purposes by the Government” until a report has been made and approved for any particular site.<sup>5</sup>

Johnson quickly introduced this draft legislation as H.R. 11613, and he also wrote the report of the Military Affairs committee that recommended that Congress approve the act. “Because of the number of measures introduced,” Johnson wrote, “and the evident interest in Congress in the establishment of these military parks . . . the study and investigations called for . . . will be the greatest interest and importance in determining what action should be taken by Congress.” Congress passed the bill and President Coolidge signed it into law in June 1926. According to Lee, this was “the first legislation

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 10.

enacted by the Congress of the United States to provide for a broad historic sites survey.”<sup>6</sup>

#### CLASSIFICATION OF BATTLEFIELDS

The War Department had already created a framework for prioritizing battlefields for preservation. The Army War College had completed a study to classify battlefields according to importance in 1925. The study was the work of the Historical Section of the War College, directed by Lieutenant Colonel C.A. Bach. Secretary Davis had approved it in June of that year. Bach and his staff had reviewed fifty years of legislation on the topic, and determined that previous commemorative actions by Congress had set precedents for “an appropriate battlefield classification scheme for the future.”<sup>7</sup>

The review showed that past Congresses had provided for three ways of commemoration. First was the establishment of national military parks; second, marking significant points with markers or monuments, but not establishing a park; and lastly, by erecting single monuments. The Historical Section assigned battles to two classes. Class I included “battles of such great importance and far-reaching effect as to warrant . . . establishment of national military parks.” Class II was composed of “battles sufficiently important to warrant commemoration . . . as national monuments.” Bach’s report stated that in the opinion of the War Department, “national military parks should as a general thing cover a comparatively large area of ground,” and that “the expense of maintaining

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 1; Lee, 39.

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

such a park is so great as to indicate that the number should be kept fairly low.” Bach explained that “less important and extensive engagements which have nevertheless a definite military and political effect” should cover “limited areas of ground . . . and the whole aggregation of separate areas designated as a national monument.”<sup>8</sup>

The Historical Section further divided Class II into Class IIa and IIb because of “the great difference in the importance of these battles.” Class IIa included sites “of such great military and historic interest as to warrant locating and indicating the battle lines of the forces engaged by a series of markers or tablets, but not necessarily by memorial monuments.” Class IIb sites were “of sufficient historic interest to be worthy of some form of monument, tablet, or marker to indicate the location of the battle field.”<sup>9</sup>

The Historical Section considered only five sites to be worthy of Class I: the Revolutionary War battlefields of Saratoga and Yorktown, and the Civil War battlegrounds of Gettysburg, Chickamauga-Chattanooga, and Vicksburg. Military parks existed at the three Civil War sites, and at Shiloh. Although Shiloh was not included with this class according to the Historical Section’s criteria, Bach noted that Shiloh had been placed in Class I by congressional authorization of the park. Bach then explained that since “each of the three great Union armies . . . has its national military park on the site of its most famous battle, all the other important battles of these armies are placed in Class

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<sup>8</sup> H. Rept. 1071, 2.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

II.” The Army of the Cumberland was represented by Chickamauga—considered to be their greatest battle.<sup>10</sup>

The Historical Section assigned the Battle of Stones River to Class IIa, one of fifteen Civil War engagements so designated, such as First and Second Manassas, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Petersburg, Atlanta, and Fort Donelson, also in Tennessee. These battlefields were considered of “far-reaching importance, in which the numbers engaged and the losses sustained, or the resultant military or political effects, were so great as to warrant their inclusion.” The report also noted that “should it be deemed important to preserve any one of these fields for professional military and historical study, it would be sufficient to mark the battle lines as on the field at Antietam.”<sup>11</sup>

In his report to Congress in December 1926, outlining the preliminary plan for how the studies and inspections could be “most economically carried out,” Secretary Davis noted that the first step required the “enumeration and classification of battle fields.” He noted that a “considerable amount” of that work had been accomplished by the Army War College, and that it was “expected that there would be no change in the principles of classification” established in Bach’s report.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 7-8.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>12</sup> *House Documents*, 69<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., H. Doc. 574, 1-2.



Davis also suggested that a policy be adopted that gave top priority to studies of battlefields where the “promise of free land has been given.” The Corps of Engineers would do initial investigations to be reviewed by representatives of the Army War College, the Quartermaster General, and the Chief of Engineers. Once the Secretary of War accepted a report, he would then charge the Quartermaster General with acquiring land, erecting markers and memorials, and administration and maintenance of the sites.<sup>13</sup>

#### THE STONES RIVER PARK BILL

Among the backlog of bills that had prompted action from Rep. Johnson and the Military Affairs committee was a new bill for creating a military park at Stones River. Congressman Ewin Lamar Davis, the successor to Houston, had introduced this new bill, H.R. 6246, on December 21, 1925. Davis was a native of Bedford County, born in 1876. He was a graduate of the Webb School and Vanderbilt University in Nashville. He graduated from Columbian (now George Washington) University Law School, in Washington, D.C., in 1899. That same year he began practicing law in Tullahoma. He was a circuit judge from 1910 until he entered Congress in 1919. Davis was well acquainted with Murfreesboro; since 1906, he had served on the Board of Trustees for the Tennessee College for Women located on East Main Street on the site of the old Union University.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 2-3.

<sup>14</sup> “Davis, Ewin Lamar, (1876-1949),” Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, online: <http://bioguide.congress.gov/>.

Davis's bill was substantially different from the previous park bills introduced by Richardson and Houston, though there were some similarities. H.R. 6246 called for the Secretary of War to appoint a commission that included a Union veteran, Confederate veteran, and an officer from the Corps of Engineers. Perhaps acknowledging that the pool of available veterans who had actually participated in the Battle of Stones River was thin, Davis specified that these commissioners, "as far as practicable," were to be selected for their familiarity with the battlefield terrain and the history of the engagement.<sup>15</sup>

The commission's duties were to inspect the battlefield and "carefully study the available records and historical data with respect to the location and movement of all troops," in order to preserve and mark the field for "professional military study," and submit a report to the Secretary of War. This report would "describe the portion or portions of land within the area of the battle field which the commission thinks should be acquired and embraced in a national park and the price at which such land can be purchased and its reasonable market value." Davis's bill did not call for a specific amount of land as his predecessor's bills had done. The report was to include a "map or maps showing the lines of battle and the locations of all troops engaged in the battle of Stones River and the location of the land [to] be acquired for the national park." Finally, the commission was to recommend the location of historical markers. Clearly, Ewin Davis held no expectation of a huge park along the lines of Shiloh or Vicksburg; the

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<sup>15</sup> H.R. 6246, 69<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., 1-2.

commission's directions were in keeping with the preferred economy of the Antietam Plan.<sup>16</sup>

The bill then allowed for the Secretary of War, after receiving the commission's report, "to acquire, by purchase, when purchasable at prices deemed by him reasonable, otherwise by condemnation, such tracts of lands as are recommended by the commission as necessary and desirable for a national park." The Secretary would mark troop locations with "substantial historical tablets at such points within the park and in the vicinity of the park and its approaches as are recommended by the commission." All of this was contingent on keeping costs within budget. The bill required that the "entire cost of acquiring said land, including cost of condemnation proceedings, if any, ascertainment of title, surveys, and compensation for the land, the cost of marking the battle field, and the expenses of the commission, shall not exceed the sum of \$100,000." The bill would incorporate the National Cemetery and Hazen Brigade Monument lot within the park. It also delegated supervision of the park to the Superintendent of the National Cemetery. This provision obviously intended to keep the annual maintenance costs of the proposed park as low as possible.<sup>17</sup>

Like previous bills, the Secretary of War was given the discretion of allowing current landowners to remain on the land "to occupy and cultivate their present holdings, upon condition that they will preserve the present buildings and roads, and the present

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 2-3.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 3-4.

outlines of field and forest,” and “assist in caring for and protecting” historic markers or monuments that might be placed on the site. It allowed state authorities to erect markers representing their troops that fought in the battle, after receiving approval from the Secretary of War. It also outlined penalties for those who vandalized park property, monuments, or markers.<sup>18</sup>

Congressman Davis sent a copy of his bill to the commander of the Quartermaster Corps, General Benjamin “Frank” Cheatham, for his opinion. Cheatham was a potentially strong ally for the creation of the park. His father, Confederate General Benjamin F. Cheatham, had commanded a division at the Battle of Stones River. A memorandum from an unnamed subordinate of the Quartermaster General spelled out some objections to Davis’s bill. “When a report is called for . . . objection should be made to the provisions [that] incorporate the Hazen Brigade tract and the national cemetery into the Park and make the superintendent of the cemetery, the superintendent of the Park,” the memo read. The reason for the objection was that the required duties of the two positions were too different. The memo’s author noted that the “Superintendent of the cemetery should be in the cemetery practically all the time,” and that the park Superintendent “will have a large area to supervise and should be . . . looking after maintenance and enforcing laws and regulations.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 4-6.

<sup>19</sup> Memorandum, February 1, 1926, War Department Files, 1926-1933, Stones River National Battlefield (hereafter War Department Files).

A handwritten addition to the memo pointed out that there was a “special statute” concerning the appointment of superintendents of national cemeteries. Superintendents were required to be honorably discharged soldiers who had been disabled in the line of duty. The memo suggested that park superintendents “should be able-bodied men,” and that a similar plan had failed at Antietam. Nonetheless, when called on to report on the bill by the Secretary of War, Quartermaster General Cheatham recommended passage of the bill without changes.<sup>20</sup>

Secretary Davis gave his opinion of the legislation in a letter to Rep. John M. Morin, chairman of the House Committee on Military Affairs. He wrote that the “importance of the battle of Stones River either as a factor in the final result of the Civil War or as an event in the Nation’s history is, of course, a matter of opinion and, in final consideration as to appropriate commemorative importance, raises an issue which Congress alone can determine.” But he referenced the battlefield classification system created by the Army War College the year before, noting that Stones River had been assigned to Class IIa, and recommended that “commemorative recognition . . . for the battle of Stones River be limited to surveying, locating, and preserving the battle lines.” He included the enabling legislation for Antietam as an example for this limited approach.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.; “Statement of Hon. Ewin L. Davis, of Tennessee,” Hearings Before the Committee on Military Affairs, House of Representatives, 69<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., March 19, 1926, 3.

<sup>21</sup> Dwight W. Davis to John M. Morin, February 3, 1926, War Department Files.

Also in his letter, Secretary Davis suggested replacement legislation for Congressman Davis's bill. His draft legislation also called for a commission as had been outlined in the Stones River bill, but the commission's report was only to "ascertain the feasibility" of preserving the battlefield, with no authorization to acquire lands or erect markers. In May, when Johnson introduced H.R. 11613, the legislation for battlefield studies conducted by the War Department, Ewin Davis introduced another bill specifically requesting a study of Stones River, using the draft language written by the Secretary of War. The House passed this bill, H.R. 12043, on May 12, but President Coolidge signed Congressman Johnson's bill into law the next month, rendering Davis's new bill unnecessary.<sup>22</sup>

The Secretary of War referred the Stones River bill to the Director of the Budget, who was opposed in principle to the bill based on the administration's "program of economy." When Congressman Davis learned of this opposition to the bill, he appealed "directly to President Coolidge," who assured Davis that he would support the project.<sup>23</sup>

In his statement before the House Committee on Military Affairs, Davis referenced the favorable report written by Congressman Brownlow in support of Richardson's 1900 bill. Davis stated that Richardson's bill had "provided for the purchase of the entire acreage of the battlefield of Stones River, amounting to 3,100

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.; H.R. 12043, 69<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., 2.

<sup>23</sup> "Statement of Hon. Ewin L. Davis," 3; "Stones River Park Is Dedicated With Fitting Ceremonies," *Murfreesboro Daily News-Journal*, July 16, 1932, 4.

acres.” The \$125,000 appropriation Richardson had sought also “provided for the improvement, preservation, and marking of the battle field.” By contrast, Davis pointed out that “recognizing the spirit of economy that is somewhat pervading the Congress and the country, I drafted the present bill providing the sum of \$100,000 as a limit for all purposes.” This would, Davis stated, “permit the purchase of a few hundred acres, but not the entire battle field, and the marking and preservation of the different topographical features.”<sup>24</sup>

Davis went on to mention the petitions from GAR posts and UCV camps collected by the Battlefield Association nearly thirty years earlier. He used a recent article on the battle published in the *National Tribune* to give the history of the battle, and reiterated its significance, quoting Brownlow’s insistence that Stones River “ranks in importance with Gettysburg, Antietam, Chickamauga, Shiloh, and Vicksburg.”<sup>25</sup>

Tellingly, much of Davis’s statement focused on the battlefield’s potential as a tourist destination. Describing it as “particularly accessible to visitors,” Davis noted that the battlefield was “traversed by the Dixie Highway . . . one of the most traveled highways in the entire country, hundreds of cars passing over it every day at the point of Stones River battlefield.” Tourism and the economic boon that the battlefield presented for the local economy was an important part of Davis’s pitch: “Large numbers of tourists and others are continually seeking information about the battlefield,” he wrote, and if

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<sup>24</sup> “Statement of Hon. Ewin L. Davis,” 2-3.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 3, 5-13.

“the location of troops and important events were appropriately marked and a portion made into a national park . . . it would be one of the most visited battlefields in this country.”<sup>26</sup>

An April 1926 newspaper editorial is evidence of local support for a military park. “There is every reason why [Stones River] should be so preserved and dedicated,” the article stated, “there are now few survivors of the carnage of those days more than sixty years ago, but definite steps to mark and dedicate the field should be taken before the last survivor joins his comrades on the other shore.” The editorial also made mention of the battlefield’s potential for tourism: “It is right on or near the great highways of interstate travel. If it were preserved and marked, as it should be . . . countless thousands would visit it every year.” The article concluded that “every possible support should be given Mr. Davis in his efforts to obtain belated recognition for this field of honor.”<sup>27</sup>

The Military Affairs committee reported favorably on H.R. 6246, which was approved by the House on February 7, 1927. The Senate also approved the bill later that month. President Coolidge signed the bill authorizing Stones River National Military Park on March 3, 1927. The effort to preserve the battlefield, more than thirty-two years in the making, had finally met with success.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 7-8.

<sup>27</sup> “Stones River Park,” *Nashville Tennessean*, April 11, 1926, editorial.

<sup>28</sup> See *House Reports*, 69<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1st sess., H. Rept. 788; S. Rept. 1517.



## THE BATTLEFIELD COMMISSION

The first order of business after the park bill was approved was for the Secretary of War to appoint the commission. On the very day that President Coolidge signed the bill into law, Richard Beard, who had been the secretary of the Battlefield Association, sent a letter to Congressman Davis nominating himself as the Confederate veteran commissioner. "I see that you have put through, successfully, your bill to establish a National Park on the Murfreesboro battlefield," Beard wrote, "and I assure you that you have the congratulations and the thanks of every citizen of Murfreesboro and Rutherford County." Regarding the commission, he wrote that "I was all through the battle of December 31, 1862 [and] I expect I know as much of the history of the battle . . . as any Confederate soldier living; probably more," closing with his hope that "my name may be thought of for the appointment."<sup>29</sup>

Beard had begun his Confederate service in 1861 at nineteen years of age. He enlisted in the Seventh Tennessee Infantry and fought in Virginia until he was wounded at the Battle of Seven Pines. He went home to recuperate, where he joined the Fifth Confederate Regiment as a lieutenant. He was wounded again at Chickamauga, and afterwards promoted to captain. Captured near Atlanta in the summer of 1864, he was a prisoner of war at Johnson's Island, Ohio for the remainder of the war.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Richard Beard to Ewin L. Davis, March 3, 1927, War Department Files.

<sup>30</sup> Robert C. Davis to Ewin L. Davis, March 26, 1927, War Department Files. Richard Beard was the maternal grandfather of Jean Faircloth, the wife of Gen. Douglas MacArthur. MacArthur's father, Arthur MacArthur, had also fought at the Battle of Stones River.

Beard had been engaged in the practice of law and other business pursuits in Murfreesboro for more than fifty years. With his involvement with the UCV and the Battlefield Association, his claim to knowledge of the Stones River battlefield could hardly be disputed. But Congressman Davis was quickly inundated with letters from Murfreesboro residents nominating Confederate veteran Samuel H. Mitchell for the commission.

Sam Mitchell was born in 1843, and at the outbreak of the Civil War had enlisted in the Forty-fifth Tennessee Infantry in the company commanded by his father, Addison Mitchell. Promoted to colonel, the elder Mitchell would lead the regiment at Shiloh but died in the service at Iuka, Mississippi. Sam Mitchell served with the Forty-fifth for the remainder of the war. At Stones River, he had fought within sight of his family's home, very near McFadden's Ford. He had lived on that farm until the early 1900s, when he sold the property and moved to Murfreesboro. Although he was not an officer of the Battlefield Association, he had been well acquainted with their membership and work.<sup>31</sup>

In addition to farming, Mitchell had been involved with banking in Murfreesboro after the war. One of the first endorsements of his candidacy for the park commission was a handwritten letter from T. Scott Williams on the letterhead of the Murfreesboro Bank and Trust Company. "It is thought by many . . . that Mr. Sam Mitchell of Murfreesboro will make an excellent member of the committee," Williams wrote, adding that

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<sup>31</sup> Adjutant General to Ewin L. Davis, April 11, 1927, War Department Files; *Goodspeed's History of Tennessee*, 64; Howard Henderson to Ewin L. Davis, April 1, 1927, War Department Files.

Mitchell's appointment would "please our citizens." The following day the secretary of the Rotary Club of Murfreesboro also sent an endorsement, describing Mitchell as "a man of good sound adjustment and in every way suitable to fill this position." The Rutherford County Farm Bureau sent a letter directly to the Secretary of War, saying that Mitchell was the "best qualified man . . . that it will be possible to find." Mitchell also received glowing nominations from the local Chamber of Commerce and the Kiwanis Club.<sup>32</sup>

Finding a suitable Union veteran for the commission proved to be more difficult, as all of the ex-federals that had been members of the Battlefield Association had long since passed away. Davis enlisted local help in finding a Union commissioner. Howard Henderson, treasurer of Henry King and Company, a local wholesale grocery firm, made inquiries for a candidate. "I think we have at last found a Union soldier," Henderson wrote to the congressman in late March, enclosing letters of endorsement for John D. Hanson of Shelbyville. The Rotary Clubs of both Murfreesboro and Shelbyville quickly sent letters nominating Hanson, as did many prominent citizens of Shelbyville. Doctor T.J. Coble wrote that Hanson was "qualified in every respect to hold the position, and his appointment would give general satisfaction in Bedford County, where he is deservedly very popular." Lawyer Charles Ivie described the old veteran as "industrious and

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<sup>32</sup>1900 U.S. Census, Rutherford County, TN; T. Scott Williams to Ewin L. Davis, March 18, 1927, W.E. Mullins to Ewin L. Davis, March 19, 1927, J.M. Haynes to Secretary of War, March 19, 1927, War Department Files.

painstaking in all his work,” noting that Hanson had been an assistant postmaster and bookkeeper in Shelbyville for many years.<sup>33</sup>

Hanson was a native of Denmark, born in 1844, and had immigrated to the United States about 1858. In August 1862 he had enlisted in the Union Fifth Tennessee Cavalry at Nashville. Hanson had participated in the Battle of Stones River and served out the remainder of the war in Tennessee.<sup>34</sup>

The enabling legislation for the park had required that the battlefield commission submit the results of their inspection to the Secretary of War by December 1, 1927. Ewin Davis was anxious to get the commission started on this task as soon as possible, but there was an issue with how the commission’s expenses would be paid. Although the legislation allotted \$100,000 for the project, which would include the costs of performing the inspection and completing the report, there was no specific allocation for fiscal year 1927 for this purpose. Davis had hoped to secure an appropriation for the commission in a “general deficiency bill,” but that bill had failed to pass the Senate.<sup>35</sup>

Congressman Davis suggested to the Quartermaster General that the commission’s expenses could be “met by local organizations,” or even by himself,

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<sup>33</sup> H.D. Henderson to Ewin L. Davis, March 23, 1927, T.J. Coble to Ewin L. Davis, April 1, 1927, Charles S. Ivie to Ewin L. Davis, April 4, 1927, War Department Files.

<sup>34</sup> 1900 Census, Bedford County, TN; Adjutant General to Ewin L. Davis, March 25, 1927, Memorandum: Stones River Commission, War Department Files.

<sup>35</sup> Memorandum of the Quartermaster General, March 15, 1927, Ewin L. Davis to the Secretary of War, May 9, 1927, War Department Files.

provided that Congress would agree to reimbursement. There was a precedent for such action. The commission for the military park at Petersburg, created a year earlier, had moved to finish their report before an appropriation could be made for the expense. That commission had used their own funds, and had been reimbursed by congressional action later. However, the War Department advised that this precedent was not “a safe one to follow.” The concern was that the promise of reimbursement would run counter to the law that forbade any action that financially obligated the government without a congressional appropriation. It was possible that statute “would be invoked to defeat an appropriation for reimbursement.” In late May, the Secretary of War determined that the commission could not carry out its duties without incurring expenses that would ultimately have to be paid by the government. Without an appropriation from Congress to cover the expenses, he decided against appointing a commission “at this time.” This decision would stall work on the park for several months.<sup>36</sup>

Congressman Davis did secure the necessary appropriation for the commission for fiscal year 1928. Quartermaster General Cheatham recommended the appointment of Hanson and Mitchell on December 31, 1927, the sixty-fifth anniversary of the Battle of Stones River. The Secretary of War accepted this recommendation. The final member of

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.; Col. Hampton to Quartermaster General, March 18, 1927, Secretary of War to L.D. Tyson, May 31, 1927, War Department Files.

the commission would be selected from the District Office of the Corps of Engineers in Nashville.<sup>37</sup>

The man selected to complete the Stones River Battlefield Commission was Maj. John French Conklin. Conklin was born in 1891 at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. His family was originally from New York; like his father, Colonel John Conklin, he was a graduate of West Point. Indeed, Conklin came from a very distinguished line of army officers. His maternal grandfather was General William French, also a West Point man, who had been a corps commander in the Army of the Potomac during the Civil War. His uncle by marriage was General John Clem, who had gained fame as “Shiloh Johnnie,” the drummer boy of Shiloh. When Clem retired, he was the last Civil War veteran on active duty. Conklin’s wife, Marguerite, was the daughter of General John W. Heard, a West Point graduate who had received the Medal of Honor for bravery in the Spanish-American War (Figure 18).<sup>38</sup>

Conklin was a member of the celebrated West Point Class of 1915. This class provided more generals to the U.S. Army than any other in the Military Academy’s history; Conklin’s classmates included Omar Bradley and Dwight D. Eisenhower. Conklin served as an engineer during the First World War, although he did not go overseas until the fighting had ceased. From 1920 to 1924 he was an instructor at West

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<sup>37</sup> Quartermaster General to the Assistant Secretary of War, December 31, 1927, War Department Files.

<sup>38</sup> See George W. Cullum, *Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U.S. Military Academy*, vol. IX (Chicago: Lakeside Press, 1950).

Point. He was assigned to the District Engineer's office in Nashville in June 1927. With his selection, the Battlefield Commission was now in place, and work could begin on creating the Stones River park.<sup>39</sup>

#### THE COMMISSION'S REPORT

The Commission first met at the First National Bank Building in Murfreesboro on March 16, 1928. At this meeting, the members selected Hanson as chairman. Conklin, as specified in his appointment, was to serve as secretary, and to "assume the active direction of the Commission."<sup>40</sup>

As soon as Conklin received confirmation of his appointment to the Commission he had inquired about a historical survey of the Battle of Stones River that was being done by the Historical Section of the Army War College. This survey would provide the Commission with the basic facts of the battle from official records, and maps giving troop locations at various times. This was especially important given the Commission's mandate to select the most important parts of the battlefield and recommend the locations for historical markers.

A preliminary report, with two maps, had been created by Lieutenant Colonel Howard L. Landers of the Historical Section and forwarded to Conklin in February.

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.; Conklin would eventually be promoted to Brigadier General during World War II, during which he served in Europe as Chief Engineer for the Third Army.

<sup>40</sup> "Report of Inspection of Battlefield of Stones River, Tennessee," July 17, 1928, Central Files, Folder H17, Stones River National Battlefield (hereafter Commission Report); Chief, Military Division, Corps of Engineers to John F. Conklin, January 16, 1928, War Department Files.

Landers was a native of Maryland, born in 1874. He graduated from Columbian University (now George Washington University) in 1893, and briefly worked as an accountant in California. When the Spanish-American War broke out in 1898 he joined the army and served in the Philippines. He was commissioned as an officer upon his return to the United States and served in a variety of posts over the next several years. During World War I, he commanded a field artillery unit. Landers became familiar with the Middle Tennessee area in the early 1920s while on recruiting duty in Nashville.

Landers had also been a military historian from a stint with the Army War College from 1915 to 1917. Described by one biographer as “a soldier who knew how to write good history,” in 1926 he was assigned to the Historical Section of the War College. There he wrote several monographs, particularly on Revolutionary War battles, which had been published as Senate and House documents. As part of the new Battlefield Studies Sub-section, he was busy preparing histories for several battles in addition to his work on Stones River.<sup>41</sup>

Conklin and Landers corresponded regularly in the spring and early summer of 1928, as Landers was heavily involved in creating several more detailed maps of Stones River. Landers visited the battlefield in early April, staying in Nashville and Murfreesboro over several days. During this visit, Landers toured the battlefield with the

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<sup>41</sup> 1920 U.S. Census, Davidson County, TN; Howard L. Landers to John F. Conklin, May 25, 1928, War Department Files; Stetson Conn, *Historical Work in the United States Army 1862-1954* (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1980), 11-12.



Commission, making a sketch of areas that he recommended for inclusion in the park.

For this sketch he used the map drawn by Oscar Jones in 1899, which he praised for its accuracy. He intended to use this map to “subdivide . . . areas” and “indicate, tentatively, the number of tablets and markers” he felt that should be placed on the battlefield.

Landers would use Jones’s work as the basis for seven troop movement maps he created for the Commission’s report. During this visit, Landers had a number of photographs made of the battlefield. The Commission also visited the Shiloh and Chickamauga military parks to get some idea of what type of roads and markers they should recommend for Stones River (Figure 19).<sup>42</sup>

Conklin was under some pressure to finish the report as soon as possible. When Landers asked for a timeframe for completion, Conklin replied that he believed he would finish by mid-July. “I could have rendered this report much sooner were it not for stress of other duties,” he wrote. No doubt, Conklin was referencing his regular duties with the Corps of Engineers surveying the Cumberland River, and an additional assignment to do preliminary inspections of the battlefields of Franklin and Nashville in Tennessee, as well as Eastport and Iuka in Mississippi. “Furthermore,” he explained, “I know you realize that the entire work of preparing this report has devolved upon me.” He went on to say that “the veteran members of the Commission are very fine gentlemen of whom I am

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<sup>42</sup> Howard L. Landers to John F. Conklin, May 25, 1928, April 26, 1926, June 12, 1928, John F. Conklin to Howard L. Landers, June 29, 1928, War Department Files. The photographer for the Commission photographs was identified as “Mr. Weakley” in John F. Conklin to Howard L. Landers, April 11, 1928, War Department Files.

very fond, but after all is said and done, they have been of absolutely no assistance to me . . . little can be expected of a man eighty-five years old.”<sup>43</sup>

Conklin submitted the Commission’s eighteen-page report to the War Department on July 17, 1928, enclosing seventeen photographs, ten maps, and seven “exhibits.” The Commission had found “no earthworks, trenches or other remaining evidences of the battle,” although “there are now in existence in the vicinity of the battle field, four monuments commemorating the battle of Stones River.” These monuments included the National Cemetery and the Hazen Brigade Monument, as well as the Redoubt Brannan



Figure 18. John F. Conklin and Richard Randolph. This photograph was made in 1928 at Chickamauga. Randolph (left) was that park’s superintendent. Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park.

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<sup>43</sup> Howard L. Landers to John F. Conklin, May 25, 1928, John F. Conklin to Howard L. Landers, June 15, 1928, War Department Files.

and Artillery Monument lots, which had both recently been “deeded to the United States without monetary consideration” for the purposes of the park.<sup>44</sup>

One of the maps included with the report outlined “the land that is proposed to purchase for the park proper, as well as the two small tracts that are proposed for Bragg’s and Rosecrans’ headquarters monuments.” The Commission recommended the purchase of approximately 325 acres that would encompass the scene of the “severest fighting” on the first day of the battle. Conklin located this scene as “near the intersection of the Nashville-Murfreesboro Pike with Van Cleve Lane.” This land would also include the National Cemetery and Hazen Brigade Monument, “which are already the property of the United States.” The Commission’s proposal called for the acquisition of “two small one-fourth acre tracts of land” for the headquarters monuments, and “seven one-eighth acre tracts,” on which to place historical markers outside of the park.<sup>45</sup>

The Commission did not recommend the acquisition of any battlefield land in the vicinity of McFadden’s Ford, because “at the present time this land is very inaccessible.” Conklin noted that “There are now no bridges across the Stones River” in this area, and that it could “only be reached by poor country roads,” leading out of Murfreesboro.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Commission Report, 4-5; It is possible that the NC&StL’s donation had been secured by Davis to ensure preference for Stones River per the Secretary of War’s policy of giving priority consideration to battlefields where the promise of free land was given.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 5-6, 8.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

Conklin explained that the northern and southern portions of the main 325 acre tract was “open country.” The center, however, was rocky and “covered with cedar trees.” It was the Commission’s opinion that this combination would be “ideal for Park purposes.” Likely, they meant that this combination would allow visitors to get a feel for the different types of terrain that soldiers had experienced during the fighting. It was noted in the report that this proposal “by no means covers fully the entire site of the hardest fighting of the battle of Stones River, but with the funds available it is believed to be the best selection possible.”<sup>47</sup>

As to roads, the Commission recommended that maintenance of the Dixie Highway through the park “should remain in the hands of the State of Tennessee.” However, they suggested that the War Department purchase land on each side of Van Cleve lane south of the railroad for its entire length. The lane would then have to be “reconstructed into a Park road,” because it was “at present in a very poor state of repair and must be rebuilt throughout.” The Commission proposed the construction of a new “winding road through the center of the Park, running generally in a north and south direction.” The Commission considered it “essential that at least these roads be built, if the Park is to be traversed and inspected by tourists and other interested parties.” These roads were to be built of gravel, eighteen-feet in width.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 10.

Along these roads, and at other points, the Commission suggested the installation of thirty-five cast-iron tablets and ten “pointers.” They noted that the markers at Shiloh were “various shapes and colors, the varied shapes used to denote different days of the battle, etc., and the varied colors being used to denote different Armies.” At Chickamauga, “tablets of a uniform shape were used.” The Commission recommended that only one design be used at Stones River, “due to the greater expense incident to a multiplicity of designs” for a small number of markers. They did add, however, that these markers could be “painted different colors to denote the different forces engaged.”<sup>49</sup>

One of the Commission’s recommendations would carry serious implications for the residents of Cemetery, the African-American community born during Reconstruction. Although the enabling legislation gave the Secretary of War the discretion of allowing landowners to remain on their property, the Commission was opposed to this idea: “Due to the limited extent of the 325 acre tract of land that is proposed to acquire for the Park, it is believed undesirable to permit any of the present owners . . . to remain.” Most of the landowners that actually lived on the proposed park were African-Americans that lived along Van Cleve Lane. “Many tracts have located upon them negro shacks in a miserable state of repair,” the report stated, “but, nevertheless, constituting the negroes’ only homes; in a case of this kind, the minimum expense of the negro family’s acquiring a habitable residence elsewhere has been taken into consideration . . . in arriving at an estimate of the tract’s value.” Earlier in the report, Conklin had written that local

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 11-12.

residents were “enthusiastic and in entire accord with the proposition of creating a national park at the Stones River Battle Field.” It is doubtful that some in the Cemetery community were “in entire accord” with these plans.<sup>50</sup>

The Commission estimated the cost of acquiring land for the park at \$48,975, with an additional \$6,500 to cover the cost of abstracting and recording deeds. They believed that road construction would require \$21,000, and markers would cost \$4,300. They allowed \$6,000 for surveys, studies, maps, and planning, \$4,000 for fences, trees, and shrubs, and \$9,225 for “contingencies and overhead.”<sup>51</sup>



Figure 19. Cemetery Community, 1928. This is one of the photographs included in the Battlefield Commission’s report to the Secretary of War. Stones River National Battlefield.

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 5, 8-10.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 13-14.

Later that month, Landers wrote Conklin, “your very excellent report on the Stones River National Military Park was received by the Quartermaster General, and approved by him.” Landers was on the board of officers reviewing the report, which was also going to recommend the Secretary of War approve it. The board’s only suggestions for change were that the roads be constructed in the “boulevard” style, with twenty-one feet of grass and ornamental plantings on either side, and that the size of the headquarters monuments be reduced. “You have done much and careful work on this report,” Landers wrote, “and I am glad you have taken the time, and have the inclination, to work for the successful establishment of this park.”<sup>52</sup>

#### THE COMMISSION’S ROLE

Quartermaster General Cheatham, in a conversation with Conklin, had expressed uncertainty as to “who would actually execute the work of constructing the Stones River Park.” At other military parks this had been the responsibility of the respective commissions. But the new policy outlined by the Secretary of War in December 1926 placed that work with the Quartermaster Corps. Conklin explained to Cheatham that if he were put in charge of the construction, he would only be able to devote part of his time to that effort. In addition to his regular duties with the District Engineer’s office, Conklin was now serving on the commission that would inspect and report on the proposed

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<sup>52</sup> Howard L. Landers to John F. Conklin, July 26, 1928, War Department Files.

military park at Fort Donelson in Dover, Tennessee. Conklin suggested “supervision of the construction of the Park was worthy of some officer’s full time.”<sup>53</sup>

One of Cheatham’s subordinates replied to this suggestion by stating that “this office concurs with you that the work of establishing [the park],” required “the full time of an officer.” However, “it has been found impracticable to find an officer of suitable qualifications” for the task. The subordinate suggested that Conklin “employ a qualified civilian to attend to the details under the supervision of the commission,” and authorized him to hire such a candidate.<sup>54</sup>

Conklin wanted to assign this duty to a staff member in the District Engineer’s office, and increase that employee’s salary. Conklin would reimburse the difference to the Corps of Engineers from the Stones River appropriation. However, the Quartermaster General’s office determined that this arrangement would be a violation of government regulations. They informed Conklin that the real estate section of the Quartermaster’s office was “prepared to proceed at once to procure the land for the Commission and to handle the details” with the acquisition. Conklin replied that land procurement would still be under his direct supervision, again pointing out that the other members of the

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<sup>53</sup> John F. Conklin to Quartermaster General, August 25, 1929, War Department Files. In addition to the stress of Conklin’s duties, his wife died during this period. Documentation has not been found to give the exact date or cause of death, or where it occurred. Landers mentions her from his visit in April 1928, and Conklin sent her regards to Landers in a letter the following June. Conklin was on leave of absence from late July to mid-August, which may be when Marguerite Conklin’s death occurred. She was buried at the Post Cemetery at West Point, where Conklin would be buried after his death in 1973.

<sup>54</sup> W.R. Gibson to John F. Conklin, September 4, 1928, War Department Files.



Commission were “aged men,” of whom “little active work can be expected.” Although he was authorized to hire a civilian engineer for constructing the park, he did not expect to need such a person until land acquisition was complete, and that was going to take a significant amount of time.<sup>55</sup>

Howard Landers was planning another trip to the Nashville area to do work for the Fort Donelson project. In a letter to Conklin he wondered “whether I could be of assistance in bringing the projects to the attention of the people of Murfreesboro, Nashville, and Dover.” Landers noted that in his official work with the commissions of the Fredericksburg and Petersburg parks, as well as Stones River, he had seen “certain problems which are quite similar in all these places.”<sup>56</sup>

Landers outlined solutions for three common problems with the establishment of these parks. First, “that after years of effort and waiting,” locals needed to realize that the government was committed to the project; second, “personal sentiment” should be aroused, “to influence individual land owners to donate the land . . . or sell it at a fair price;” and last, local organizations should be mobilized to secure “monuments or other memorials from the States, associations, or individuals.” He suggested that he, Rep. Davis, and one or more members of the Commission should meet with a “gathering of

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<sup>55</sup> John F. Conklin to Quartermaster General, September 8, 1928 and September 28, 1928, J. McClinton to John F. Conklin, September 24, 1928 and October 6, 1928, War Department Files.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

certain citizens . . . with the idea that the community understanding of the plan for memorializing their battle field may be definite.”<sup>57</sup>

Landers met with the Commission in Murfreesboro in early October, along with some local business leaders, to discuss land acquisition. “These gentlemen went over the list of land parcels desired for the park, and the tentative values set down by the Commission,” Landers wrote in a report of the meeting. “They were of the opinion that the values were much too high, except in the cases where the homes of some poor colored people were involved.”<sup>58</sup>

A joint meeting of the Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs took place on October 4. At this meeting, Ewin Davis, Landers, and Conklin spoke to the groups, which “enthusiastically agreed to render assistance in all ways possible.” As he had mentioned in his earlier letter to Conklin, the local civic club’s priority was to “create public sentiment which will tend to prevent any land owner asking an exorbitant price for his land.” The groups also planned to appoint a committee to “cooperate with the Commission in arriving at fair and reasonable land values.”<sup>59</sup>

Landers also reported that during his visit with Conklin he repeatedly mentioned expediting land acquisition and that he did not believe it would take as long as Conklin thought it would. One Quartermaster Corps official felt that Conklin should be replaced,

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Howard L. Landers to W.R. Gibson, October 12, 1929, War Department Files.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

as Conklin seemed to have the view that “he has major engineering projects under his control which require most of his time and attention and he considers military park duties as decidedly secondary.” The man the official suggested to replace Conklin on both the Stones River and Fort Donelson Commissions was not an engineer officer. The suggestion was shot down because the legislation creating the parks required an officer of the Corps of Engineers to serve on the Commissions.<sup>60</sup>

The meeting with community leaders produced some result. Conklin enlisted the help of James R. Jetton of the Commerce Union Bank to negotiate with landowners. In November, Conklin sent Jetton a list of landowners with a request that he determine the lowest price they would be willing to accept for their property. “As you know,” Conklin wrote, “I am more than willing to pay a reasonable price for each tract desired, but am not willing to have the Government ‘held up’ in any case.” Conklin went on to say that he felt Jetton would be “in a better position than I would be, to bring the landowner down to reasonable terms.”<sup>61</sup>

In another letter, Conklin thanked Jetton for his efforts. “I think it will help a lot on our problem of acquiring land for the Park,” he wrote. Conklin then gave Jetton the details of a negotiation he had with one landowner. The landowner wanted \$4,000 for a ten-acre tract that was valued at \$500 by the tax assessor. Conklin had offered the man \$1,500. When Ewin Davis learned of Conklin’s “difficulties relative to . . . landowners

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<sup>60</sup> W.R. Gibson to Quartermaster General, October 12, 1928, War Department Files.

<sup>61</sup> John F. Conklin to James R. Jetton, November 12, 1928, War Department Files.

asking excessive amounts for their land,” he reminded Conklin that condemnation proceedings were possible.<sup>62</sup>

Conklin made some progress toward acquiring options on battlefield land in early 1929, despite his heavy workload. His work on the Stones River Commission came in fits and starts, but everything was soon to change entirely. In March, the Judge Advocate General reached a determination on some questions dealing with the enabling legislation for the Stones River park. The first issue was if the legislation authorized the War Department to construct “roads and walks and for the restoration and care of grounds and the planting of trees and shrubs,” as was recommended in the Commission’s report. The Judge Advocate General determined that these actions were not specifically provided for in the enabling legislation and “a strict construction of the wording . . . would indicate that they can not be done.” Congressman Davis remedied this issue with an amendment to the enabling legislation that specifically authorized the Secretary of War to proceed with these activities.<sup>63</sup>

The second issue with the legislation was the question of who had responsibility for the actual construction of the park—the Commission or the Quartermaster Corps. Conklin had inquired about this soon after the Commission’s report had been approved and was instructed to proceed with the acquisition of land and starting construction. The

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<sup>62</sup> John F. Conklin to James R. Jetton, December 19, 1928, Ewin L. Davis to John F. Conklin, January 14, 1929, War Department Files. The amendment was H.R. 2825, 71<sup>st</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess. It was not passed until April 1930.

<sup>63</sup> Quartermaster General to Assistant Secretary of War, April 6, 1929, War Department Files.

Judge Advocate General ruled that construction of the park was the responsibility of the Quartermaster Corps. The Commission's mandate was largely fulfilled with the inspection report. Quartermaster General Cheatham drew up orders for an "officer of the Quartermaster Corps to proceed to Murfreesboro, Tennessee, to take over the duties of the establishment of both the Stones River and Fort Donelson National Military Parks."<sup>64</sup>

With this ruling, the Commission became strictly an advisory board. But other changes made the Commission more or less a courtesy position. On April 12, 1929, Commission chairman John D. Hanson died; the Secretary of War did not fill the vacancy. That same week, Conklin was appointed to a teaching position at West Point. Conklin was to report to the Military Academy in August, although he would leave his post with the District Engineer's office (and the Commission) in July. Major Frank Besson of the Corps of Engineers succeeded Conklin on the Commission, though Besson would have almost no role in the establishment of the military park.<sup>65</sup>

#### LAND ACQUISITION

The new "officer-in-charge" of establishing the Stones River National Military Park was Captain George Moseley Chandler. Chandler was a native of Chicago, born in 1875. He graduated from the University of Michigan with a degree in engineering in

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid.; Quartermaster General to John D. Hanson, April 24, 1929, War Department Files.

<sup>65</sup> R.D. Valliant to John F. Conklin, April 13, 1929, John F. Conklin to R.D. Valliant, April 15, 1929, John T. Harris to F.S. Besson, September 27, 1929, War Department Files.

1898. Shortly afterwards he joined the U.S. Navy as a seaman, and served on the U.S.S. Yosemite in the West Indies during the Spanish-American War. After the war he returned to civilian life, working as an engineer with two Chicago firms, the Western Concrete Bridge Company and architects Riddle and Riddle. In 1918 he re-entered the military, this time as a commissioned engineering officer with the U.S. Army. He worked on construction projects in Maryland and at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, but later served on the General Staff of the Army.<sup>66</sup>

Chandler arrived in Murfreesboro in late June 1929, accompanied by his wife, Fannie. The Chandlers took up residence in the James K. Polk Hotel, just off of the courthouse square. Chandler then opened an office in the First National Bank building. From here, he planned to complete land acquisition and construct the park, a process he expected would take two to three years. Ewin Davis, in a letter to the Chamber of Commerce, wrote, "I am sure the organizations of Murfreesboro will gladly co-operate with Capt. Chandler in his official work." Indeed, one of Chandler's first actions was to meet with the local Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs.<sup>67</sup>

Chandler entertained the Kiwanis Club with a discussion of "methods of waging warfare from the time of David and Goliath to the present day," before he described the

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<sup>66</sup> U.S. Army Construction Division, *Who's Who In The Construction Division of the United States Army* (New York: Simmons-Boardman Publishing Co., 1920), 42; *New York National Guardsman* 1:10 (January 1925): 6. Chandler had a great interest in heraldry—he designed the coat of arms for the Beta Theta Pi fraternity as a student at Michigan; he was also instrumental in the design of the "crossed muskets" still used as the device of U.S. infantry, and the "crossed pistols" emblem of the military police.

<sup>67</sup> "Officer to Take Charge of Park," *Murfreesboro Home Journal*, June 28, 1929, 1.

work to be done at Stones River. But his description painted a different picture for the park than the plan approved by the Secretary of War. Chandler described a park encompassing 3,000 acres with numerous monuments and new roads to all points on the battlefield, along the model of the Shiloh National Military Park. He stated his hope that Congress would increase the original appropriation so that the War Department could preserve more of the battlefield. If Chandler was trying to create some excitement among the club's membership it must have worked; a newspaper article described his address as "one of the most enjoyable ever presented" at the club's weekly meetings. Public relations were important to Chandler. He requested a duplicate set of battlefield maps from the Quartermaster General's office for display in the park office. "The community is much interested in this project," he wrote, "the fathers of half the town were in the battle, and it is the desire of this office to cooperate in every way with the residents."<sup>68</sup>

These maps were the source of the only real controversy over the placement of monuments and markers at Stones River, albeit a minor one. At other battlefield parks there had been a number of long and heated controversies over the placement of monuments and markers and the correct positions occupied by particular units during those battles. This was not an issue at Stones River, probably because so few eyewitnesses to the battle remained. But some of the "old timers" were convinced that

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<sup>68</sup> "Major Chandler Rotary Speaker," *Murfreesboro Home Journal*, September 3, 1929, 1; George M. Chandler to Quartermaster General, August 2, 1929, War Department Files.

Bragg's headquarters was not correctly placed on the official map produced by Howard Landers and the Historical Section of the Army War College.<sup>69</sup>

In late 1929, Captain Chandler addressed those concerns in correspondence with the Quartermaster General. Chandler wrote that he had consulted with Commissioner Sam Mitchell about the proper placement for the headquarters sites. Mitchell told him that the Rosecrans site was confirmed to him by Carter B. Harrison and Charles Sheafe of the Battlefield Association, and that Richard Beard "vouched for" Bragg's headquarters. Landers had selected the site based, in part, from a map included in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, a popular history produced in 1884. According to Chandler, "current gossip of what had happened 67 years ago," was that the Landers map was incorrect. Landers reviewed Chandler's concerns and insisted that the map was correct because its placement of Bragg's headquarters was corroborated by the official records. The "current gossip," according to Landers, was "not considered as having sufficient weight to warrant going against the official map." This short exchange settled the matter.<sup>70</sup>

Soon after establishing the park office in town, Chandler hired a local man, George C. Williamson, to handle the land acquisition process. Williamson was a forty-year old World War I veteran who had been born and raised in Rutherford County. Chandler justified his employment of Williamson to the regional Civil Service office by

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<sup>69</sup> George M. Chandler to Quartermaster General, December 13, 1929, George M. Chandler to Howard L. Landers, December 14, 1929, War Department Files.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.; Memorandum for the Quartermaster General by Howard L. Landers, undated, War Department Files.



explaining that he was “exactly the man I want, familiar with land surveys, with the actual land to be acquired, with the records and with the owners.” In addition to his knowledge of the local real estate market, Chandler considered him a “good field man, gang boss, and superintendent of construction.” Hiring a local man familiar with the landowners would be beneficial as land acquisition progressed. Williamson’s knowledge of local real estate and tax records was crucial, as procuring land for the park proved to be a very complicated and time consuming effort.<sup>71</sup>

Major Conklin had secured options on a number of tracts before he left in the summer of 1929. However, the process required that the landowners submit a warranty deed for their property, abstracts be written for each parcel, and review by the Justice Department to ensure the government obtained a clear title to the land. This was true of the simplest of cases, but many acquisitions were more complicated.

Chandler, like Conklin, had to negotiate with landowners who were asking for prices above the value appraised by the Commission and the Quartermaster Corps. Chandler reported to the Quartermaster General that “in many instances the assessed valuations bear little relation to the true value.” Noting that some parcels may have been in the same hands for years, he felt that the owner’s asking prices were not in line with what they could expect to realize if they were selling their property to a neighbor.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> 1930 Census, Rutherford County, TN; George M. Chandler to Secretary, Fifth U.S. Civil Service District, September 14, 1929, War Department Files.

<sup>72</sup> George M. Chandler to Quartermaster General, October 22, 1929, War Department Files.

Chandler gave the example of three tracts of identical size, lying side-by-side along the Dixie Highway and at the center of the proposed park. Robert W. Averitt's Tract 7 consisted of ten tillable acres with many improvements. Tract 8, part of the Virginia K. Earthman estate, was low ground "at times under water," Chandler explained, so crops did not mature. Tract 9 was mostly tillable land owned by Harold M. Henderson, with no improvements. Chandler had secured options for Averitt's property at \$4,000, and Henderson's for \$2,000. The Earthmans were insisting on \$3,000 for their largely unusable property. Chandler called this a "very difficult problem," as the "family is a leading one." He was concerned that purchase of the property at the owner's valuation would set a precedent that would hamper pending negotiations with other landowners. "If we pay the price demanded the land values are all upset and the next appropriation is cut in two in purchasing power," Chandler stated, and he did not want to condemn the property because "good will is a very great asset." The Earthman property eventually was condemned, however, and the family was paid \$1,500 for their ten-acre tract.<sup>73</sup>

Excluding the two lots donated to the park by the Nashville, Chattanooga, and St. Louis Railway, and the National Cemetery and Hazen Brigade Monument lots that were already owned by the government, the War Department would procure 319 acres for the Stones River National Military Park. This included fifty-three tracts, owned by forty-five individuals or estates. African Americans owned 164 (51%) of these 319 acres.

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

Chandler reported that “the negro holdings are a strange problem.” Echoing the Commission’s report, he stated “the [African American’s] houses are in general worthless, and yet, they are the family’s only home and we are displacing the family which must find a new home some place else.” The Commission had claimed to have included the cost of finding a new home in their assessment of the value of these tracts. But not all of the residents of Cemetery were comfortable with the amounts they were offered by the War Department.<sup>74</sup>

Ed Howard owned Tract 16, two acres of virtually untillable land, and Tract 23, a one-acre parcel that included his home, a shed, and a small peach orchard. Howard asked for \$2,500 for both tracts; the Commission assessed the properties at \$850. Chandler expected to have to condemn the property because Howard did not have a deed. He later reported “the old colored man later produced a deed that had never been recorded and then declined to accept my best offer.” Howard told Chandler that Conklin had offered him \$1,100 for his tracts, but “since then his price had gone up.” Chandler felt that this would cause an issue with future land acquisitions, as he had with the Earthman property. Howard finally agreed to accept \$900 for his holdings, and avoided condemnation proceedings.<sup>75</sup>

In all, the War Department would have twenty-four of the forty-four tracts owned by African American condemned. In many cases, this was not due to a dispute over price;

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid; George M. Chandler to Quartermaster General, June 6, 1930, War Department Files.

rather it was the inability to secure a clear title from the landowners. In one memorandum, Chandler requested condemnation of fifteen tracts due to no deed, minor heirs, and the inability to locate heirs. In one case, the heir to one estate was considered “insane.” In these cases the only way the government could gain clear title was the condemnation process. Although he did not like to take these matters to court, some situations forced the issue. Chandler wrote Washington “the whole problem, however, is quite capable of solution – patience – fairness and time.”<sup>76</sup>

Fairness in all cases is questionable. Rowena Minter, a widow with seven children, owned Tract 10. This was an eleven-acre tract that included a four-room house, a barn and smokehouse, two sheds and fruit trees. Approximately seven acres were tillable. She valued the property at \$3,000, but the Commission had assessed it at only \$1,350. The Minter family learned that the War Department had agreed to pay a larger amount for a nearby parcel owned by a prominent white man, Homer Gannon. Gannon’s Tract 3 contained almost five acres of tillable land with a three-room house and “half-interest in a well.” The Minters held out for a better offer until the court condemned their

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<sup>76</sup> George M. Chandler to Quartermaster General, February 14, 1929, October 22, 1929, War Department Files. All land areas and prices included in this chapter were taken from a table titled “Status of Acquisition at Stones River National Military Park,” Central Files Collection, Oversize folder, Stones River National Battlefield. Other tables show discrepancies in the names of landowners (particularly as inheritances were sorted out) and the prices paid. For example, owners of condemned properties were paid interest accrued between condemnation orders and final settlement. Interest payments are not included in the prices quoted here. See Appendix G, “Land Acquisitions, 1930-1931” for a summary of the data and a tract map.

property. They eventually were paid \$2,200 (\$200 per acre) for the tract. Gannon was paid \$3,000 (\$625 per acre) for his parcel.<sup>77</sup>

Perhaps location was a factor in the amounts the War Department paid for battlefield land. Gannon's tract was fronted by the Dixie Highway and abutted the Hazen Brigade Monument lot. Only a small corner of the Minter tract sat on the highway. As it was more prominent, the Gannon tract was of more value to the park's creators. A similar point can be made for the headquarters sites. Amanda Fowler and Alice Windrow, the African American owners of Rosecrans's headquarters site, were paid \$400 for their quarter-acre parcel, equal to \$1,600 per acre. O.L. Crouse, the white owner of the site of Bragg's headquarters, realized \$600 for his two-thirds of an acre, equivalent to \$869.57 per acre. Both of these figures were very much above the average prices paid per acre to other landowners, whose properties may not have been so crucial to park planners.

In fact, all of the tracts (1-12) that bordered the Dixie Highway sold for well above the average paid per acre to other landowners. These tracts (excluding Rosecrans's headquarters) sold for an average of \$237.72 per acre; for African American landowners the average was \$241.63 per acre, and white landowners were paid an average of \$234.61 per acre for their properties. Landowners whose property did not front the highway (excluding the Bragg headquarters site) were paid an average of \$131.97 per acre. When all of the properties were acquired, African American landowners were paid, on average,

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<sup>77</sup> Rebecca Conard, "The Changing Face of the Country: Environmental History and the Legacy of the Civil War at Stones River National Battlefield," *George Wright Forum* 28:2 (2011): 163; George M. Chandler to Quartermaster General, October 22, 1929, War Department Files.

\$178.24 per acre; if their property had been condemned there was little difference at \$177.96. White landowners were paid, on average, \$155.60 per acre; the Earthman property, the only white-owned tract that was condemned, brought \$153.06, also an inconsequential difference.

Of course, being paid an above average price per acre was little consolation for losing a home of two or three generations. It is not known how many Cemetery residents were displaced—several tracts belonged to multiple heirs, some of whom lived elsewhere. It is unfortunate that anyone was forced to move, but once Congress authorized a park, the community's location sealed its fate. In a sense, the National Cemetery that had given rise to the community also contributed to its demise. The Commission chose the area to be acquired for the park because it was the pivotal point of the first day of the battle; however, the National Cemetery and Hazen Brigade Monument were long established as places of commemoration, and the enabling legislation mandated their inclusion in the park. Also, the busy Dixie Highway traversed the battlefield at this point, providing tourist access. The Commission could have selected other important points on the battlefield. However, none could have told the story of the conflict as well as the site where the Union finally stemmed the Confederate onslaught, and the dictates of the Antietam Plan prevented more land being acquired. Given the ability to preserve only a fraction of a huge battlefield, the Commission had chosen the best site for the purpose. They had recommended that homeowners not be allowed to remain on the property because the park area only encompassed a small percentage of the battlefield. Monetary compensation for resident's losses was the only course of action the

War Department could take. Under these unfortunate circumstances, the compensation appears to have been at least reasonable.<sup>78</sup>

## BUILDING THE PARK

Land acquisition consumed most of George Chandler's time as officer-in-charge at Stones River. His planned stay of two or three years ended in August 1930. Available documents do not specify the reason for the change, or if it was voluntary. During the thirteen months Chandler was in Murfreesboro, he had opened a park office and, with the hiring of George Williamson, had made solid progress toward purchasing park land. By the end of his work, the War Department had acquired fourteen lots containing about one-third of the proposed park.<sup>79</sup>

Chandler's replacement was Captain Henry J. Conner. Conner was born in 1888 in Virginia, and had lived and worked in the Washington D.C. area most of his life. He had been employed by the War Department for over twenty years, first as a civilian clerk and later as a commissioned officer with the Quartermaster Corps. His wife, Louise, had been a clerk with the State Department.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> See Conard, 163.

<sup>79</sup> George M. Chandler to Ewin L. Davis, August 8, 1930, War Department Files; Dates of acquisition are listed differently in the records. As with land prices, the dates given on the "Status of Acquisition" table are used here. This document was signed by the Quartermaster Corps Officer-in-Charge, and therefore reflects the date when he considered acquisitions to have been made.

<sup>80</sup> 1910 U.S. Census, 1920 U.S. Census, Washington, DC.

Conner immediately began to take steps for the actual construction of the park, although land acquisition was far from complete. One of his first actions was to seek a legal opinion from the U.S. Attorney's office in Nashville on whether he had the authority to begin construction on tracts that were in the condemnation process. The attorney believed that he did have that authority, but suggested he get permission from the landowners to be certain. Conner also sought authority from the War Department to hire a civil engineer for the construction of both the Stones River and Fort Donelson projects. Chandler had intended to use George Williamson as a construction manager, but he was not a trained engineer, and was still heavily involved in land acquisition. The War Department granted Conner's request for an engineer less than three weeks after he arrived in Murfreesboro.<sup>81</sup>

Jacob A. Blanton was the civil engineer that Conner selected for the work. Blanton was a forty-two year old Georgia native, and a graduate of Georgia Tech. He had broad experience including work in the Panama Canal Zone. At the time of his Stones River appointment, he was doing inspection work for the Corps of Engineers in Vicksburg, Mississippi. He arrived at Murfreesboro in November 1930.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> A.V. McLane to H.J. Conner, August 20, 1930, H.J. Conner to Quartermaster General, August 12, 1930, W.J. Calvert to H.J. Conner, August 23, 1930, War Department Files.

<sup>82</sup> L.A. Moyer to Officer in Charge, Stones River National Military Park, October 28, 1930, H.J. Conner to Secretary, Fifth U.S Civil Service District, November 5, 1930, War Department Files; 1930 U.S. Census, Warren County, MS; Personal correspondence of the author and Debi Schneider Rickenbacker, March 14, 2011. Mrs. Rickenbacker's husband is the grandson of Jacob Blanton.



By January 1931 Conner and Williamson had acquired an additional seventy-five acres of the battlefield, accounting for well over half of the park. In February, condemnation proceedings began for several more tracts. These condemned properties contained about 103 acres. Although land acquisition was not complete, construction of the park was soon underway.

In December 1930, Conner signed a contract with the Forcum-Jones Company of Dyersburg, Tennessee, for the construction of the main park road and reconstruction of Van Cleve Lane. The contract specified 11,400 feet of “macadam” roads, eighteen feet in width, at a cost of \$17,500. The macadam process, one of the most popular methods of road building in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, required crushed and compacted stone for the road surface. At Stones River, the contractor was required to use stone from the park grounds, including a number of rock fences that they were to dismantle and crush on-site.

In an April 1931 progress report, Conner stated that the contractors had completed about 2,000 feet of roads, as well as 1,800 feet of “shoulder and ditch work.” Crews had cleared a significant amount of land along the main park road, preparing it for “planting grass, flowers, shrubs and trees.” Conner noted that winter weather, particularly rain, had slowed the project somewhat (Figure 20).<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> H.J. Conner to General Accounting Office, December 4, 1930, George M. Chandler to Quartermaster General, April 5, 1930, H.J. Conner to Quartermaster General, April 1, 1931, War Department Files.



Figure 20. Park Road Construction. Conner included this photograph in a 1931 progress report to the Quartermaster General's office. Stones River National Battlefield.

Conner also reported the completion of two stone columns at the north entrance to the park. A local African American stonemason, Herbert Smith, did this work. Smith and two assistants built the columns of local limestone, four feet square and eleven feet tall, taking about two weeks to complete the task (Figure 21). Smith would also build two identical columns at the south entrance on Van Cleve Lane. The Quartermaster hired Smith to build similar columns at Fort Donelson and Shiloh. Conner had the columns at Stones River topped by cannonball pyramids and finished with bronze tablets cast by the

Ross-Meehan Foundries in Chattanooga, announcing “Stones River National Military Park.”<sup>84</sup>

Colonel C.A. Bach filed an inspection report in late April that attests to the great speed at which Conner and Blanton were progressing with the construction work. Bach noted that a number of construction projects were being “actively prosecuted.” Contractors had “completely macadamized” the main park road and prepared Van Cleve Lane for paving. Crews had finished erecting a wire fence around the entire boundary of



Figure 21. Stone Columns at the North Entrance. These columns were built by Herbert Smith in 1931. In this image, the cannonball pyramids that would top the columns have not yet been placed. Stones River National Battlefield.

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<sup>84</sup> R.A. Livingston to H.J. Conner, March 28, 1932, H.J. Conner to R.A. Livingston, March 30, 1932, C.A. Bach to Commander, Fourth Corps Area, April 23, 1931, War Department Files.

the main park and at Redoubt Brannan. They had plowed the grounds around the Artillery Monument and would soon grade it and plant grass. They would also refinish the monument with a “cement paint.” By this time, Conner had overseen the planting of about 1,000 trees and shrubs along the Dixie Highway and the new park road. Bach’s only recommendations were that Conner have a binder applied to the loose stone of the park road, and erect gates at the entrance points.<sup>85</sup>

Construction work at the park continued at a fast pace throughout the summer of 1931. By October, the remaining thirty acres proposed for the park by the Commission had been acquired by the War Department. Although some of the condemnation cases would not be finally settled for another one or two years, the acquisition of land for the park was essentially complete. Bach returned for another inspection on October 20. In his trip report, he commented that “a great deal of intelligent work has been done toward the beautification of the Park.” He felt that the park roads had been improved with the addition of a bituminous binder and were in “excellent shape.” Crews had removed underbrush for a distance of 150 yards on either side of the park roads. He also noted that Conner had erected a flagstaff near the north gate and stationed three cannons around it.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> C.A. Bach to Commander, Fourth Corps Area, April 23, 1931, War Department Files.

<sup>86</sup> C.A. Bach to Commander, Fourth Corps Area, November 2, 1931, War Department Files. The flagstaff was erected on the site of the present-day Visitor Center. The three cannons were donated by the NC&StL. The railway had originally placed the cannons atop Redoubt Brannan.

When the flagstaff was erected in October 1931, an informal ceremony was held for the first unfurling of the United States flag over the park site. Commissioner Sam Mitchell was the “master of ceremonies” for this rather impromptu event, attended by a handful of onlookers. Mitchell spoke only a few lines as he and Captain Conner hoisted the flag up the new seventy-five foot pole (Figure 22). “Imagine an old rebel out here pulling up this union flag,” Mitchell said, adding “I used to want to tear down that flag when I saw it going up . . . but now it’s different.”<sup>87</sup>

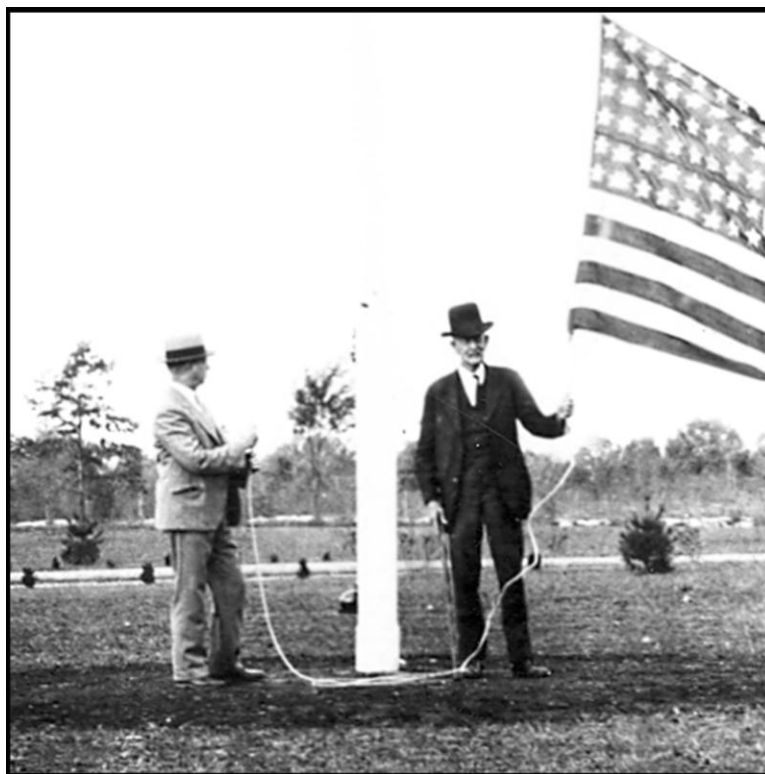


Figure 22. Raising the Flag. Capt. Henry J. Conner (left) and Confederate veteran Samuel H. Mitchell raising the flag at Stones River National Military Park, October 1931. Stones River National Battlefield.

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<sup>87</sup> “Aged ‘Rebel’ Unfurls First Flag Over Battleground Site Since Civil War,” *Daily News Journal*, October 27, 1931, 1.

The battlefield certainly was different. A local newspaper article gushed over the transformation of the site. “A trip through the Stones River National Military Park . . . reveals that splendid progress had been made,” the article began. Conner had given the unnamed reporter a tour of the park—and the reporter was amazed. “The changes which have taken place in the few short months are all but marvelous. Acres and acres of dense underbrush have given way to carefully cleared land.” The article noted the dismantling of the “score or more negro cabins” along Van Cleve Lane, betraying a Jim Crow-era conceit that the removal of the African American community was an added benefit of the establishment of the park. The article’s author opined that “all of the changes which have taken place are much for the better,” but the “most marked improvement” was along Van Cleve Lane. In addition to the razing of the African American community, the lane itself had been “straightened out, an excellent highway replacing it.”<sup>88</sup>

According to Conner, the bulk of the work to be completed involved clearing ditches and drains, and planting more grass and shrubbery. About twenty-five acres of stumps and “surplus trees” would be removed, and another thirty acres needed to be “raked and cleared of loose stones, old wire fences, tin, and miscellaneous junk.” Two houses remained for removal. This work would be done over the winter months and early spring of 1932. The most important project yet to be done would be placing historical markers along the park road and other points.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> “Stones River Park Becoming Beauty Spot of Mid-State,” *Daily News Journal*, October 1, 1931, 1.

<sup>89</sup> H.J. Conner to James H. Laubach, November 28, 1931, War Department Files.

The Commission had suggested the placement of fifty markers in the park. The Historical Section of the Army War College would increase that recommendation to sixty-eight. It is not clear from available records who was responsible for the text, but it was likely the staff of the Historical Section of the Army War College. In November 1931 the Quartermaster Corps office asked Landers to expedite the review of the markers as “construction is well underway and conditions are such to warrant early manufacture and erection of the tablets.” Conner wanted the markers in place by the anticipated dedication of the park on July 15. The review was not complete until April. Landers provided a list of markers that Conner should erect first, in case the appropriation for that fiscal year was not enough for all sixty-eight.<sup>90</sup>

The markers were to be cast-metal (Conner gave specifications for both iron and aluminum), three feet high by four feet wide, mounted on metal standards (Figure 23). Conner awarded the contract to the Newman Manufacturing Company of Cincinnati, Ohio. Because of limited funds, Conner could only order the first forty-five markers from the contractor. The contractor would not be able to deliver any of the tablets prior to the dedication date, so Conner developed a contingency plan: he would have smaller wooden markers constructed and painted for the purpose of the park opening.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> James H. Laubach to Historical Section, Army War College, November 20, 1931, Howard L. Landers to Colonel Laubach, April 4, 1932, War Department Files.

<sup>91</sup> H.J. Conner to W.D. Smith, April 14, 1932, April 27, 1932, War Department Files.



Figure 23. War Department Marker. The War Department erected dozens of cast-metal tablets around the battlefield. This one was placed at the Hazen Brigade Monument lot. Stones River National Battlefield.

Much had happened from the Secretary of War's acceptance of the Commission's report in August 1928 to the summer of 1932. Major Conklin had started building relationships with local organizations and sorting out how park land would be acquired. That duty became the responsibility of the Quartermaster Corps and Captain Chandler. With the help of Rutherford Countian George Williamson, Chandler was able to begin the difficult process of land acquisition. His successor, Captain Conner, finished the bulk of that work, and brought in engineer Jacob Blanton to begin actual construction. A portion of the Cemetery community, including about twenty homes, two churches, and a store, was either razed or moved, displacing an unknown number of persons. Contractors and crews quickly went about transforming farms and rough woodland into a national



park, building roads and marking the battlefield for tourists. For the most part, Murfreesboro residents had watched all of this activity from afar. The park area was closed to visitors while construction was ongoing. Some local business and political leaders, however, had been kept abreast of the park's progress through addresses given at the meetings of the town's civic organizations. Both Chandler and Conner, as well as other representatives of the War Department, had spoken to these groups. The public's first real glimpse of the park, the realization of two generations of effort, would occur with the formal dedication on July 15, 1932.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> See Conard, 161-163.

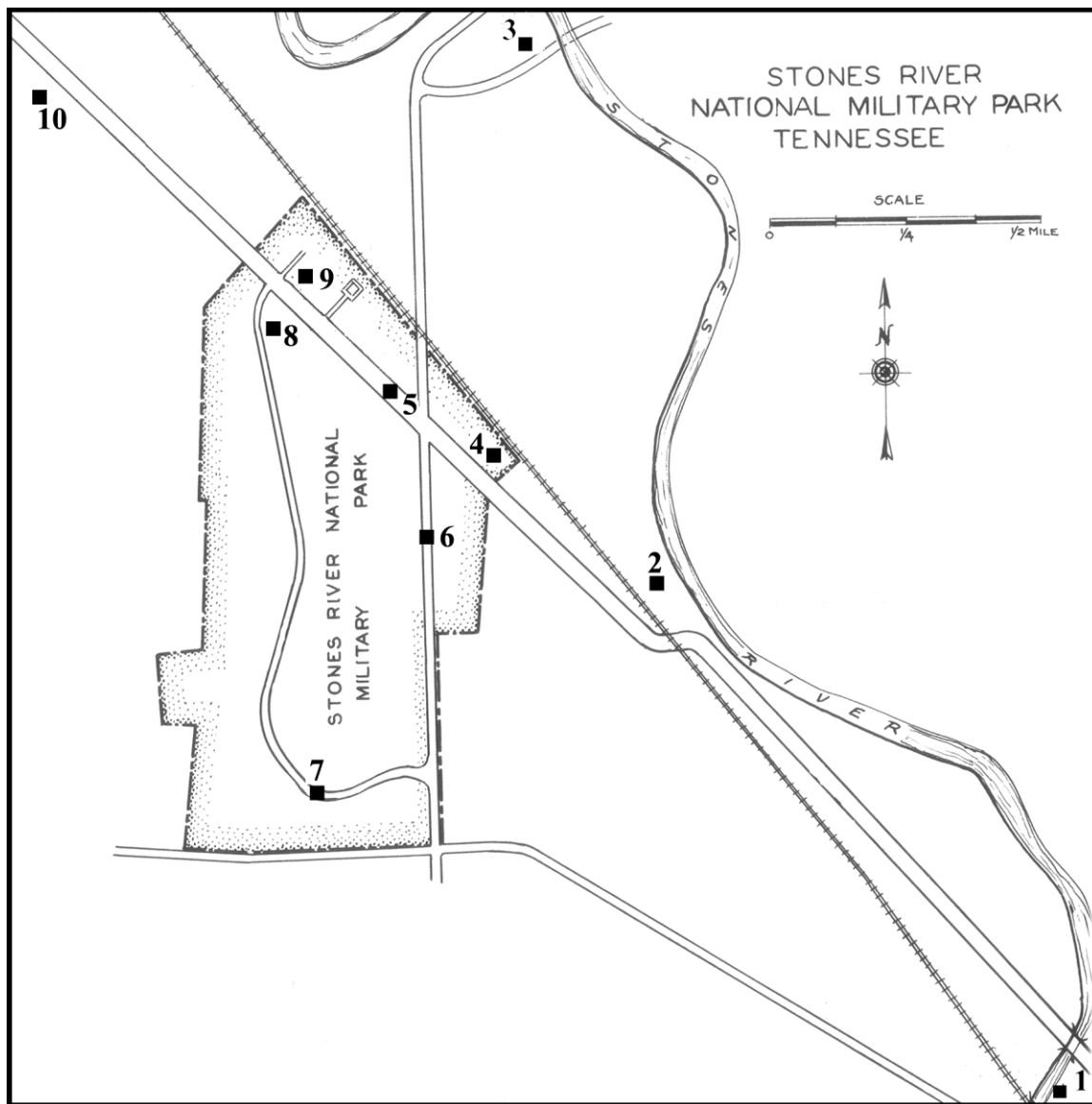


Figure 24. Early Park Map. 1. Redoubt Brannan; 2. Bragg's Headquarters; 3. Artillery Monument; 4. Hazen Brigade Monument; 5. Dixie Highway; 6. Van Cleve Lane; 7. Park Road; 8. Flagstaff; 9. National Cemetery; 10. Rosecrans's Headquarters. Adapted by the author from a map created by the National Park Service circa 1940.

## CONCLUSION:

### DEDICATING THE PARK

The dedication of the Stones River National Military Park would be very different from the Chickamauga dedication thirty-seven years earlier. Newspapers in 1895 had promoted the Chickamauga dedication as a “national affair.” Unprecedented in scope, it received the country’s attention for weeks leading up to and following three days of ceremonies. Tens of thousands of veterans and other interested parties flocked to Chattanooga on chartered special trains. The master of ceremonies had been the sitting Vice President of the United States, and dozens of congressional leaders came to hear rousing patriotic addresses by noteworthy speakers. Congress had appropriated thousands of dollars for the christening of the park.<sup>1</sup>

The dedication of Stones River in 1932 would be a much smaller, and very much local, exercise. The nation’s newest military park received virtually no attention in the national press. The featured speakers were certainly well-known to the people of Middle Tennessee, but there were no famous dignitaries to give speeches. The formal ceremony would take two hours of onlooker’s time. Congress appropriated no money for the event.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “A National Affair,” *Boston Daily Advertiser*, September 16, 1895, 8; Timothy B. Smith, *The Golden Age of Battlefield Preservation: The Decade of the 1890s and the Establishment of America's First Five Military Parks* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2008), 65-66; David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (New York: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), 205.

<sup>2</sup> Ewin L. Davis to Maj. J. Garesché Ord, June 23, 1932, War Department Files, 1926-1933, Stones River National Battlefield.

With no money on hand for the dedication, H.J. Conner appealed to the residents of Murfreesboro for assistance. Many local civic organizations enthusiastically came to his aid. These organizations took responsibility for different portions of the event. The United Daughters of the Confederacy formed a committee, as did both chapters of the Daughters of the American Revolution. The American Legion and Auxiliary participated. The Murfreesboro Woman's Club provided meeting space for all of the different organizations to plan and coordinate the activities. The Chamber of Commerce and the Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs also helped in the preparations for the dedication. Conner served as an ex-officio member of all the various committees.<sup>3</sup>

The executive committee chose John C. Mitchell, the Superintendent of Murfreesboro schools, to be the general chairman for the festivities. Two days before the July event, Mitchell made an appeal to local residents, published in the *Daily News Journal*. "This is an event of much importance to all," Mitchell stated, "and especially to citizens of this county and Murfreesboro. It is our duty to see that the park ceremonies are successful and it is imperative that every loyal Murfreesboroan assists." Mitchell was apparently concerned with attendance, saying "first of all, your presence at the park Friday is necessary and second, you are earnestly requested to bring someone with you." He noted that the government had expended "a large sum in making this park possible and we will benefit mostly by it. Let us acknowledge this by being present." To encourage attendance the Rotary Club passed a resolution asking that the circuit court,

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<sup>3</sup> "Committees For Park Opening Named," *Murfreesboro Daily News Journal*, June 29, 1932, 1.

city and county schools, and all stores close “from 2 to 4 o’clock during the opening ceremonies.”<sup>4</sup>

The committee planned to hold the ceremonies at the rostrum in the tree-shaded National Cemetery, “to afford relief from the heat.” The National Guard and local Boy Scouts were to manage parking, and twenty-seven members of the 117<sup>th</sup> Infantry band from Tullahoma would provide music for the occasion. Chairman Mitchell assured that “each of the speakers will make brief addresses and the complete program will be one of interest from beginning to end and it will in no way become tiresome to the general public.” The committee arranged for a bus to take any Confederate veterans wishing to attend, meeting at the courthouse an hour before the dedication began. The committee also would provide transportation for schoolchildren and courthouse employees.<sup>5</sup>

The ceremony took place as planned on July 15, 1932. A newspaper review of the event described the setting as “ideal” with a cloudless sky and “a cool breeze [that] partly offset the torrid temperatures.” The review’s author estimated that “approximately 1,000 persons sat under the shade of the beautiful trees,” entertained by a band concert from the rostrum, “gaily decorated, the colors of the Confederacy and the colors of the Union being entwined to a highly effective degree.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> “Park Dedication Will Be Held In Cemetery,” *Murfreesboro Daily News Journal*, July 13, 1932, 1. John C. Mitchell was apparently no relation to Battlefield Commissioner Sam H. Mitchell.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.; “Program is Announced for Park Dedication,” *Murfreesboro Daily News Journal*, July 14, 1932, 1.

<sup>6</sup> “Stones River Park is Dedicated with Fitting Ceremonies,” *Murfreesboro Daily News Journal*, July 16, 1932, 1.

Bishop Thomas F. Gailor of Memphis opened the event with a dedicatory prayer. Gailor's father had been a Confederate officer, killed at the Battle of Perryville. The first speaker was then-former Quartermaster General Frank Cheatham who had been supportive of the park's establishment. Cheatham read an abbreviated history of the battle prepared by the Army War College (probably Howard Landers). Major General Edward L. King, the son of a Union veteran, followed Cheatham. As commander of the Quartermaster's Fourth Corps Area, based in Atlanta, King was to take charge of the park after the dedication. Conner then spoke, giving a brief outline of the construction of the park and thanked the audience "for the many courtesies extended him while a citizen of Murfreesboro."<sup>7</sup>

The principal speaker of the day was Congressman Ewin L. Davis. Davis gave a "lengthy address" on the "history of the legislation necessary to make the park a reality." Davis specifically mentioned his appeal to President Coolidge, and the executive's pledge to support the park's establishment. Eleanor M. Gillespie of Murfreesboro, a state leader of the UDC, then gave a brief tribute, followed by James Richardson, the son of the late congressman who had introduced the first park bill, who accepted the site on behalf of the state of Tennessee. The ceremony concluded with the Boy Scouts assisting Sam Mitchell with raising the flag as the band played the national anthem.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.; John Allison, ed., *Notable Men of Tennessee: Personal and Genealogical, with Portraits* (Atlanta: Southern Historical Association, 1905), 66.

<sup>8</sup> "Park is Dedicated," *Murfreesboro Daily News Journal*, July 16, 1932, 1.

The park was the culmination of a process seven decades in duration. In the earliest stage of this process, soldiers erected the Hazen Brigade Monument, the Army established Stones River National Cemetery, and veterans would fulfill a twenty-year old promise to place a monument over the graves of the U.S. Regulars. After government-supported military parks came into vogue in the 1890s, local Union and Confederate veterans banded together to mark and promote the battlefield and to lobby for the establishment of a similar park at Stones River.

At the turn of the twentieth century, John W. Thomas had expended the resources of the Nashville, Chattanooga, and St. Louis Railway to mark parts of the battlefield and purchase others to preserve Civil War history. The railway continued his commitment to commemoration by erecting the Artillery Monument at McFadden's Ford after his death. Others, such as John Savage and the Association of the Survivors of the Battle of Stones River, were thwarted in their efforts to follow suit. Over more than thirty years, local congressmen kept the preservation effort before Congress until success.

Survivors had felt a deep passion to remember what had happened on this battlefield. Others of the Civil War generation were determined to see the event honored as other battles of that nation-defining conflict. At the close of the process, long removed from the event, the federal government preserved part of that then-quiet ground.

As Union General Henry Halleck predicted, "future generations" would "point out the places where so many heroes fell" on the battlefield. On that hot afternoon in 1932, the first visitors streamed along the park road from the knoll where the Chicago Board of Trade Battery had stood, through the Cottonfield and the Cedars, past the

Slaughter Pen and back to the Nashville Pike where Rosecrans's army had stubbornly defended its last line. Through two generations of persistence the intangible need to preserve a place of historic importance, "imbued with meanings more profound than mere pastoral beauty," had been achieved.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Richard West Sellars, "Pilgrim Places: Civil War Battlefields, Historic Preservation, and America's First National Military Parks, 1863-1900" *CRM: The Journal of Heritage Stewardship* 2:1 (Winter 2005): 30.



**AFTERWORD:**  
**STONES RIVER SINCE 1932**

War Department administration of the Stones River National Military Park was short-lived. In 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued an executive order that transferred all battlefield sites from the War Department to the Department of the Interior. Less than a year after it was dedicated the Stones River park fell under the purview of the National Park Service.<sup>1</sup>

The War Department had consolidated the positions of cemetery and park superintendent. Melroe Tarter, caretaker of the National Cemetery since 1924, became superintendent of the park in 1929. However, the superintendent was under the supervision of the Quartermaster Officers-in-Charge, George Chandler and H.J. Conner, during the construction of the park. After the National Park Service assumed responsibility of Stones River, the park was administered by the Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park, though Tarter maintained the title of superintendent until his retirement in 1942. Two successors, John Steffey (1942-1947) and Victor Shipley (1947-1957) also were superintendents of the park under the same arrangement. The NPS gave administrative autonomy to Stones River in 1957; John T. Willett was the first superintendent under this new arrangement.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ronald F. Lee, *The Origin and Evolution of the Military Park Idea* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1973), 42.

<sup>2</sup> Ann Wilson Willett, "A History of Stones River National Military Park" (M.A. thesis, Middle Tennessee State College, 1958), 114-115, 136.

In the 1930s and 1940s staff headquartered at the Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park developed interpretive materials for Stones River. Park employees generally were concerned with maintenance of the National Cemetery, although some occasionally provided a free “guide service” for tourists. The NPS created several master plans for further development of the park in this period. The agency was unable to implement any of these plans because of insufficient funding.<sup>3</sup>

In the aftermath of the Second World War tourism was increasing at all national parks, although funding still lagged. The long-neglected infrastructure at parks could not adequately support the increased tourist traffic. To solve this problem, the NPS initiated the Mission 66 program in 1956. This ambitious ten-year plan, that would culminate with the agency’s fiftieth anniversary in 1966, would provide new facilities and services throughout the national park system, and brought dramatic change to Stones River.<sup>4</sup>

Congress changed the park’s designation to Stones River National Battlefield in 1960, and construction projects began soon after. Within four years, the NPS built a visitor center, a new maintenance facility, and employee residences. The addition of the visitor center, built near the old north entrance, provided tourists with an easily accessed source of information about the battle, including a museum space. With this new facility and increased staffing, the NPS was finally able to offer broader methods of

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<sup>3</sup>Angela Sirna, “In Need of Better Guidance”:The Administration of Stones River National Battlefield, 1933-1941” (Unpublished paper, Middle Tennessee State University, 2012), 13, 20; Willett, 91-97.

<sup>4</sup> Gilbert J. Backlund, “Patriotism on the Battlefield: The National Park Service and Mission 66 at Stones River” (M.A. thesis, Middle Tennessee State University, 2005), 41, 46.

interpretation and offer educational programming for area schools. The agency modified the park road; the entrance off of Van Cleve Lane was closed, and an addition was made to the original War Department boulevard. This created a tour loop, completely enclosed within the park, that controlled access to the site. Mission 66 planners installed new wayside markers at designated tour stops, explaining the events that had occurred at that spot.<sup>5</sup>

The formal ceremony dedicating the new visitor center was held April 11, 1964. Attendees included George Hertzog, the Director of the NPS, and Tennessee Governor Frank Clement. One local resident said that the event was a “signal” of the NPS “coming to the community,” although the agency had managed the site for three decades. An exchange between Lawrence Quist, superintendent of the park, and the Washington office is a telling example of how the park/community relationship had changed over the years. Quist wrote that a local planning committee had formed for the dedication; the Regional Director replied, “you are to be congratulated on having the cooperating groups you have mentioned, however . . . it’s important that the service exert its early leadership in staging the event and hold the reins.” Locals did support the dedication, but they apparently had less input into the event than in 1932.<sup>6</sup>

The boundaries of the park remained virtually unchanged until 1987. Congressman Bart Gordon secured legislation authorizing the acquisition of parcels

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 46, 65.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 66-67.

adjoining the main park unit, as well as at McFadden's Ford. Congress authorized another increase in 1991 that cleared the way for the city of Murfreesboro to donate more remnants of Fortress Rosecrans to the park. The NPS developed this site for interpretation in the mid-1990s, as well as Redoubt Brannan. These increases brought the total acreage of the park up to 650 acres.<sup>7</sup>

In 2004, a major renovation of the visitor center, which expanded office and museum spaces, helped to better serve a growing public audience. Since the 1980s, Murfreesboro and Rutherford County had been experiencing unprecedented growth. New residential and commercial developments encroached ever closer to the park. Significant parts of the battlefield that had not been incorporated into the park were lost to development. An extension of Thompson Lane included an overpass that "greatly affected the viewsheds from the park eastward."<sup>8</sup>

In 2011, the NPS completed an overhaul of the tour road. The new plan closed part of the 1960s tour loop to vehicles, and repaved and reopened Van Cleve Lane. A connecting drive between Thompson Lane and Van Cleve Lane provided a new entrance to the park on one of Murfreesboro's busiest thoroughfares, giving easier access to tourist traffic. Four stone columns, reminiscent of those designed by Herbert Smith in 1931, flanked the new gate, marking the presence of historic ground. This new entrance essentially incorporated the once bucolic battlefield into the city.

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<sup>7</sup> Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc., and John Milner Associates, Inc., *Stones River National Battlefield Cultural Landscape Report* (National Park Service, 2007), 43.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

**APPENDICES**

## APPENDIX A

### Superintendents Stones River National Cemetery 1865-1929\*

Means, John A.: 1864 – June 1865

Earnshaw, William: June 1865-August 1867

Moore, Tredwell: September 1867 - 1869?

Doolittle, Leonard S.: 1869? - 1876?

Frame, Thomas: 1876? – July 1890

Godman, Thomas D.: August 1890 – January 1891

Taylor, Rufus C.: February 1891- March 1894

Gould, Lucien B.: April 1894 – July 1894

Barrett, Edwin P.: August 1894 – January 1900

Hart, Clayton: February 1900 – August? 1908

Delaplane, Frank B.: September? 1908 – August 1909

Shea, Thomas: September 1909 – July 1911

*Rucker, James (Acting, appointment cancelled): July 1911*

*Ordway, Frank (Acting): July 1911*

*Ordway, Charles F. (Acting): August 1911*

Thomas, John H.: August 1911 – August 1924

Tarter, Melroe: September 1924 – August 1929

\*In 1929 the superintendent of the cemetery, Melroe Tarter, was appointed the first superintendent of Stones River National Military Park, which included the cemetery. Since then, park superintendents have also been in charge of the cemetery.

## APPENDIX B

### Officers and Directors Stones River Battlefield and National Park Association

#### Union Veterans:

Flemmon Hall	Lieutenant, 99 <sup>th</sup> Ohio Infantry
Carter B. Harrison, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice President	Captain, 51 <sup>st</sup> Ohio Infantry
Byron C. Knapp	Private, 16 <sup>th</sup> United States Infantry
Frank McClure, Treasurer	Corporal, 124th Indiana Infantry
James F. McClure	Private, 124th Indiana Infantry
Charles A. Sheafe, President	Captain, 59 <sup>th</sup> Ohio Infantry
Charles O. Thomas	Captain, 9 <sup>th</sup> Michigan Infantry

#### Confederate Veterans:

Richard Beard, Secretary	Captain, 5th Confederate Infantry
Reuben Couch	Lieutenant, 23rd Tennessee Infantry
William A. Hoskins	Private, 18th Tennessee Infantry
David D. Maney, Historian	Private, 1st Tennessee Infantry
William. S. McLemore, 1 <sup>st</sup> Vice President	Colonel, 4th Tennessee Cavalry
James O. Oslin	Private, 2nd Tennessee Infantry
Asbury M. Overall	Private, 18th Tennessee Infantry
Richard Ransom	Lieutenant, 24th Tennessee Infantry
James McKnight Witherspoon	Private, 18th Tennessee Infantry

#### Non-veterans:

Horace Palmer
Jesse W. Sparks, Jr., Corresponding Secretary

## APPENDIX C

### Land Owners, 1899

Source: Oscar Jones Map of the Stones River Battlefield, 1899, STRI-298,  
Stones River National Battlefield

<b>Tract</b>	<b>Owners</b>	<b>Acres</b>
1	S.H. Mitchell	105.71
2	Sarah A. Rucker	37.24
3a	E.P. Leach	28.21
3b	E.P. Leach	148.50
4	G.I. Leach	175.48
5	W.I. Early	36.61
6a	G.I. and A.M. Leach	98.65
6b	G.I. and A.M. Leach	70.74
6c	G.I. and A.M. Leach	28.47
7	W.M. Freeman	47.25
8	W.W. Murphy	10.29
9	W.M. Hollins (Holland)	3.13
10	Nelson Cowan	10.46
11	U.S. National Cemetery	20.20
12	John Wade	80.58
13	E.P. and Annie Leach	35.80
14	G.W. Westenberger	41.24
15	J.H.B. Howard	42.94
16	A.M. Overall	391.94
17	James Hill	24.75
18	J.D. Hoover	75.00
19	N.D. Overall	163.52
20	Sam Rucker	6.39



21	George Butler	6.46
22a	Mrs. J.W. Gresham	224.60
22b	Mrs. J.W. Gresham	101.52
23	Mrs. Mary Harding	39.90
24	Henry Wood	102.03
25	Giles Harding	225.83
26	Hardy S____?	
27	J.E. Manson	57.65
28	J.E. Manson	371.46
29	Samuel Gresham	39.87
30	H.H. Kerr	32.94
31	Mrs. W.T. Henderson	308.16
32	John W. Gyer	110.33
33	J.W. Littler	98.79
34	F.W. Washington	21.75
35	H.C. David	78.49
36a	Sallie Fleming	3.65
36b	Sallie Fleming	5.10
37	Robert Rucker	11.28
38	Joe Wade	16.20
39	Lewis Bell	17.56
40	King Manson	4.00
41	William Windrow	4.00
42	William Creighton	5.00
43	Jennie McDaniel	7.00
44	Miss Alice House	51.39
	Small lots	52.69
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3772.61</b>

## APPENDIX D

### Park Committee Association of the Survivors of the Battle of Stones River

#### District

1	Gilbert R. Stormont	58 <sup>th</sup> Indiana Infantry	Princeton, Indiana
2	Silas Grimes	31 <sup>st</sup> Indiana Infantry	Smithville, Indiana
3	W.R. Adkins	32 <sup>nd</sup> Indiana Infantry	New Albany, Indiana
4	Argus D. Vanosdol	3 <sup>rd</sup> Indiana Cavalry	Madison, Indiana
5	George W. Scarce	51 <sup>st</sup> Indiana Infantry	Danville, Indiana
6	John C. Livezey	36 <sup>th</sup> Indiana Infantry	New Castle, Indiana
7	Rodger R. Shiel	39 <sup>th</sup> Indiana Infantry	Indianapolis, Indiana
	David H. Olive	86 <sup>th</sup> Indiana Infantry	Indianapolis, Indiana
8	A. E. Kerwood	57 <sup>th</sup> Indiana Infantry	Muncie, Indiana
9	Orlando A. Somers	39 <sup>th</sup> Indiana Infantry	Kokomo, Indiana
10	Benjamin F. Booth	15 <sup>th</sup> Indiana Infantry	Boswell, Indiana
11	D.B. McConnell	9 <sup>th</sup> Indiana Infantry	Logansport, Indiana
12	J.N. Ohlwine	30 <sup>th</sup> Indiana Infantry	Cromwell, Indiana
13	Edwin Nicar	15 <sup>th</sup> Indiana Infantry	South Bend, Indiana

## APPENDIX E

### **Enabling Legislation, Stones River National Military Park**

An Act to establish a national military park at the battle field of Stones River, Tennessee, approved March 3, 1927 (44 Stat. 1399)  
Amended April 1930 (46 Stat. 167) *amendments in italics*

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That a commission is hereby created, to be composed of the following members, who shall be appointed by the Secretary of War:

- (1) A commissioned officer of the Corps of Engineers, United States Army;
- (2) A veteran of the Civil War who served honorably in the military forces of the United States; and
- (3) A veteran of the Civil War who served honorably in the military forces of the Confederate States of America.

Sec. 2. In appointing the members of the commission created by section 1 of this Act the Secretary of War shall, as far as practicable, select persons familiar with the terrain of the battle field of Stones River, Tennessee, and the historical events associated therewith.

Sec. 3. It shall be the duty of the commission, acting under the direction of the Secretary of War, to inspect the battle field of Stones River, Tennessee, and to carefully study the available records and historical data with respect to the location and movement of all troops which engaged in the battle of Stones River, and the important events connected therewith, with a view of preserving and marking such field for historical and professional military study. The commission shall submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the Secretary of War not later than December 1, 1927. Such report shall describe the portion or portions of land within the area of the battle field which the commission thinks should be acquired and embraced in a national park and the price at which such land can be purchased and its reasonable market value; the report of the commission shall also embrace a map or maps showing the lines of battle and the locations of all troops engaged in the battle of Stones River and the location of the land which it recommends be acquired for the national park; the report of the commission shall contain recommendations for the location of historical tablets at such points on the battle field, both within and without the land to be acquired for the park, as they may

deem fitting and necessary to clearly designate positions and movements of troops and important events connected with the battle of Stones River.

Sec. 4. The Secretary of War is authorized to assign any officials of the War Department to the assistance of the commission if he deems it advisable. He is authorized to pay the reasonable expenses of the commission and their assistants incurred in the actual performance of the duties herein imposed upon them.

Sec. 5. That, upon receipt of the report of said commission, the Secretary of War be, and he is hereby, authorized and directed to acquire, by purchase, when purchasable at prices deemed by him reasonable, otherwise by condemnation, such tracts of lands as are recommended by the commission as necessary and desirable for a national park; to establish and substantially mark the boundaries of the said park; to definitely mark all lines of battle and locations of troops within the boundaries of the park and erect substantial historical tablets at such points within the park and in the vicinity of the park and its approaches as are recommended by the commission, together with such other points as the Secretary of War may deem appropriate: *to construct the necessary roads and walks, plant trees and shrubs, restore and care for the grounds, including the Hazen Monument:* Provided, That the entire cost of acquiring said land, including cost of condemnation proceedings, if any, ascertainment of title, surveys, and compensation for the land, the cost of marking the battle field, and the expenses of the commission, *and the establishment of the national military park,* shall not exceed the sum of \$100,000.

Sec. 6. That, upon the ceding of jurisdiction by the legislature of the State of Tennessee and the report of the Attorney General of the United States that a perfect title has been acquired, the lands acquired under the provisions of this Act, together with the area already inclosed within the national cemetery at the battle field of Stones River and the Government reservation in said battle field upon which is erected a large monument to the memory of the officers and soldiers of General Hazen's brigade who fell on the spot, are hereby declared to be a national park, to be known as Stones River National Park.

Sec. 7. That the said Stones River National Park shall be under the control of the Secretary of War, and he is hereby authorized to make all needed regulations for the care of the park. The superintendent of the Stone River National Cemetery shall likewise be the superintendent of and have the custody and care of the Stones River National Park, under the direction of the Secretary of War.

Sec. 8. That the Secretary of War is hereby authorized to enter into agreements, upon such nominal terms as he may prescribe, with such present owners of the land as may desire to remain upon it, to occupy and cultivate their present holdings, upon condition that they will preserve the present buildings and roads, and the present outlines of field and forest, and that they will assist in caring for and protecting all tablets, monuments, or such other artificial works as may from time to time be erected by proper authority.

Sec. 9. That it shall be lawful for the authorities of any State having troops engaged in the battle of Stones River to enter upon the lands and approaches of the Stones River National Park for the purpose of ascertaining and marking the lines of battle of troops engaged therein: Provided, That before any such lines are permanently designated, the position of the lines and the proposed methods of marking them by monuments, tablets, or otherwise shall be submitted to the Secretary of War, and shall first receive the written approval of the Secretary.

Sec. 10. That if any person shall willfully destroy, mutilate, deface, injure, or remove any monument, column, statue, memorial structure, or work of art that shall be erected or placed upon the grounds of the park by lawful authority, or shall willfully destroy or remove any fence, railing, inclosure, or other work for the protection or ornament of said park or any portion thereof, or shall willfully destroy, cut, hack, bark, break down, or otherwise injure any tree, bush or shrubbery that may be growing upon said park, or shall cut down or fell or remove any timber, battle relic, tree, or trees growing or being upon such park, except by permission of the Secretary of War, or shall willfully remove or destroy any breastworks, earthworks, wall, or other defenses or shelter, or any part thereof, constructed by the armies formerly engaged in the battle on the lands or approaches to the park, any person so offending shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction thereof before any court or competent jurisdiction, shall for each and every such offense be fined not less than \$5 nor more than \$100.

Sec. 11. That the sum of \$100,000, or so much thereof as may be necessary, is hereafter authorized to be appropriated, out of any moneys in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, to be expended for the purposes of this Act: Provided, That no obligation for the purchase of lands shall be incurred until the commission has fixed the boundaries of said park.

## APPENDIX F

### Stones River Battlefield Commission and War Department Staff

#### **Stones River Battlefield Commission:**

John D. Hanson, Union veteran, Chairman (1928-29)  
*Hanson died in 1929; his position remained vacant.*

Samuel Hodge Mitchell, Confederate veteran, Member (1928-32)

Maj. John French Conklin, Corps of Engineers, Secretary (1928-29)  
*Conklin received a teaching appointment to West Point in 1929.*

Maj. Frank Besson, Corps of Engineers, Secretary (1929-32)

#### **War Department Staff:**

Capt. George M. Chandler, Officer-in-Charge, June 1929 – August 1930

Capt. Henry James Conner, Officer-in-Charge, August 1930 – July 1932

George C. Williamson, Special Clerk, July 1929 – July 1932

Jacob Alexander Blanton, Civil Engineer, November 1930 – July 1932

Miss \_\_\_\_\_ McCullough, Stenographer

Louise Jones, Stenographer, ? – July 1932

## APPENDIX G

## LAND ACQUISITIONS, 1930-1931

Source: Status of Acquisition at Stones River National Military Park, Central Files Collection, Oversize folder, Stones River National Battlefield.

White landowners in *italics*

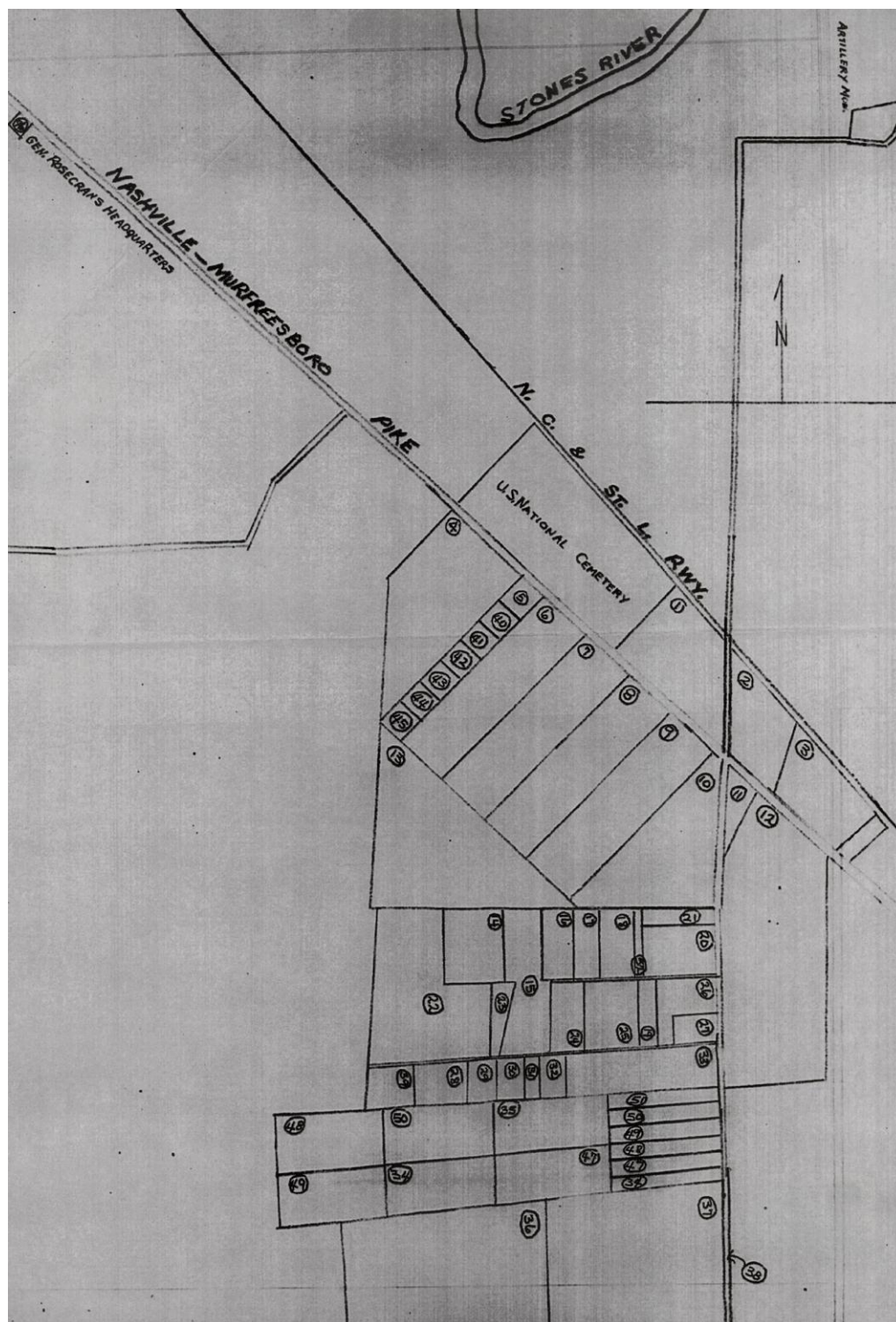
\* Condemned properties

<b>Tract</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Acreage</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Per Acre</b>
1	Hickman, Louis H.	8.4	\$2,000.00	\$238.10
2*	Anderson, Burton	5.0	\$2,250.00	\$450.00
3	<i>Gannon, Homer</i>	4.8	<i>\$3,000.00</i>	<i>\$625.00</i>
4	King, Walter	11.9	\$2,400.00	\$201.68
5*	Ward, Martha M.	0.7	\$500.00	\$714.29
6*	Jordan, Evelyn H., est.	9.8	\$2,000.00	\$204.08
7	<i>Averitt, Robert W.</i>	9.8	<i>\$4,000.00</i>	<i>\$408.16</i>
8*	<i>Earthman, Virginia, est.</i>	9.8	<i>\$1,500.00</i>	<i>\$153.06</i>
9	<i>Henderson, Harold M.</i>	9.8	<i>\$2,000.00</i>	<i>\$204.08</i>
10*	Minter, G.H., est.	11	\$2,200.00	\$200.00
11*	Working People's Society	1	\$200.00	\$200.00
12	<i>Ransom, J.A. &amp; Overall, R.F.</i>	25.9	<i>\$3,600.00</i>	<i>\$139.00</i>
13	Cole, Will	17.2	\$1,050.00	\$61.05
14	Wade, Louise Harding	3.6	\$800.00	\$222.22
15	Avent, Eliza, est.	4.7	\$800.00	\$170.21
16	Howard, Edward	1.9	\$150.00	\$78.95

17	Huddleston, Rufus & Ella	1.5	\$650.00	\$433.33
18*	Ebenezer Church	2.4	\$1,000.00	\$416.67
19*	Anderson, I.W. (heirs)	1	\$400.00	\$400.00
20*	Waller, William, est.	3.2	\$600.00	\$187.50
21	Mt. Olivet Church	1	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
22*	Peyton, Elnora	12.1	\$1,210.00	\$100.00
23	Howard, Edward	1	\$750.00	\$750.00
24*	Avent, Robert	1.9	\$1,000.00	\$526.32
25	Bass, Sallie	3	\$800.00	\$266.67
26	Anderson, Golena	2.3	\$1,100.00	\$478.26
27*	Mason, John, est.	1.1	\$150.00	\$136.36
28*	Swift, John, est.	2	\$500.00	\$250.00
29	Black, Nannie Bell	1	\$400.00	\$400.00
30	Cowan, Thaddeus	1	\$80.00	\$80.00
31	Burke, Isabel	0.5	\$40.00	\$80.00
32	Black, Nannie Bell	1	\$50.00	\$50.00
33	Orr, Ed	5.5	\$500.00	\$90.91
34*	Gresham, Sallie	7	\$625.00	\$89.29
35	Freeman, Will & Mary	5.1	\$800.00	\$156.86
36	<i>Steelman, Robert</i>	<i>49.8</i>	<i>\$5,000.00</i>	<i>\$100.40</i>
37	<i>Harding, Giles, est.</i>	<i>43</i>	<i>\$4,294.00</i>	<i>\$99.86</i>
38	<i>Bowen, Cephus, est.</i>	<i>1.1</i>	<i>\$75.00</i>	<i>\$68.18</i>



39	Orr, Edward, est.	1.6	\$125.00	\$78.13
40*	Smalling, Pauline	0.7	\$125.00	\$191.21
41*	Frazier, Georgia	0.7	\$125.00	\$191.21
42*	Harlan, Jordan	0.7	\$125.00	\$191.21
43*	Harlan, Samuel	0.7	\$125.00	\$191.21
44*	Harlan, Joseph	0.7	\$125.00	\$191.21
45*	Harlan, John, et. al.	0.7	\$125.00	\$191.21
46	Windrow, Alice, et. al.	0.25	\$400.00	\$1,600.00
47*	Gresham, Elizabeth	7	\$625.00	\$89.29
48*	Gresham, Lucy	7	\$925.00	\$132.14
49*	Gresham, Martha, est.	7	\$625.00	\$89.29
50*	Gresham, Samuel	7	\$625.00	\$89.29
51*	Gresham, John, est.	1.25	\$125.00	\$100.00
52	Williams, Kitty	0.5	\$150.00	\$300.00
53	<i>Crouse, O.L.</i>	<i>0.69</i>	<i>\$600.00</i>	<i>\$869.57</i>



War Department Land Acquisition Tract Map, 1929. Central Files, Oversize folder, Stones River National Battlefield.

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