

TENNESSEE HISTORICAL COMMISSION GRANTS

Thirty-six matching grants from the Historic Preservation Fund allocated to the Tennessee Historical Commission have been awarded to community and civic organizations for projects that support the preservation of historic and archaeological resources. Awarded annually, 60% of the project funds are from the federal Historic Preservation Fund and 40% of project funds come from the grantee. Grants are competitive and this year the Tennessee Historical Commission staff reviewed 67 applications with funding requests totaling approximately \$1.5 million, nearly double the amount of funding available. This year's selection included building and archaeological surveys, design guidelines for historic districts, rehabilitation of historic buildings, posters

highlighting the state's history and archaeology, and training for historic zoning staff or commissioners. One of our grant priorities is for projects that are in Certified Local Governments, a program that allows communities to participate closely in the federal program of historic preservation. Eleven Certified Local Government communities were awarded grants this year. Additional priorities include areas experiencing rapid growth and development, other threats to cultural resources, areas where there are gaps in knowledge regarding cultural resources, and the restoration of the state's historic buildings that are owned by civic or non-profit organizations. Properties that use the restoration grants must be listed in the National Register.

The grant recipients and/or sites of the projects include:

Bedford County:

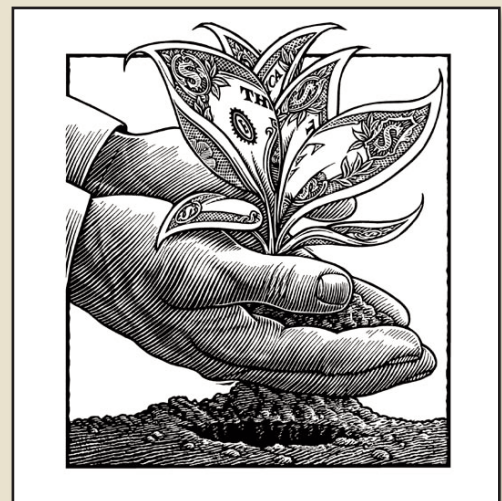
Shelbyville Historic Zoning Commission - \$1,000 for one commissioner or staff to attend training at the National Alliance of Preservation Commission's Forum.

Campbell County:

Campbell County - \$24,000 to fund a survey of historic resources in the county.

Carter County:

Tennessee State Parks - \$15,000 to fund the restoration of the foundation at the Miller Farm in Roan Mountain State Park.



The June meeting of the Tennessee Historical Commission will take place on Friday, June 26, 2015 at 9 AM at the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis. The museum is located at 450 Mulberry Street, 38103.

**Grant recipients and/or sites of projects...continued from page 1**

Davidson County:

Metropolitan Historical Commission - \$30,000 to fund a master plan for Two Rivers Mansion.

Metropolitan Historical Commission - \$5,000 for five commissioners or staff to attend training at the National Alliance of Preservation Commission's Forum.

Middle Tennessee State University, Department of History, Public History Program - \$12,181 to fund a geophysical survey of Clover Bottom Mansion property in Nashville.

Fayette County:

Town of LaGrange - \$6,600 to fund the restoration of the porch on the LaGrange Civic Center, part of the LaGrange Historic District.

Hardin County:

City of Savannah, Historic Zoning Commission - \$10,800 to fund design guidelines for local historic districts.

Jackson County:

Town of Gainesboro - \$6,000 to fund foundation restoration on the E.O. Smith House, part of the Gainesboro Residential Historic District.

Knox County:

Knoxville-Knox County Metro Planning Commission - \$21,000 to fund a survey and digitization of 20th century buildings in the county.

Maury County:

Association for the Preservation of Tennessee Antiquities, Maury County Chapter - \$15,000 to fund restoration work at the Athenaeum.

McMinn County:

City of Etowah - \$20,000 to fund restoration of windows on the Etowah Carnegie Library building.

Overton County:

Livingston Civic and Garden Club - \$6,000 to fund the porch restoration on the Gov. A.H. Roberts Law Office.

Pickett County:

East Tennessee State University - \$15,000 to fund a survey of prehistoric archaeological sites in Pickett State Forest.

Rutherford County:

Middle Tennessee State University, Department of Sociology and Anthropology - \$25,000 to fund survey and investigations of prehistoric sites in southwest Rutherford County.

Shelby County:

City of Memphis, Memphis Landmarks Commission - \$6,000 for six commissioners or staff to attend training at the National Alliance of Preservation Commission's Forum.

Sumner County:

City of Gallatin, Planning Department - \$1,000 for one commissioner or staff to attend training at the National Alliance of Preservation Commission's Forum.

Bledsoe's Lick Historical Association - \$7,800 to fund dendrochronology studies at Wynnewood, a state-owned historic site.

Unicoi County:

Tennessee Division of Archaeology - \$12,000 to fund remote sensing for the Flint Creek Battle Site at Rocky Fort State Park.

Washington County:

Town of Jonesborough - \$24,000 to fund a survey and nomination for local and National Register districts.

Town of Jonesborough - \$2,000 for two commissioners or staff to attend training at the National Alliance of Preservation Commission's Forum.

Continued on page 3



Grant recipients and/or sites of projects...continued from page 2

Williamson County:

Hiram Lodge Preservation, Inc. - \$10,000 to fund restoration of the Hiram Masonic Lodge No. 7.

Multi-County Grants:

Tennessee Preservation Trust - \$20,000 to fund the 2015 Statewide Historic Preservation Conference and to and to provide preservation education materials that can be used in the state.

Tennessee History for Kids - \$10,000 to fund posters for Tennessee schools and libraries, highlighting historic preservation in Tennessee.

Middle Tennessee State University, Department of Sociology and Anthropology - \$3,410 to fund posters for Tennessee Archaeology Week.

Middle Tennessee State University, Fullerton Laboratory for Spatial Technology - \$40,000 to digitize data for historic / architectural survey files and for survey data entry for computerization of survey files.

Tennessee Division of Archaeology - \$10,564 to fund a continuation of a survey of Rosenwald schools and school sites.

East Tennessee Development District - \$36,000 to fund a preservation specialist staff position for the East Tennessee Development District.

First Tennessee Development District - \$25,000 to fund a preservation specialist staff position for the First Tennessee Development District.

Greater Nashville Regional Council - \$25,000 to fund a preservation specialist staff position for the Greater Nashville Regional Council.

Memphis Area Association of Governments - \$32,000 to fund a preservation specialist staff position for the Memphis Area Association of Governments.

Northwest Tennessee Development District - \$36,000 to fund a preservation specialist staff position for the Northwest Tennessee Development District.

South Central Tennessee Development District - \$50,000 to fund a preservation specialist staff position for the South Central Tennessee Development District.

Southeast Tennessee Development District - \$54,000 to fund a preservation specialist staff position for the Southeast Tennessee Development District.

Southwest Tennessee Development District - \$54,000 to fund a preservation specialist staff position for the Southwest Tennessee Development District.

Upper Cumberland Development District - \$50,000 to fund a preservation specialist staff position for the Upper Cumberland Development District.





From the Director:

Major Clover Bottom Collection Donated to State

A recently-discovered archive of photographs, farm records, memorabilia, and artifacts associated with the second owners of Nashville's Clover Bottom, Rep. Andrew and Anna Gay Price, has provided a wealth of new information about the home of the Tennessee Historical Commission.

The Prices were the second family to own the c. 1853 house, purchasing the property from Mary Ann Hoggatt, the widow of Dr. James Hoggatt, in 1882. During this family's ownership, Andrew Price served as a member of Congress, representing the 3rd Congressional District of Louisiana from 1889-1897. Price was elected to the seat previously held by his father-in-law, Edward Gay, and his political career might well have continued had illness not forced his retirement. A native of Franklin, Louisiana, Price's father was Col. James C. Price from Lebanon, TN. Andrew graduated from Cumberland School of Law in Lebanon in 1875. The Price family owned Clover Bottom more than 30 years, before the widowed Anna Price sold it to Arthur F. Stanford in 1918. At that time Mrs. Price moved into the Belle Meade Apartments.

The materials comprising the new collection—which number in the hundreds of items-- were contained in three large wooden trunks and a few cardboard boxes. Most of the contents appear to have remained undisturbed for about 80 years, moving just two or three times during that period between several West Nashville attics. The trunks, which bear the still-legible stenciled name “Andrew Price,” were carefully packed by Mrs. Price sometime prior to her death in 1939. A substantial number of items bear labels that explain their significance, in expectation of the time when they might be unpacked and examined. That time came in late 2014, when owner R. Walter Hale, III, of Nashville (a great grandson of Mrs. Price's sister) generously donated the contents of the trunks to the State of Tennessee. The materials will reside at the Tennessee State Library and Archives, and at the Tennessee State Museum. Some artifacts may eventually be displayed at Clover Bottom.

Significantly for the THC, the new materials demonstrate that the Price's ownership of Clover Bottom is a notable and somewhat early historic preservation story—very appropriate for the home of the State Historic

Preservation Office. Historians have long known that the Prices, who lived primarily at Arcadia Plantation in Louisiana, purchased Clover Bottom for use a summer home, and as a thoroughbred horse farm. What has emerged from this new archive, however, is that the Price's ownership represents a deliberate effort to purchase and preserve the property due to its historic significance. Among the objects are correspondence and memberships to the Ladies Hermitage Association from 1889, along with photos of visits by the Prices to there and to other historic sites. An album of original photos demonstrates a conscientious effort to retain and



This 1898 photo, taken in front of Clover Bottom, is one of many from the recently discovered Price collection. Titled "Edward pattin' and Martha dancing," the reference appears to refer to patting juba, a form of dance that traces its origins to West Africa.

document the exquisite original French Zuber scenic wallpaper that decorated most of the home. Newspaper records provide the most compelling references to the Prices' preservation focus. Andrew Price's obituary in the *Nashville American*, on February 6th, 1909, noted “Mr. Price bought Clover Bottom and spent a great deal on it, restoring it to its old time beauty and elegance, and adding to it the comforts and luxuries of a modern home.” The *Nashville Banner* on February 8, 1909 observed “it is said that as a little boy passing and repassing this magnificent farm on the stage line which his father and grandfather controlled he [Price] declared his purpose someday to own the place made historic during the life of Gen. Jackson.”

From the Director, continued on page 5

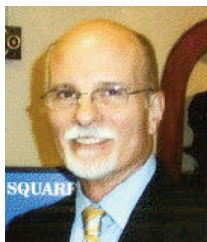
**From the Director...continued from page 4**

Objects associated with the family reveal fascinating and varied histories befitting a prominent and well-connected couple. A testament to Mrs. Price's style in clothing, the collection includes several magnificent garments that were packed away. One couture dress bears the label of Lady Lucy Duff-Gordon, an early fashion designer who survived the sinking of the Titanic. There are also tantalizing connections to larger episodes from late 19th-century history. Inside one trunk resided an invitation to the 1890 christening of the USS Maine, which after a mysterious explosion in Havana Harbor in 1898 touched off the Spanish-American War. There are also items from the Prices' visit to the famous Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893. Items associated with Mr. Price's time in Congress include a carefully-wrapped cigar containing a label stating it had been given to Price by President

Grover Cleveland during a visit to the White House. A large gold badge with a profile of President William McKinley is labeled that Mrs. Price wore it to his inauguration in 1897.

With the restoration of the historic dependencies here starting in June and an archaeological excavation by MTSU to look for non-extant outbuildings also taking place this summer, the new collection is already being of use. An 1890s photo of the still extant carriage house showed an unknown, long-vanished cupola, which has been incorporated into the architectural design to be replicated. The THC is very grateful to Mr. Hale and the Hale family for donating this important collection that will be of use to scholars, historians, and others.

-Patrick McIntyre

Fred Prouty Retires

Fred Prouty

Tennessee Wars Commission Program Director Fred Prouty retired in January, after a distinguished 20 year career at the Tennessee Historical Commission as the first and only staff member for the Wars Commission. A well-attended celebration was held January 30th at the Commission to

note his achievements and pay tribute to this dedicated professional.

Over the course of his career, Fred Prouty has helped save over 7000 acres of battlefield and military-associated properties, and helped secure over \$7,400,000 in non-Federal matching funds to help acquire significant military sites. During his tenure, 350 acres have been saved at Parker's Crossroads in Henderson County, and 830 acres—representing 98% of the battlefield-- have been saved at Davis Bridge in Hardeman County.

In addition to saving property, Prouty has overseen and helped fund multiple studies, master plans, archaeological excavations, and exhibit projects. Prouty helped produce the Emmy Award-winning documentary "Hallowed Ground" in 2001. The "Path Divided Civil War Heritage Brochure" is still the most-requested brochure in the state's welcome centers. Prouty began his interest in history as a child, and in particular he gravitated toward

the study of the Civil War. During a career in music, Prouty went on to make history of his own. He began playing drums in bands in Memphis in the 1960s. Then, as a session drummer in Muscle Shoals during the classic era of the early 1970s, Prouty played on multiple well-known songs, including Mac Davis' 1972 #1 hit, "Baby, Baby Don't Get Hooked on Me." He recorded with a range of other stars, including Little Richard, Donnie Osmond, and Liza Minnelli. Prouty transitioned to a career in history and historic preservation by working at Colonial

Williamsburg and then the Tennessee State Museum. He also worked for an archaeological consulting firm and the Hermitage. In 1989, Prouty joined the staff at the Tennessee Division of Archaeology. When legislation was established in 1994 to establish the Wars Commission, Prouty transferred to the THC. The Wars Commission

functions as a division of the THC. With the search for a successor underway, Prouty is currently serving a part-time appointment at the Commission.



Fred leading a tour of Parker's Crossroads, in Henderson County



THC Elects New Officers

At the February 27th meeting of the Tennessee Historical Commission at the Commission's offices at Clover Bottom, the members elected a new chairman and vice chairs to two year terms. Dr. Reavis Mitchell of Nashville serves as the new Chairman. A native of Nashville, Dr. Mitchell is the Dean of School of Humanities and Behavioral Social Sciences at Fisk University. Dr. Mitchell was previously vice chair for Middle Tennessee. First appointed to the Commission in 1999 by Gov. Don Sundquist, Dr. Mitchell was reappointed twice by Gov. Phil Bredesen, and reappointed in 2014 by Gov. Bill Haslam. Serving in her first term as Vice Chair for West Tennessee is Derita Coleman Williams of Memphis. Originally appointed to the THC in 2007 by Gov. Bredesen, Ms. Williams was reappointed in 2012 by Gov. Haslam. She serves as an independent scholar in American material culture, and a private dealer in American fine art and decorative arts. Allen Carter of Athens was elected to his first term as the vice chair for East Tennessee. First appointed to the Commission in 2012 by Gov. Haslam, Mr. Carter is the owner of Athens Insurance Agency. At the meeting, a special appreciation was



Left to Right: Former THC Chairman Norman Hill, new chairman Dr. Reavis Mitchell, and outgoing chairman Sam D. Elliott at the February 2015 THC meeting in Nashville.

extended to Sam D. Elliott of Signal Mountain for his service as chair from 2009 to 2015, and to Paul A. Matthews of Memphis for serving as vice chair for West Tennessee from 2009 to 2015.

In Memorium: Clarence Elkins

THC member Clarence Elkins of Smyrna died on March 31 at the age of 76. Appointed to the Commission in 2010 by Gov. Bredesen, Mr. Elkins was a respected member known for his gentle style and kind manner. Mr. Elkins served as a volunteer at the Sam Davis Home Museum for 18 years, which helped renew a long-held interest in history. In addition, he enjoyed spending time at his family farm in Bedford County, which has been in his family for over 175 years. Prior to retirement Mr. Elkins was a long-time attorney for the Tennessee Department of Transportation. There, he helped organize and direct the Equal Opportunity Employment section from 1969 to 1992. Elkins then directed the Governor's Highway Safety program until his retirement in 1995. The Commission extends its deepest sympathies to his family.



Merit Award Winners Announced

The 2015 THC Certificate of Merit award recipients were recognized with a ceremony and reception at Clover Bottom Mansion on Wednesday, May 27. Executive Director Patrick McIntyre and Commission Chairman Dr. Reavis Mitchell presided over the event. The awards program, established in 1975, honors those who have made significant contributions in the prior year to historic preservation in Tennessee and/or to advancing Tennessee history. This year's recipients include:

Historic Preservation

1. **Dr. Henri Grissino-Mayer** of the University of Tennessee-Knoxville was recognized for recent dendro-archaeological studies at several sites, including the THC's Rocky Mount, Sabine Hill, and Wynnewood.
2. For the successful efforts to save and purchase Nashville's historic Studio A, **Aubrey Preston** of Leiper's Fork and his Nashville financial partners, **Mike Curb**, and **Chuck Elcan** were recognized. In addition, music star **Ben Folds** was included for starting the effort, and the members of the **Music Industry Coalition** including **Mike Kopp**, **Sharon Corbett-House**, and **Trey Bruce** were recognized.
3. The **Monroe County Government** was honored for their ongoing restoration of the c. 1897 Monroe County Courthouse, located on the square in Madisonville. Three phases of work have been completed to date, assisted in part by THC Federal Preservation grants.
4. **Friends of Kellytown**, Nashville, was recognized for raising funds for the purchase of a threatened 14th century Native American town site in Forest Hills, Davidson County.
5. **The Tennessee Dept. of Transportation** was honored for the protection and stabilization of the Trail of Tears-associated c. 1823 Toll Bridge pier, Nashville.
6. **Jose and Jennifer Velasquez** of Memphis were nominated for the restoration of a formerly endangered landmark property, the c. 1848 James Lee House in Memphis. Unused since the 1950s, the property is now a bed and breakfast. The owners worked with THC and used federal historic tax credits.
7. **The Nashville Zoo** at **Grassmere** received an award for their sensitive excavation and relocation of a historic African-American cemetery on the property to another section of the property.
8. **Knox Heritage** received an award for the Westwood Mansion Restoration in Knoxville. This handsome 1890s Victorian house has been restored by Knox Heritage for use as their headquarters, event space, and a preservation resource center.

Merit Award Winners Announced...continued on page 8



Merit Award Winners Announced...continued from page 4

Book/Public Programming

1. **Dr. Edward McCaul** was awarded for his book *To Retain Command of the Mississippi: The Civil War Naval Campaign for Memphis*, which explores the 1862 Battle of Memphis and its strategic importance.
2. **Amy Kostine** and **David Crockett State Park** received a certificate for the Trail of Tears exhibit at David Crockett State Park, which consists of interpretive panels installed at the park in October, 2014.
3. **Wayne Dowdy** was honored for his book *On this Day in Memphis History*. Largely derived from period newspapers, daily readings from the book by Willie Bearden on WKNO Radio have helped the book reach a broad audience.
4. **Contemporary Media** received an award for *The First 150: The First Tennessee Story*, which details the history of First Tennessee Bank.
5. **Aram Goudsouzian** received a certificate for *Down to the Crossroads; Civil Rights, Black Power, and the Meredith March Against Fear*, a well-balanced and researched account of the Civil Rights Movement's last great march.

Special Commendations

1. **Sen. Douglas Henry** of Nashville, recently retired from the Tennessee General Assembly, was recognized for his decades of dedicated support for Tennessee's history and for historic preservation.
2. **Fred M. Prouty**, program director of the Tennessee Wars Commission, was honored following his retirement for his many successes in the position he held from 1994 to 2015.
3. Dr. George Woodbury and Dr. Cathy Chapman were recognized for the **Chapman Woodbury Oral History Program** at Lausanne Collegiate School in Memphis. As part of this program, students have interviewed a diverse group of individuals, from Holocaust survivors to World War II veterans to those associated with Memphis' music heritage.
4. **Vicki Vaden** of Crossville was awarded for her longstanding efforts in keeping a road expansion project out of the Cumberland Homesteads National Register District.
5. Coach **Bill Bingham** of Bristol received an award for his ongoing efforts to oversee the restoration and upgrades at the National Register-listed c. 1934-36 Stone Castle (Bristol Municipal Stadium.)



CAPITAL PROJECTS APPROVED FOR TWO STATE HISTORIC SITES

By Martha D. Akins, Historic Sites Program Director

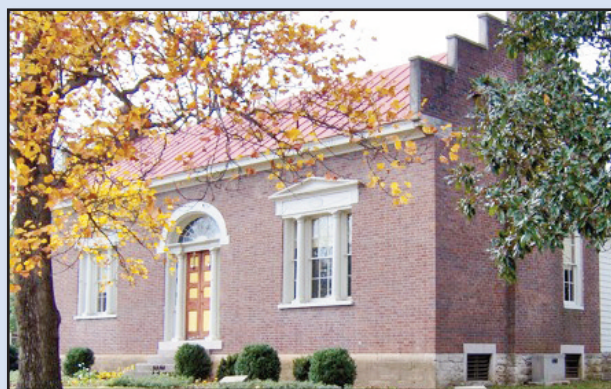
The Tennessee General Assembly recently approved the State's 2015-2016 Capital Budget, including projects at two of the Tennessee Historical Commission's historic sites. A project for restoration work at Rock Castle State Historic Site was approved for \$240,000, and a project to demolish the vacant gymnasium on the Carter House State Historic Site property was approved for \$500,000.



THE DANIEL SMITH FAMILY HOME, ROCK CASTLE STATE HISTORIC SITE, HENDERSONVILLE

Rock Castle State Historic Site, located in Hendersonville (Sumner County), contains the 1784 home of General Daniel Smith, who had a quite distinguished career as surveyor, military officer, and politician. Expected scope of work for the historic house includes installing shutters on the first floor windows, installing tongue-and-groove ceiling on the back porch, repairing damaged railings and stairs on the back porch, re-glazing windows, replacing the roof, cleaning and repainting all wood elements. The historic smoke house will have the dirt infill removed, a new lintel will be installed over the entry door, and the roof will be replaced. The property also has a caretaker's cottage. Work on that building includes roof and gutter replacement and addressing the moisture issue under the house. In addition to better protecting the buildings from the elements, several key elements will be returned to the historic buildings, making them more accurate historically.

Carter House State Historic Site, located in Franklin (Williamson County), contains the home of the Carter family, who sought refuge in the basement while the 1864 Battle of Franklin engulfed their property. In the 20th century, a high school and gymnasium were built north of the house. The high school burned down leaving the gymnasium, which in recent history housed the Boys and Girls Club. A land swap occurred between the state and the city in 1998, and the State obtained the gymnasium. A plan was developed for the adaptive reuse of the gymnasium into a visitor center that would better serve the needs of the site than the present museum. Complete funding never materialized, thus stalling the project. With recent battlefield reclamation successes happening in the city, new energy and fresh ideas between the Tennessee Historical Commission and Battle of Franklin Trust (the managing non-profit of Carter House State Historic Site) have created a synergy of desired battlefield



THE CARTER FAMILY HOME, CARTER HOUSE STATE HISTORIC SITE, FRANKLIN

reclamation on the state property itself. To accomplish this, demolition of the non-historic gymnasium will recreate the once-open viewshed, leaving visitors with a better understanding of how the property looked on November 30, 1864.

Both projects will kick-off with the new fiscal year, which starts in July, and both should be complete by this time next year.



THE LITTLE KNOWN STORY OF ELBERT WILLIAMS AND THE RIGHT OF THE FRANCHISE IN HAYWOOD COUNTY

Linda T. Wynn

Assistant Director for State Programs

This year marks the end of the Civil War's Sesquicentennial. It also begins Reconstruction's Sesquicentennial and the Sesquicentennial of the ratification of Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, which finally outlawed the enslavement of African Americans. Before Reconstruction ended, the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution were ratified on July 28, 1868 and February 3, 1870, respectively. Within a month of the Fifteenth Amendment's ratification, Thomas Mundy Peterson became the first African American to take advantage of the new right to vote. Peterson cast his historic vote on March 31, 1870. It took almost 100 years for the promise of the 15th Amendment to fully apply to all citizens of the United States regardless of race. This year also marks the 50th anniversary of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, which President Lyndon B. Johnson signed into law on August 6, 1965. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 abolished literacy tests and poll taxes designed to disenfranchise African American voters and gave the federal government the authority to take over voter registration in counties with a pattern of persistent discrimination.

However, before the 1965 Voting Rights Act came to fruition numerous persons gave their lives in the African American quest for social justice and the right of the franchise as granted by the 15th Amendment to the Constitution. This amendment granted African American men the right to vote by declaring that the "right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude". By the late 1870s, various discriminatory practices were used to prevent African Americans from exercising their right to vote, especially in the South. The right to vote appears more times in the Constitution than other rights Americans hold dear. Between 1868 and 1971 several amendments were added to the Constitution that addressed citizens and the vote. Section 2 of the Fourteenth Amendment imposes a penalty on those states that deny or abridge "the right to vote at any [federal or state] election . . . to any male inhabitants of such State, being twenty-one years of age, and citizens of the United States, . . . except for participation in rebellion, or other crime." The Fifteenth states that "the right of citizens of

the United States to vote" cannot be abridged by race; The Seventeenth Amendment calls for members of the U.S. Senate to be elected directly by the people instead of State Legislatures; the Nineteenth states that the same right cannot be abridged by sex; the Twenty-Fourth states that the "right of citizens of the United States to vote" in federal elections cannot be blocked by a poll tax; and the Twenty-Sixth protects "the right of citizens of the United States, who are eighteen years of age or older, to vote." From the colonial era to the seventh decade of the twentieth century, the legislative branch of government addressed the issue of the franchise.

For African Americans, however, the right of the franchise expanded and contracted especially after the end of Reconstruction and the Supreme Court's 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision. Using poll taxes, literacy tests and outright intimidation to stop people from casting free and unfettered ballots, Southern states effectively disenfranchised African Americans. The white southern code of ethics eliminated African Americans as voters, jurors, or anything else associated with civic equality. Despite the disenfranchisement, African Americans continued the struggle to regain the right to have their voices heard in the political process of governance. In doing so, they faced many dangers, including the loss of life. One such case, though not generally recognized in the annals of Tennessee history is that of Elbert Williams, an African American, allegedly murdered by Brownsville law enforcement officers, because of his affiliation with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and his quest to participate in the political process.

Four years prior to the NAACP's Legal Defense Fund's litigation of the 1944 *Smith v. Allwright* case that outlawed "white primaries," Elbert Williams, a resident of Haywood County, Tennessee, and one of the earliest known members of the NAACP, was lynched because of his membership in Brownsville's newly inaugurated chapter of the NAACP. Williams' demise came 11 years before the Christmas night dynamite bombing of Harry T. and Harriett Vyda Simms Moore's bedroom; 15 years before the lynching of 14 year-old Emmett Till; and 23 years prior to Medgar Evers' assassination.

*Story of Elbert Williams...continued from page 10*

When consideration is given to those whose lives were taken in the struggle to gain voting rights, Florida's Harry T. Moore or Mississippi's Medgar Evers are among the first persons to come to mind. Evers, a native of Decatur, Mississippi, and an alumnus of Alcorn University, was a civil rights activist, organizer of voter registration efforts, demonstrations and boycotts of companies that practiced discrimination. He was the first field secretary for the NAACP in Mississippi. Because of his civil rights and voter registration efforts, at 12:40 a.m. on June 12, 1963, Byron De La Beckwith, a white segregationist shot Evers in the back at his Jackson home. He died less than an hour later at a nearby hospital. Evers' life ended twelve years after pioneering civil rights activist Harry T. Moore in Florida. Moore organized the first Brevard County branch of the NAACP in 1934. Seven years later, he organized and became President of the Florida State Conference of NAACP branches. As founder and executive director of the Florida Progressive Voter's League, Moore aided the registration over 100,000 black voters in Florida. Because of his civil and voter rights activities, as well as his activism in the Groveland Rape Case, the Ku Klux Klan killed Moore on Christmas Day 1951. They placed a bomb beneath the floor joists directly beneath the Moore's bed. He died on the way to the hospital; his wife, Harriett, died nine days later. Notwithstanding these two well-known civil and voting rights activists, Tennessee's Elbert Williams met a similar fate for wanting to participate in the political process.

Williams was born on the 15 of October 1908 in rural Haywood County, Tennessee, to Albert and Mary Green Williams. In 1929 he married Annie Mitchell. The Williams' worked at the Sunshine Laundry, which was located at 206. N. Jackson, in Brownsville. When the Brownsville Branch of the NAACP organized in 1939, the couple became charter members. On May 22, 1939, the NAACP's Board of Directors authorized Brownsville's NAACP Chapter, then one of three headquarters in Tennessee. One of the first actions taken by members of the Brownsville's chapter was to register African Americans to vote in the presidential election the following year. African American residents of Haywood County, of which Brownsville is the county seat, had not voted since 1884. On May 6, 1940, five members of Brownsville's NAACP Branch attempted to register to vote. Their effort was unsuccessful. Within 24 hours, threats and a reign of terror began. White extremists destroyed Brownsville's NAACP branch and over 20 African American families fled the area. Despite the mayhem that catapulted Brownsville into a state of chaos, the Williams' heroically remained in the city.

On June 20, 1940, many in Brownsville, including Elbert and Anna Williams, listened to the radio broadcast of the second fight between Joe Louis and Arturo Godoy. Louis successfully defended his title in the eighth round. Later that evening, as Elbert Williams prepared for bed, Tip Hunter and Charles Read, city police officers, and Ed Lee, manager of the local Coca-Cola bottling company knocked on their door and forced Williams, who was barefoot and clad in pajama bottoms and an undershirt, into an awaiting vehicle. They questioned him about his activities with the Brownsville NAACP and then drove off into the night. That was the last time anyone saw him alive. When he did not return home by the next morning, Annie Williams desperately attempted to find the whereabouts of her husband. After three days of anxiously awaiting some word about her husband, Annie Williams received the dreaded call on Sunday June 23, 1940 at 7:30 a.m. from undertaker Al Rawls. He wanted her to come to the Hatchie River because two anglers found the mutilated "body of a colored [sic] man". Williams, still clothed in what he was wearing the night of his abduction, was found with a rope around his neck, which was fastened to a log. He was beaten and bruised; bullet holes perforated his chest. His head was twice its normal size. The Coroner ordered no medical examination, and held his inquest on the riverbank that same morning. His contemptible verdict was "Cause of death: unknown". Similar to what the coroner wanted to do with Emmett Till's body some 15 years later, the Brownsville's Coroner refused to let Annie Williams see her husband's body. However, she insisted. Upon identifying her husband's body, she started to cry. Void of human compassion, one of the racially intolerant white men in attendance callously told her, "We ain't gonna have no hollering here". After she identified the body, they told Mrs. Williams that the body was to be buried immediately. According to his death certificate, Elbert Williams' death was preposterously ruled a homicide by "parties unknown". After retrieving the body from the Hatchie River and wrapping it in sheets, Al Rawls placed the body in a pine box and subsequently buried the remains of Elbert Williams in Taylor's Chapel Cemetery. So intimidated by the violence, neither Annie nor members of the Williams' family attended the burial. She immediately left Brownsville and ultimately settled in New York. The lynching of Elbert Williams was stunningly conspicuous at the time when America prepared to help in the fight against fascism, ensuing the eruption of World War II in Europe in a year earlier. The Pittsburg Courier, noted, "there is something definitely wrong about a so-called democratic government that froths at the mouth about rightfulness and terrorism

*Story of Elbert Williams...continued from page 11*

abroad, yet has not a mumble of condemnation for the same thing at home.”

Because of the atrocities committed in Brownsville, the county seat of Haywood, Thurgood Marshall, the NAACP's Special Council, investigated the murder and interviewed numerous witnesses. Like so many others, these interviewees challenged violent assaults discursively and engaged in what Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub in their work *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History* (1991) described as calculated “speech acts,” which should be viewed as a form of direct action protest against racial violence.

Pressured by the National Office of the NAACP, the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) ordered the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to investigate the death of Elbert Williams. DOJ promised a broad inquiry. It ordered the United States Attorney in Memphis to present the case to a Federal Grand Jury. Marshall discovered that FBI agents took Tip Hunter, the leader of the lynch mob, on their rounds to question witnesses. Subsequently, DOJ reversed its decision and closed the case citing insufficient evidence. Marshall criticized the DOJ for its investigation and failure to prosecute. As in many cases involving the death of those who fought to obtain civil and social justice, no one has ever been prosecuted for the death of Elbert Williams. According to some, Elbert Williams of Brownsville, Tennessee, was the first known person affiliated with NAACP killed for his civil rights activities and seeking the right to vote. At the height of the Modern Civil Rights Movement, Brownsville's NAACP re-organized in 1961.

On February 27, 2015, the Tennessee Historical Commission approved a marker commemorating the ultimate sacrifice that Elbert Williams made to the African American struggle to gain the right of the franchise. Proposed by the Elbert Williams Memorial Committee, the marker's placement is directly across the street from the former location of the Sunshine Laundry in Brownsville, Tennessee, where Williams and his wife were employed. In remembrance of the 75th anniversary of Elbert Williams' death, the marker's unveiling will take place on June 20, 2015. The text of the Elbert Williams' historical marker captures the zeitgeist and context of the events surrounding his quest to participate in the democratic process and his demise for wanting civic equality:

4 D 61
ELBERT WILLIAMS
1908-1940

Elbert Williams, an African American Haywood County native, was one of the early members of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) killed in the United States for his civil rights work. He and his wife Annie became charter members of the NAACP Brownsville Branch in 1939. On May 6, 1940, five African Americans tried to register to vote. A white terror campaign followed and destroyed the NAACP Branch. More than 20 African American families fled the area. Williams disappeared on the night of June 20, 1940, after police took him from his home and questioned him about planning an NAACP meeting.

After three days, Williams' mutilated body was found in the Hatchie River. His death was ruled a homicide by unknown parties, and he was buried in Taylor Cemetery. Annie Williams quickly moved to New York. After interviewing witnesses in Brownsville, Thurgood Marshall, NAACP Special Counsel, criticized the U.S. Department of Justice's investigation and failure to prosecute. The NAACP Brownsville Branch re-organized in 1961.

Sources:

Richard A. Couto. *Lifting the Veil: A Political History of Struggles for Emancipation*. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1993

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Memphis Press Scimitar, “Lynch Victim Widow Leaves for New York,” July 3, 1940.

Michael G. Long. *Marshalling for Justice: The Early Civil Rights Letters of Thurgood Marshall*. New York: Harper Collins, 2011.

Raye Springfield. *The Legacy of Tamar: Courage and Faith in an African American Family*. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2000.

Patricia Sullivan. *Lift Every Voice: The NAACP and the Making of the Civil Rights Movement*. New York: The New Press, 2009.

The Pittsburgh Courier, “Democracy in Brownsville,” August 10, 1940.

Tennessee Certificate of Death #14160, Elbert Williams



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NEWS

By Christine Mathieson

One Hundred North Main Building



One Hundred North Main Building

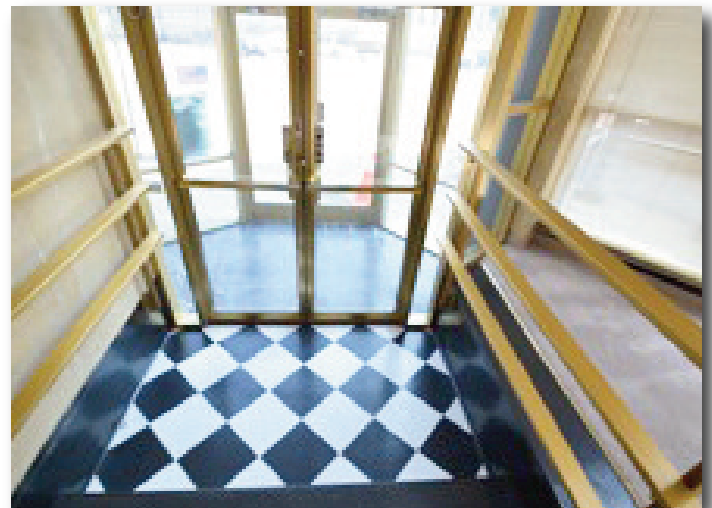
The One Hundred North Main Building is located in Memphis, on a half-acre lot, where Main Street intersects with Adams Avenue, two blocks east of the Mississippi River. The International Style building is 430 feet tall and has 38 stories, two basements, and a rotating restaurant as the top (38th) floor. Ground breaking was held on June 30, 1963 and parts were open for public use by January 1965. The One Hundred North Main Building has few changes and retains a high degree of integrity.

The skyscraper's facade is composed in a tripartite design of a base, middle, and concluding elements. This design tradition for American high-rise buildings was established by Louis Sullivan in the late nineteenth century. The One Hundred North Main Building was designed by Robert Lee Hall and Associates, the building has 753,000 square feet of gross area and 525,000 square feet of leasable space.

The building was constructed of slip form reinforced concrete resting on 770 pilings. The wall Cladding is vertical tiers and horizontal fins composed of cast concrete clad with an inch layer of expanded polystyrene topped with a cement and white marble chip patina

The building's first floor (lower) lobby is 16 feet high with black and white marble floors and wall cladding and anodized gold aluminum trim throughout. Adjacent to the west entrance are two aluminum escalators which extend up from the lobby to the fourth floor where small retail spaces line the walls. To the east beyond the escalators in the main lobby, the ceiling height drops to a seventeen-foot height and the corridor funnels pedestrians to the rear elevator lobby. It is likewise lined with retail spaces. The ground floor commercial spaces on the west façade have been altered over time for tenant improvements and currently the space on the northwest corner is unfinished.

The building's interior is based on a central core system with all facilities radiating from the ten high speed elevators located there. Five of the elevators serve the first 22 floors and operate at 500 feet a minute.



One Hundred North Main Building entry

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES ...cont. from page 15**

Five express elevators serve the top floors at a speed of 700 feet a minute. Two additional elevators serve the top four floors (35-38) including the revolving lounge. The Lower Floor elevator lobby has marble walls, terrazzo floors, anodized aluminum elevator doors, black and aluminum ashtrays, a starburst wall mounted clock also finished in anodized aluminum, and a marble information desk.



38th floor revolving lounge of the One Hundred North Main Building

The 35th floor was initially finished out with massage rooms, saunas for the health club on the floor above, and a swimming pool on the floor above rested on this floor. This floor retains an intact black marble elevator lobby and hall, but the interior area has been stripped and is currently used for storage. The 36th floor was a health club with a forty-foot steel swimming pool with a louvered roof opening up to the sky, a cocktail lounge and snack area, and a billiard room. The health club was converted to the Tennessee Club in 1971 by removing the swimming pool and installing a dance floor over the space, however the louvered roof is still extant although roofed over.

The top floor is a functioning domed-roof-revolving lounge set slightly back from the edge of the building, seating 125 people. It radiates from a stationary core for service stairs and an elevator lobby. The wood and tufted Naugahyde bar is located in the center of the room. The canted window seating area is circular with a 12' wide floor platform mounted on rubber automobile tires running on a steel track, powered by a three-quarter horsepower motor which revolves the full 360 degrees once every 90 minutes.

The One Hundred North Main Building was listed in the National Register under Criterion C as an excellent local example of the late International style in Memphis. The building exhibits the hallmarks of International style including pilotis, vertical panels with marble chip sheathing and vertical ribbon-style anodized aluminum windows on the exterior. On the interior, book matched marble in the entry and elsewhere, aluminum and anodized aluminum trim, multiple elevators, dual escalators and extensive use of glass on the main floors remain intact, adding to the architectural significance of the building.

As with most International style buildings, the use of high quality and unique materials is concentrated on the exterior, main entries and lobbies. Secondary floors of the building exhibit an International style free-floor plan with only the central core (elevators, restrooms, utilities) being important aesthetically. The flat roof with a landscaped garden evokes Modernist architect, Le Corbusier's, seminal Villa Savoye. A unique Mid-century feature of the building is its extant revolving restaurant.



Downtown Memphis Skyline

The One Hundred North Main Building has been a unique focal point of the Memphis riverfront skyline since 1965.

The National Register nomination for One Hundred North Main Building was prepared by Judith Johnson.



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES ...cont. from page 16

Christ Episcopal Church**Christ Episcopal Church**

Christ Episcopal Church is located in Tracy City, Grundy County and is situated in a quiet neighborhood setting. The church, constructed in 1925, faces west on the original 1873 church site and is adjacent to the Parish house, which was built ca. 1952. The site features large trees, a stone retaining wall, and a small asphalt parking lot. The Gothic Revival style church maintains a high degree of integrity and remains unchanged with the exception of a back addition ca. 1950s and a rear door exiting the baptistery for handicap accessibility ca. 1974. The church's floor plan is a front facing L-shaped plan with the Baptistery being an irregular projection.

Christ Episcopal Church is a frame building with a cross gabled roof covered in asphalt shingles. The church features Gothic arch stained glass windows, weatherboard siding, and a concrete block foundation. The roof displays open eave overhangs with exposed rafters and knee brace brackets, typical of the Gothic Revival style. The church's interior features plaster walls, wainscoting, Tiffany style stained glass windows, wood floors, and original woodwork from the 1873 church, which was destroyed in a storm in the early 1920s. The church is representative of the late Gothic Revival architectural style which was prevalent among many church edifices in the United States during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

On the interior, the central block of the church includes the sanctuary and organ room with the baptistery and 1950's addition projecting from it to the south, and the narthex projecting to the west. The sanctuary features original 3" and 3 1/2" heart pine wood floors, two sections of pews facing east, and a central aisle with red carpet that wraps behind the pews to the Baptistery and main entrance. Centered on the west wall of the sanctuary are oak doors leading to the narthex. Above these doors is a set of three Tiffany style stained glass windows.

Separating the nave from the chancel is a simple wood chancel screen. The chancel is elevated one step above the nave and includes a pulpit on the left and lectern on the right with the walls behind angling in to allow for the organ room and pipes on the north wall and 1950s addition behind the south wall. Flanking each side of the nave are the choir pews with the original altar carved in 1892 centered on the rear/east wall. Above the altar are three bays of stained glass windows with a central ribbon of three featuring a connecting scene of Jesus as a shepherd. The two individual windows flanking the central windows depict angels. These windows were given to the church by St. Margaret's Altar Guild in 1926 and were selected by a Rose Kunz Quinn, who was a very active member of the church and served several terms as president and secretary of St. Margaret's Altar Guild. The nave of the sanctuary features stained glass windows on each side with vertical rectangular panes of glass in a light blue color with a thin band of gold lining the outside.

Christ Episcopal Church is significant under Criterion C for its high degree of architectural integrity representing the Gothic Revival Style. The church is an excellent representative of the late Gothic Revival architectural style. The Gothic Revival style gained popularity in the late 18th and early 19th century as Europe and the United States entered into the Romantic Movement. This movement proclaimed the superiority of the Christian medieval past and revived the gothic architectural style.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES ...cont. from page 17**

The style is prevalent among many church edifices in the United States built during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. During this period, many church architects, especially while designing Episcopal churches, followed the Gothic Revival style and were strongly influenced by Augustus W. N. Pugin and the English ecclesiologists who promoted the archeologically accurate Gothic parish church, as it was thought to be the only suitable structure for Christian worship.



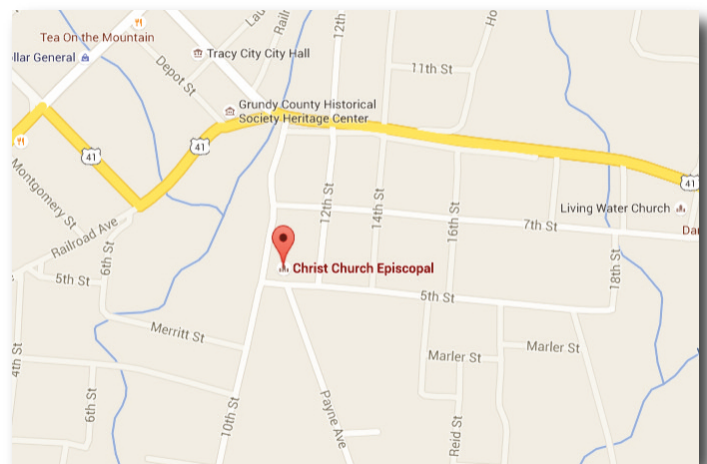
Christ Episcopal Church Sanctuary

Constructed in 1925, the Christ Episcopal Church follows the Episcopalians intention to build a church in the Gothic Revival style. The building represents a

simple Gothic Revival style in a small rural town with its Gothic arch windows, weatherboards that extend into the gables, and steeply pitched gabled roof with open eave overhands, exposed rafters and brackets. Because Christ Episcopal Church is significant for its architecture it meets Criterion Consideration A.

Christ Church in Tracy city remains the only example of a church of its size and style in the surrounding area located in a small rural town, and it retains a high degree of integrity.

The National Register nomination for Christ Episcopal Church was prepared by Melissa Mortimer of the Southeast Tennessee Development District.



Since the last issue of The Courier there have been ten new entries to the National Register of Historic Places from Tennessee. The properties are the following:

- Standard-Coosa-Thatcher Mill, Hamilton County
- Brown Farm, Washington County
- Dunbar-Carver Historic District, Haywood County
- College Hill Historic District (boundary increase), Haywood County
- North Washington Historic District, Haywood County
- Barnes Site, Davidson County
- Grand Old Opry House, Davidson County
- Sewanee Fire Tower, Franklin County
- Christ Church, Grundy County
- 100 North Main, Shelby County

In addition, two Multiple Property Submissions were approved. They are the following:

Archaic Shell-Bearing Sites of the Middle Cumberland River Valley of Tennessee
Tennessee Division of Forestry Fire Lookout Towers, 1870-1975

There are now 2,130 entries in the National Register from Tennessee including 281 districts for a total of 42,547 resources now listed.

By Peggy Nickell



PUBLICATIONS TO NOTE

By Linda T. Wynn

Assistant Director for State Programs
& Publications Editor

Publications of The University of Chicago Press, 1427 E. 60th Street Chicago, Illinois 60637 include: **Leonard L. Richards, *Who Freed the Slaves? The Fight Over the Thirteenth Amendment*.** In the collective memory, the freeing of America's enslaved people of African descent was made possible by President Abraham Lincoln's January 1, 1863 Emancipation Proclamation. While the Emancipation Proclamation only released enslaved persons from those under the control of Confederate states, it did pave the way for the Thirteenth Amendment, the first amendment ratified during the Reconstruction Era. Ratified on December 18, 1865, the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution permanently banned the "peculiar institution" of enslaving people of African descent. Like the Bill of the Century: The Epic Battle for the Civil Rights Act by Clay Risen, which details the behind the scenes effort to bring the 1964 Civil Rights Act to fruition, Dr. Richards, Professor Emeritus at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, takes the reader beyond President Lincoln to Ohio Congressman James Ashley. He covers the floor of the Congress and the back rooms where deals and conveys the complicated process of enacting legislation. The compelling effort of James Ashley, now little known but then a member of the United States Congress from Ohio, is finally recognized for his efforts and achievement of this by-no-means-certain change to the United States Constitution. A succinct history on the enactment and implementation of the Thirteenth Amendment laid to an unsettled rest the great injustice of explicit human slavery. As revealed in *Who Freed the Slaves?* the passage of this amendment represented the efforts of not only Lincoln but also the work of many others. The author of seven books, including *Shay's Rebellion: The American Revolution's Final Battle* and *The California Gold Rush and the Coming of the Civil War*, those interested in American history should read Dr. Richards's enlightening book to learn more about "who" did free the slaves by passage of the Thirteenth Amendment. **Cloth, \$30.00**

Publications of the University Press of Florida, 15 NW 15th Street, Gainesville, Florida 32611-2079 include: ***Slave Breeding: Sex, Violence, and Memory in African American History*** by Gregory D. Smithers. This work is a provocative exposition on what Dr. Tunde Adeleke, Professor of History and Director of the African American Studies Program at Iowa State University, characterizes as the "sexual zeitgeist of American national history." For more than two centuries, the study of slave breeding has been the subject of controversy within the master narrative of American history. Smithers, an associate professor of history at Virginia Commonwealth University, investigated the history and memory of slave breeding in seven chapters. He looks at slave breeding from the perspectives of nineteenth-century abolitionists; Lost Cause mythologizes and late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century historians; early twentieth-century playwrights; former slaves in the late 1930s; black scholars and civil rights leaders between the end of the First World War and the modern civil rights movement; and in the literature, films, and folktales by and about African Americans (p.19). Between 1936 and 1938, the staff of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) interviewed more than two thousand formerly enslaved persons from seventeen states. Through these WPA interviews, detailed plantation practices can be ascertained that included directing pairings of enslaved men and women, rewards for fertility, and masters' use of enslaved men to impregnate multiple enslaved women. By placing African American histories and memories of slave breeding within the larger context of America's history of racial and gender discrimination, Dr. Smithers illuminates the collective memory of African Americans, racialized perceptions of fragile black families, and the long history of racially motivated violence against people of the African diaspora. **Cloth, \$74.95**



The Tennessee Contraband Conundrum: 1862-1865, A Documentary Narrative, Part 4 of 5[©]

By James B. Jones, Jr., Public Historian

A good description of a small pox hospital comes from a volunteer nurse on her first day at work in Nashville. The small pox hospital was:

...about a mile out from the city, and near Camp Cumberland. It consists of tents in the rear of a fine, large mansion which was deserted by its rebel owner. In these tents are about 800 patients-including... contrabands... Everything seems done for their comfort which can... be, with the scarcity of help. Cleanliness and ventilation are duly attended to; but the unsightly, swollen faces, blotched with eruption, or presenting an entire scab, and the offensive odor, require some strength of nerve in those who minister to their necessities. There are six physicians each in charge of a division. Those in which I am assigned to duty are in charge of Drs. R. & C. There is but one lady nurse here, a side [sic] from the wives of three surgeons,-Mrs. B., the nurse, went with me through the tents, introduced me to the patients and explained my duties.¹

In Memphis on February 26, 1864, General P. M. Buckland issued Special Orders No. 23. He was concerned with the prevalence of small pox because of the inflation of the city's population caused by foreign population and "contrabands in the city." His plan was to appoint a physician to each of the city's wards and vaccinate all found without well marked scars. Moreover, a new public health policy was initiated in the city:

Every contraband shall have the certificate of some one of these physicians thus appointed, that he has been vaccinated, and has a well marked scar otherwise be liable to arrest, until he has been properly vaccinated. The city authorities will see that a proper Pest House will be established without the city limits, for the treatment of all cases sent by the ward physicians thus appointed.²

In consequence of the increasing incidence of Small Pox, amidst the flood of foreign population and contrabands in the city, it was ordered:

That physicians be appointed in each ward, by the city authorities, whose duty it shall be to visit all of this class, each in their respective wards, and vaccinate all found without well marked scars. Every contraband shall have the certificate of some one of these physicians thus appointed, that he has been vaccinated, and has a well marked scar otherwise be liable to arrest, until he has been properly vaccinated. The city authorities will see that a proper Pest House will be established without the city limits, for the treatment of all cases sent by the ward physicians thus appointed.

In this manner the army was not just protecting itself from disease, but working as well to keep the city and contraband healthy.

A few days later, according to General James C. Veatch, in charge of forces occupying the Bluff City, indicated that a new tax would be levied to fund a general street cleaning with contraband and refugee white labor. "The condition of the streets and alleys of your city demands our immediate attention." He required that the work be done at once.

¹Powers, *Pencillings*, p. 42 Nashville *Dispatch*, July 9, 1863

²Memphis *Daily Bulletin*, March 4, 1864.



TENNESSEE CONTRABAND CONUNDRUM...cont. from page 18

A thorough Cleaning should take place, and all offensive matter be removed; and such police regulations established as shall prevent in future deposits of matter liable to produce disease.³

I have approved your levy of additional tax, as you will have ample means at your command. *I will also give you control of all straggling contrabands within the limits of the city.* [emphasis added]

You will be required to have the work done without delay. Allow me then to suggest that you at once employ all the available labor white and black, and let the work commence and be carried on in each Ward, under competent managers until it is completed.

Any aid which I can give you shall be promptly rendered.

On March 6 a communication to the City Council from General Veatch was received. According to the General:

General Order [sic] No. 28

The taxes now levied in the city of Memphis having been found insufficient to meet the public expenditures –

It is ordered that an additional tax of ten per cent. per month on the amount of all annual licenses, be levied, and collected by the Collector of Taxes on privileges, and that said taxes be paid quarterly in advance, commencing without delay.

The special committee appointed reported to General Veatch informing him that for the purpose of improvement, the labor of one hundred negroes. To make this labor efficient, and give all parts of the city the immediate benefit of it, the committee recommended as follows: 1) that the city be divided into five segregated districts, to each of which is shall be assigned the labor of twenty negroes to work under the superintendence of an overseer. 2) That the Chairman appoint a member of this Board to have special charge of each district who shall engage an overseer at a rate of wages not exceeding two dollars a day, and provide tools at the expense of the city. He shall also provide food and quarters for the negroes, and direct the overseer in regard to the labor to be performed. 3) The Street Commissioner shall furnish carts and additional labor from the force under his charge, under the direction of the Mayor. 4) The districts shall be as follows: 1. From the southern boundary of the city to the north side of Linden street.

2. From the north side of Linden to the north side of Union.

3. From the north side of Union to the north side of Court.

4. From the north side of Court to the north side of Poplar.

5. From the north side of Poplar to the northern boundary.

On motion the report was adopted.⁴

Yet the plan did not satisfy contrabands and the editor of the Memphis *Bulletin* whose editorial “Street Improvement” signaled as to why:

Some of the newly appointed district overseers got their “contrabands” to work yesterday in the streets. As far as we saw the old method of street cleaning was pursued, that is, the filth and dregs deposited in the gutter and lying at the side of the streets was loosened by means of a pickax, then shoveled to the center of the street.... Complaints are already [being] made the negroes [sic] take every opportunity that offers, to run away from the job. If their only pay is two meals each, at a cost of thirty cents for both, we should think Sambo [sic] feels considerably like changing his quarters when he gets a chance.⁵

³They were right, but for the wrong reasons. Bacteria, or “animalcules” were known to exist, but the connection between them and disease would wait until germ theory became the default medical position in the 1880s.

⁴Memphis Daily Bulletin, March 6, 1863

⁵Memphis Daily Bulletin, March 10, 1863.



TENNESSEE CONTRABAND CONUNDRUM...cont. from page 19

Whether or not to continue feeding and sheltering the contrabands was a difficult issue to solve. Military Governor Johnson opposed creating contraband camps on the grounds that blacks would grow used to help from the government. They would, in his opinion, do much better if put to work on land carved out of vacant plantations.⁶

The first official authorization to employ African Americans in federal service was the Second Confiscation and Militia Act of July 17, 1862. This act allowed President Abraham Lincoln to receive into the military service persons of African descent and gave permission to use them for any purpose “he may judge best for the public welfare.” However, the President did not authorize use of African Americans in combat until issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863: “And I further declare and make known, that such persons of suitable condition, will be received into the armed service of the United States to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places, and to man vessels of all sorts in said service.”⁷

It was not long before Federal authorities, stimulated by the poor conditions in contraband camps and the need for more soldiers, began to conscript Negro troops. Usually known as United States Colored Troops (U.S.C.T.), they proved a boon for the army and delivering pride in their race, and a chance to fight the slave owning leaders of the Confederacy. As U.S.C.T. they guarded captured rebel and soldiers⁸, homes and property⁹ and railroads,¹⁰ served as police in the occupied cities¹¹ built forts and defensive positions in the Volunteer State and earned a reputation as fighting men. In all the U.S. Army recruited over 20,000 U.S.C.T. in Tennessee.¹² At first it was thought that they would not stand and fight, but their training coupled with the knowledge that once the war was over they would be rewarded with their freedom. Their ability to fight was noted. One example was the 1864 skirmish near Fort Donelson. In this Federal victory their commander reported that: “As for the soldiers they behaved nobly. There was not a single instance in which they did not surpass my expectations of them...the One hundred and nineteenth Colored Infantry, Company I, who accompanied the expedition, were conspicuous during the entire fight, and did their whole duty.”¹³

The Federal army had no deeply held prejudice against black men joining the service. In Nashville, for example, on November 4, 1863, Circular No. 1 was issued at the Headquarters Commission for the Organization of U. S. Colored Troops. The proof of the pudding was that the memorandum established six recruiting stations in Middle Tennessee at: Murfreesboro; Gallatin; Wartrace; Clarksville; Shelbyville and Columbia. In addition it specified that:

All claims by alleged owners of s who may be enlisted, will be laid before the Board appointed by the President; that the Board would meet regularly to examine recruiting rolls, and would be made public information. All claims by slave owners that recruits were their property had to be presented within ten days after the rolls were published. No claims from any one who supported the Confederacy would be honored “and all claimants shall file with their claims an oath of allegiance to the Government of the United States.”

⁶ *The Papers of Andrew Johnson*, Volume 6, 1862-1864, eds. LeRoy P. Graf and Ralph W. Haskins, Patricia P. Clark, Associate Editor, Marion O. Smith, Research Associate, the University of Knoxville Press, Knoxville, 1983, pp. 488-492. [Hereinafter cited as PAJ, vol. 6.] Additionally, Johnson had no compunctions about freed slaves working on military fortresses in Nashville. See: *OR*, Ser. I, Vol. 16, pt. II, pp. 242-243, and Monday Sept. 8th, '62 Memorandum of R. S. Dilworth Center for Archival Collections Robert S. Dilworth Papers MS 800 Transcript: Personal Journal, April 3-May 12, 1862 <http://www.bgsu.edu/colleges/library/cac/transcripts>. [Hereinafter cited as: Memorandum of R. S. Dilworth]

⁷ See also: <http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/blacks-civil-war/article.html>

⁸ *OR*, Ser. III, Vol. 3, pt. II, pp. 840-84; *OR*, Ser. II, Vol. 8, pp. 19-20; *Memphis Bulletin*, November 19, 1863; *OR*, Ser. I, Vol. 31, pt. I, pp. 583-585; *OR*, Ser. I, Vol. 32, pt. II, pp. 267-270; *OR*, Ser. I, Vol. 38, pt. II, pp. 494-497; *OR*, Ser. III, Vol. 4, pp. 763-772;

⁹ *Anecdotes, Poetry, and Incidents of the War: North and South, 1860-1865*, (NY: Publication Office, Bible House, 1867), pp. 451-452; *OR*, Ser. I, Vol. 38, pt. II, pp. 494-497; *OR*, Ser. I, Vol. 17, pt. II, pp. 219-220; *OR*, Ser. I, Vol. 30, pt. III, p. 61; *OR*, Ser. III, Vol. 4, pp. 763-772; TSL&A, Civil War Collection, Correspondence by Jane Smith Washington, Letter, December 18, 1864.

¹⁰ *OR*, Ser. I, Vol. 31, pt. III, p. 28; Dr. U. G. Owen to Laura, January 21, 1864; *OR*, Ser. II, Vol. 8, pp. 64-65; *OR*, Ser. II, Vol. 8, pp. 163-164; *OR*, Ser. I, Vol. 39, pt. I, pp. 464-465; *OR*, Ser. I, Vol. 39, pt. I, p. 843;

¹¹ *Nashville Dispatch*, August 11, 1864

¹² Lovett, “Negro in Tennessee,” p. 50.

¹³ *OR*, Ser. I, Vol. 39, pt. I, pp. 857-858.



TENNESSEE CONTRABAND CONUNDRUM...cont. from page 20

Claims must be presented within ten days after the filing of the rolls, and to more easily facilitate recruiting:

Any citizen of Tennessee who shall offer his or her for enlistment into the military service, shall, if such be accepted, receive from the recruiting officer a certificate thereof, with a descriptive list of such, and become entitled to compensation for the service or labor of such, not exceeding the sum of three hundred dollars, upon filing with the above Board a valid deed of manumission and release, and making satisfactory proof forever thereafter free.¹⁴

Soon thereafter recruiting for the U.S.C.T. began with all obligatory timeliness. One diarist from Murfreesboro, John C. Spence, noted that only a week after Circular No. 1 was issued, contraband negroes and slave greenhorns were put into a nearby camp of instruction.¹⁵ His lengthy observations of the recruitment process are both lighthearted and insightful:

An order is out for recruiting negro soldiers at this place, and put them in [a] camp of instruction. Although the Yankees profess not to press them into service, they operate about this way-on Sunday evening a file of soldiers repair to the church door and stand as the negro men come out. They take them in possession, put them in confinement and any other they see about the streets. They are taken through an examination, such as will make soldiers are retained, the others are let off. They want devilish looking and able bodied negros [sic] for this purpose. When a sufficient number is obtained, [they] are put in squads under drill by some qualified Dutchman.¹⁶

Passing one morning by one of the churches or barracks, a squad was being drilled by a Dutch officer, who could not speak english [sic] plainer than he should, is marching the negros [sic] up and down the room. Saying to them, ["Marsh! lep-lep (meaning left foot) [sic]. No! te odder foot!-lep! lep! to odder fot you po tam fool! If you tont lep when I tells you, I'll prake mine sword over you tam wolly head! Halt! Marsh! Now, lep! lep! gis see! You got de odder foot. Take tat mit your tam nonsense [" (strikes him with the side of his sword). [sic]

Such is about the start with them at first. In a short time they get in the way of keeping the step in marching and manouvering [sic]. To every appearance they make a pretty good Yankee soldier when they are dressed in the "Loyal" blue, but whether they can be made to stand powder and lead is another question. Should not be willing to trust a chance with them, to go through difficulty. [sic]

Now and then [I] hear some of the younger [black] chaps talking among themselves. ["Bill! I'm quine to jine the rigiment next week! What you quine to do in the rigiment? Quine to fite de Reb Sesesh!"

They appear as impudent and as confident of what they will do in the army as many of the "Old Veterans," as the Yankees call the old soldiers that has [sic] been serving some time.¹⁷

Military Governor Andrew Johnson admitted that African American men performed much better than he had initially expected. In fact, he held that "the black soldier takes to discipline easier than white men, and there is more imitation about them than about white men." After the mindset that existed between him and his erstwhile master was broken, and they had white colleagues to "stand by him and give him encouragement" and a government dedicated to their freedom, they "succeeded much better than I expected and the recruiting is still going on."¹⁸ One New York *Times* reporter writing from Nashville in August 1863 held "the feeling of the army toward the Negroes, I think, has reached as sound,

¹⁴Nashville Dispatch, November 19, 1863.

¹⁵That is, boot camp.

¹⁶That is, a German officer, from the word "Deutsch." Many Germans served in the Federal army. They were often the target for derision.

¹⁷Spence Diary, entry for November 10, 1863

*TENNESSEE CONTRABAND CONUNDRUM...cont. from page 21*

healthy condition—that is, it is mostly indifference, such as they might feel toward, white laborers and refugees. The opinion of the army [is] that ‘Negroes will fight.’ How clear it is that the only path of the Negro toward recognition of his manhood will be through blood. Nothing but hard blows will do away with the vulgar prejudice against him, as a creature without the courage or the nature of a white man.”¹⁹

U.S.C.T. also participated in conscript sweeps to replenish their ranks. In March 1864, for example, orders from Chattanooga sent a force to march up the Sequatchie Valley to Pikeville, then to Caney Fork and the Calfkiller Rivers. The officer in charge of the U.S.C.T. was told “not to impress...Negroes [*sic*], but take such as volunteer, and bring them to this place, and add them to the two regiments now being organized at this place.”²⁰ While conscript expeditions were legal, it does demonstrate that if contraband did not wish to enroll he would not be forced to join. This, however, didn’t always represent the truth of the matter. For example, protests aimed at the Department of the Cumberland in September 23, 1863, in a lengthy report that highlighted irresponsible methods of recruiting African American men for the U.S.C.T. was made to the Secretary of War, E. M. Stanton. The worry in Nashville was that the imprudent method used the recruit blacks would do more harm than good. If the “men here are treated like brutes” the report read, “any officer who wants them...impresses on his own authority, and it is seldom they are paid. On Sunday a large number were impressed and one was shot; he died on Wednesday.” One free black man visiting Nashville from Zenia, Ohio, testified that:

I went to the Methodist at 11 o'clock a. m. on Sunday, September 20, 1863. After ... [I] was stopped by a guard, who demanded my pass. I handed it to them; they retained possession of it. They ordered me to fall in among them and I was marched around from place to place till they collected all they could get. We were then marched to a camp about one mile and a half and delivered to some men, who were placed on guard over us. They counted us and found they had 180 men. All through the afternoon and evening they kept bringing in squads. They took the passes of the men and after examining them burned them before us.

At dark they put a double around²¹ us and told us if we attempted to escape we would be shot down. We were left that way, out in the cold all night, without tents, blankets, or fire, and some of the men were bareheaded and some without coats.

This method of enlistment to fill the ranks of the U.S.C.T. units sparked the establishment five new set of rules for recruiting contrabands:

Colored men in the Department of the Cumberland will be enlisted into the service of the United States as soldiers on the following terms:

First. All freemen who will volunteer.

Second. All s of rebel or disloyal masters who will volunteer to enlist will be free at the expiration of their term of service.

Third. All s of loyal citizens, with the consent of their owners, will be received into the service of the United States; such s will be free on the expiration of their term of service.

Fourth. Loyal masters will receive a certificate of the enlistment of their s, which will entitle them to payment of a sum not exceeding the bounty now provided by law for the enlistment of white recruits.

Fifth. Colored soldiers will receive clothing, rations, and \$10 per month pay; \$3 per month will be deducted for clothing.

¹⁸ PAJ, Vol. 6, p.491.

¹⁹ New York Times, August 21, 1863

²⁰ OR, Ser. I, Vol. 32, pt. III, p. 48

²¹ One half of a pup pent,



TENNESSEE CONTRABAND CONUNDRUM...cont. from page 22

The new experience of a swelling black population led the town fathers of Nashville to attempt a legal way to exert control of the African-American population. In June 1863, the Nashville City Council adopted resolutions to exercise jurisdiction over burgeoning black multitudes. A separate resolution called for the control of "The Negro Question - Hacks and Prostitutes." The reasoning of the first resolution held that the great majority of contraband in the city must be controlled, and the best way to control the vagrant Negroes was for:

the President [to] call recruits and enlist negro soldiers especially cause to be taken, receive, recruit, and enlist all negroes belonging to [those] once claimed by rebels, and those opposed to the Government of the United States, at least all those fit for service, wherever and whenever it can be done; then to be officered and commanded by competent free white men....

.... because there [is], a large, unprecedented collection of runaway slaves, contrabands and free negroes, without profitable occupations, or place of residence, and without means of subsistence... [who]... infest the city and vicinity in gross violation of the State and Municipal law, [and are] a source of [a] great annoyance to the citizens....we earnestly suggest and request the military authorities to take charge of and control said negroes [sic], ...[and] put them in the army, to work on fortifications, in hospitals, on railroads, or some other public work for the government, or suffer and permit the city and municipal authorities to enforce the law in reference to said negroes [sic]; but not in such manner as to aid or assist rebel owners or claimants in re-possessing themselves of said slaves, or their services, or their hire.

A Nashville report noted in August, 1863 that at Decherd the recruitment of Negroes was rapidly progressing and that seven or eight regiments of contrabands would be in the field as rapidly as possible."

At Nashville two regiments are being organized out of the men who have been for two years at work on the defenses of that city. About 1800 men have thus been mustered into service at Nashville, and one or two parades have been had. Here at the front the regiments are yet skeletons, but are rapidly growing to be strong and important reinforcements to this army. All contrabands in the army not personal servants of officers are being gathered together for these regiments. The men go in willingly. *There is no necessity for impressing them.*²³ [emphasis added]

Yet there were still difficulties in recruiting. Contraband men were used to build and maintain railroads. Which had the greater imperative, to use them as laborers or as soldiers? General G. M. Dodge wrote to Major General U. S. Grant in early December, 1863 that "the recruiting officers for claim the right to open recruiting officers along my line²⁴ and

if this is done I lose my negroes, which at this time would be very detrimental to the service. So far I have refused to allow them to recruit. They have now received positive orders from the commanders of for Tennessee to come here and recruit. I don't want any trouble with them, and have assured them that when we were through with the negroes. I would see that they go into the service. Unless you order otherwise, I shall continue to refuse to allow them to recruit along my line.

²³Nashville *Daily Union*, August 22, 1863.

²²Insofar as the negro hacks and prostitutes were concerned, the city fathers made "it now not lawful for any hackman to drive, for pleasure or show, any woman of ill-fame through the streets of the City." Nashville *Dispatch*, June 25, 1863.

²⁴The Nashville and Northwest Railroad (N&NW), then under construction. It would prove a major link in the supply line from the Tennessee River at Johnsonville to Nashville to points further south.

*TENNESSEE CONTRABAND CONUNDRUM...cont. from page 23*

Grant approved of Dodge's plan, and no conscription of negro laborers was allowed along the route of the NW&N railroad, until after the road was finished.²⁵ Nevertheless, U.S.C.T. were used extensively in the construction of forts and defensive positions in Nashville, Chattanooga and other cities in the Volunteer State.

Railroads were vital in the Union supply and logistic system and U.S.C.T. were often ordered to protect them from Confederate guerillas bent upon destroying railroad track. The practice became so common that Federal forces built block houses, or "bomb proofs" to protect the railways. Many U.S.C.T. used them as a base to protect the railroads from Confederate assaults.

One such attack took place on December 3, 1864 on the Nashville and Chattanooga railroad, at bombproof No.2, just five miles south Nashville. It was a coordinated attack led by Nathan Bedford Forrest's units, as part of Hood's attack on Nashville. As a train filled with members of the approached the bomb proof and a bridge, Confederates, wearing Union uniforms, fired upon it, immediately wrecking the train. The train's cargo of some 350 U.S.C.T., members of the Fourteenth and Forty-fourth U.S.C.T., managed to configure into battle formation, the immediately sought refuge in Blockhouse no.2. There the U.S.C.T.'s shortage of ammunition was made up for by the 2,000 rounds the commander of the blockhouse made available to them. As the Confederate forces continued to shell the bombproof, doing considerable damage, the U.S.C.T. kept up constant firing on the enemy, forcing them to change the position of their artillery frequently. Yet there was one rebel piece that was able, "due to the features of the terrain [*sic*], to escape the well-directed and withering fire the colored troops made upon the other cannon. It was loaded under cover of the hill, pushed to the crest, sighted and fired, and then drawn back to reload. The garrison was unable to force this gun from its position. Firing was kept up continually from 10 a. m. until dark. Nearly 500 rounds of solid shot and shell, from 10 and 20 pounder guns, were fired at the block-house. The cannonade lasted from 10:00 a.m. to dark. At night the commanders of the fortress found the block-house in "a ruinous condition, the north wing being completely destroyed, outside casing of west wing was badly damaged, the lookout gone, two large breaches made in the roof, and one of the posts-the main support of the roof-knocked out, while the other center posts were badly splintered." The best thing to do under the circumstances was to reform on the outside. Knowing the attitude of Nathan Bedford Forrest's troops towards Negroes in Federal uniform, it was sagaciously decided to abandon the blockhouse to avoid day light and possible retribution from the Confederate forces.

The order was given to retreat at 3:00 a.m., and the Federal troops abandoned the ruined structure. It was later ascertained that an order for all blockhouses from Nashville to Murfreesboro be deserted, had been made a full two days earlier, but the message was never received by blockhouse No. 2. Blockhouses 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 were similarly attacked and prisoners were taken by Forrest's troops. The U.S.C.T. at No. 2, with their white comrades, accomplished a skillful and successful retreat, losing but one dead and three wounded, with no prisoners taken.²⁶ Confederate forces retreated, their railroad interference work for John Bell Hood's attack on Nashville being completed.

The operations of the Twelfth U.S.C.T. from December 7, 1864-January 15, 1865, during and after the Battle for Nashville were nothing if not skilled and fearless. According to the Report of Col. Charles R. Thompson, Twelfth U. S. Colored Troops,²⁷ commanding Second Colored Brigade, of operations December 7, 1864-January 15, 1865:

On the 7th day of December I reported to Maj.-Gen. Steedman, in accordance with verbal orders received from department headquarters, and by his directions placed my brigade in line near the City graveyard, the right resting on College street, and the left on the right of Col. Harrison's brigade, where we threw up two

²⁵OR, Ser. I, Vol. 31, pt. III, pp. 366-367.

²⁶OR, Ser. I, Vol. 45, pt. I, pp. 631-634

²⁷Organized in Tennessee at large July 24 to August 14, 1863 as 1st Alabama infantry (African descent). Designation changed to 84th U.S. Colored Troops, April 4, 1864. Designation changed again to The First U.S. Colored troops, and still later to the 12th U.S. Colored infantry. Railroad guard and garrison duty in the Dept. of the Cumberland till January, 1866 Mustered out January 16, 1866.

https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/12th_Regiment_United_States_Colored_Infantry



TENNESSEE CONTRABAND CONUNDRUM...cont. from page 24

lines of rifle-pits. On the 11th of December made a reconnaissance, by order of the general commanding, to see if the enemy was still in our front. Two hundred men, under command of Col. John A. Hottenstein, pressed the enemy's picket-line and reserve to their main line of works, where they were found to be in force. The object of the reconnaissance having been accomplished we retired to our position in line by the direction of the major-general commanding. This was the first time that any of my [U.S.C.T.] had skirmished with an enemy, and their conduct was entirely satisfactory.²⁸

Six days later on the 13th of December, the Twelfth Regt. [sic] U. S. Colored Infantry and the left wing of the One hundredth Regiment U. S. Colored Infantry passed to the left of the enemy's works, during the battle of Nashville, making a sharp angle which gave the enemy an opportunity to make a raking fire on rear of this portion of the command. It being impossible to change the front under the withering fire, and there being no works in front of them, Thompson gave orders for that portion of the command to move by the left flank to the shelter of a small hill a short distance off, there to reorganize. The right wing of the One hundredth Regt. [sic] moved forward with the left of the Fourth Corps, and was repulsed with them. The Thirteenth U. S. Colored Infantry, which was the second line of his command, pushed forward of the whole line, and some of the men mounted the parapet, but, having no support on the right, were forced to retire.

These were here for the first time under such a fire as veterans dread, and yet, side by side with the veterans of Stone's River, Missionary Ridge, and Atlanta, they assaulted probably the strongest works on the entire line, and though not successful, they vied with the old warriors in bravery, tenacity, and deeds of noble daring. The loss in the brigade was over twenty-five per cent. of the number engaged, and the loss was sustained in less than thirty minutes.²⁹

The Twelfth was in pursuit of rebel General Lyons, "without blankets or any extra clothing, and more than one-half the time without fifty good shoes in the whole brigade, this whole campaign was made with a most cheerful spirit existing. For six days rations were not issued, yet vigorous pursuit was made..."

Thereafter the 12th U.S.C.T. was thereafter transferred to Murfreesboro. Losses for the Second Brigade U.S.C.T. were³⁰

	Officers	Enlisted Men	Aggregate
Killed	7	73	80
Wounded	12	376	388
Missing	1	1	
Total	20	450	468

U.S.C.T. likewise served in West Tennessee. The Fort Pillow Capture/Massacre of early April, 1864, in which some 350

²⁸ OR, Ser. I, Vol. 45, pt. I, pp. 543-546.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.



TENNESSEE CONTRABAND CONUNDRUM...cont. from page 25

U.S.C.T. were slaughtered at the hands of troops under the command of Nathan Bedford Forrest, stands as perhaps one of the Civil War's more prominent and debated events.³¹ Yet there were other chances for U.S.C.T. to be immersed in quarrels and win laurels. One sterling example occurred at Moscow, in Fayette County, on December 3-4, 1863, in the Action at Wolf River Bridge.³² The railroad bridge was a strategic point on the Federal supply lines. Confederate forces attacked but, through much hard fighting, were repulsed. According to the Report of Col. Frank A. Kendrick, Sixteenth Army Corps, made on December 12, 1863, the Second Regiment of West Tennessee Infantry played a vital role in the defense of the bridge. Col. Kendrick specially commended the Second Regiment of the West Tennessee Infantry (African Descent), wherein he praised the "soldierly qualities evinced by the Second West Tennessee Infantry, (African Descent) in this their first encounter with the enemy." [emphasis added]

Major General S. A. Hurlbut was delighted with the report on the behavior of the U.S.C.T. and on the 7th of December wrote from Memphis that the

affair at Moscow the other day [December 4] was more spirited than I thought. The regiment behaved splendidly.³³ Our loss is 7 killed and about 40 horses-10 captured. We have captured in the movement 54 prisoners; buried 30. The entire loss of the enemy cannot be less than 150. Forrest is gathering the guerrillas together at Jackson. I shall move on him from Columbus and Moscow simultaneously.

As a result General Hurlbut likewise issued General Orders, No. 173:

GENERAL ORDERS, No. 173. HDQRS. SIXTEENTH ARMY CORPS, Memphis, Tennessee, December 17, 1863.

The recent affair at Moscow, Tennessee, [December 4] has demonstrated the fact that properly disciplined and commanded [U.S.C.T.], can and will fight well, and the general commanding corps deems it to be due to the officers and men of the Second Regt. [sic] West Tennessee Infantry, of African descent, thus publicly to return his personal thanks for their gallant and successful defense of the important position to which they had been assigned, and for the manner in which they have vindicated the wisdom of the Government in elevating the rank and file of these regiments to the position of freedmen and soldiers.³⁴

Aside from fighting in such larger engagements the U.S.C.T. likewise fought at the smaller level of the skirmish, overwhelmingly type of combat in Tennessee during the Civil War.³⁵ On September 19, 1864, near the Kentucky-

³¹ This event is also widely known also as the "Fort Pillow Massacre." It is listed as "Massacre, Fort Pillow," in *Dyer's Battle Index for Tennessee*. Many ardent devotees of Nathan Bedford Forrest disavow the assertion that there was a massacre at all, claiming instead that either Forrest was not there at the time, and so did not order such a bloodbath, or that if there was such an incident it was because otherwise disciplined soldiers became irrational after the fight due to presence of soldiers and so vented their frustrations on the Federal soldiers that surrendered. Major-General Forrest's reports regarding the fight at Fort Pillow indicate a massacre occurred, although he never used the word. See: *OR*, Ser. I, Vol. 32, pt. I, pp. 609-611; *Report of the Adjutant General*, pp. 646-647; John Cimprich and Robert C. Mainfort, "Dr. Fitch's Report on the Fort Pillow Massacre," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XLIV No. 1 (Spring, 1985), pp. 27-39; Report No. 65, House of Representatives, Thirty-eighth Congress, first session; and reports of Capt. Alexander M. Pennock, U. S. Navy, in *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy*, December 5, 1864. See also Lovett, "Negro in Tennessee," pp. 59-66.

³¹ There are a total of thirteen reports relating directly to the Fort Pillow massacre, found in the *OR*, Ser. I, Vol. 32, pt. I, pp. 502-623. See also: James B. Jones, Jr., *Every Day In Tennessee History*, (Winston Salem: John F. Blair, 1996), p. 75.

³² Lovett, "Negro in Tennessee," pp. 56-57.

³³ No indication of which U.S.C.T. organization was involved. Lovett, "The Negro in Tennessee," identifies companies A, B, C, D, 61st U.S.C.T. infantry, the 4th USC Heavy Artillery, batteries A and D. *OR*, Ser. I, Vol. 31, pt. I, p. 577.

³⁴ *OR*, Ser. I, Vol. 31, pt. I, p. 577.

³⁵ James B. Jones, Jr., "The Civil War in Tennessee: New Perspectives on Familiar Materials," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, Vol. LXII, no. 2, (September 2003), pp 168-170.

*TENNESSEE CONTRABAND CONUNDRUM...cont. from page 26*

Tennessee border U.S.C.T. were sent to ascertain a problem with guerrillas. When they found the guerillas The chivalry immediately opened fire on the rebels, and stiffened three of them as cold as a lump of ice. The other two, squealing with fright, looked over their shoulders, and with hair standing on end, eyes as wide as saucers, cheeks as pale as their dirty shirts, and chattering teeth, fled as if the everlasting devil was after them. The guerrillas made as good time as ever a Tennessee race-horse did. Of course the soldiers had to give up the chase, as there was no use trying to compete with Jeff. Davis's chivalry in a foot-race.³⁶

On September 22, 1864, Pulaski, which was partially garrisoned by U.S.C.T., escaped an attack by Forrest due to the overall strength of union forces there.³⁷

Later in October 1864 guerrilla activity had become such a hindrance to daily life that General Thomas sent troops, specifically U.S.C.T., to impede Confederate conscription parties in the environs of Fayetteville, which they accomplished.³⁸

During the same month in 1864 the Fourth Colored Artillery, and the One hundredth and Nineteenth Regiment of were involved in a major skirmish near Fort Donelson. Ninety members of the Fourth Colored Infantry on a conscript sweep in Robertson county, were attacked by a Confederate force of 250 cavalry who were repelled in their initial assaults. Soon it was found they were nearly surrounded and so they took refuge in a number of plantation log structures sitting nearby.

The Confederates dismounted and initiated a new attack but were beaten back by a well-directed fire. The Confederates could not dislodge the negro soldiers. Shortly after retreating to the nearby woods the rebels sent in a flag of truce, which was "instantly fired on." Although this was a flagrant violation of the "usages of civilized warfare" it was deemed excusable because the black soldiers "had no favors to ask nor none to grant, and knowing the treatment which officers and men of regiments have generally received at their hands we believe we will not be censured for firing on their flag of truce." The Confederate cavalry withdrew "leaving their dead and severely wounded in our possession." Lieut.-Col. T. R. Weaver, commander of the One hundred and nineteenth Colored Infantry acclaimed the soldierly attributes of his Negro troops, writing "the soldiers...behaved nobly. There was not a single instance in which they did not surpass my expectations of them."³⁹

Aside from the combat at Fort Donelson was the famous fight at Johnsonville, on the Tennessee River, in November, 1864. It was the western terminus of the N&NW railroad, and an important supply and logistical center for the Federal army. "Several Negro regiments encountered the rebel forces under Forrest and others as the Confederates sought to take possession of Johnsonville...the important Northwestern Railroad...on the east banks of the Tennessee River."⁴⁰ Rebel forces were driven off by members of the 13th U.S.C.T., who were in the process of building earthen fortifications around the railroad terminus since July, 1864. The Confederate activity was part of Major General John B. Hood's middle Tennessee campaign of 1864, an effort to cut Federal supply lines to Nashville. The 61st U.S.C.T., and the 113th Illinois infantry, suffered from a terrible ambush on the river near Johnsonville."⁴¹ Amore sanguine Confederate attack to dislodge Union forces from Johnsonville, and other U.S.C.T. troops were involved: the 12th, 13th, 100th U.S.C.T., were under siege by Rebel forces. U.S. forces, however, arrived and lifted the siege. "Afterwards, the Union Army decided to abandon the works and set up defenses to meet Hood's onslaught at Columbia, Franklin and Nashville."⁴²

³⁶Nashville Daily Times and True Union, September 20, 1864.

³⁷Lovett, "Negro in Tennessee," pp. 90-91.

³⁸OR, Ser. I, Vol. 39, pt. III, p. 172

³⁹OR, Ser. I, Vol. 39, pt. I, pp. 857-858. See also: Ibid., Vol. 39, Ser. I, pt. III, p. 218. See also: Lovett, "Negro in Tennessee," pp. 99-111.

⁴⁰Lovett, "Negro in Tennessee,," p. 94.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ibid., 94-95. See also: OR, Ser. I, Vol. 39, pt. I, pp. 868-872.



TENNESSEE CONTRABAND CONUNDRUM...cont. from page 27

Despite the hardships the U.S.C.T. faced as combat soldiers and construction workers and guards, they did develop an esprit de corps. On July 27, 1864 the first grand review of in Nashville was held in Nashville. A rare account of the official gathering testifies to this corps cohesion:

The grand review of the in this city took place yesterday afternoon at 4 o'clock. A large concourse of citizens and officers of the army were present to witness the first review of this branch of our service, which has attracted so much attention and comment from all classes. The Reviewing Officer was Brig. Gen. Chetlain, commanding the [U.S.C.T.] of Tennessee. The present were the 12th regiment U. S. C. Inf.,⁴³ Col. Thompson; 15th U. S. C. Inf., Col. T. J. Downey; 17th regiment U. S. C. Inf., Col. W. R. Shafter; and 100th regiment U. S. C. Inf., Maj. Ford, commanding. The band of the 10th Tenn. Infantry were present and discoursed most beautiful music, and added much to the effect of the review. Col. Thompson, Review Officer present, took command, and right well did he acquit himself. The 12th regiment came upon a special train from section 26, N. W. R. R. To say that the review as good hardly does justice to these gallant. We have been an eyewitness of many reviews of veteran, but have not witnessed a more creditable review than that of yesterday. The commanders of the different regiment[s] may well feel proud of their commands-and those of our citizens-especially the galvanized portion-missed a grand sight if they were not present; and we would advise them when next an opportunity affords, to be present and see how well some of the sons, grandsons, nephews, &c., of our F. F.'s.⁴⁴ acquitted themselves as soldiers of the Union. We trust that these reviews may be frequent hereafter, that our citizens may see that the "" [sic] can and will make as good a soldier as a white man. Gen. Chetlain expresses himself highly gratified with the condition of the here, and we can only wish him god speed in his glorious mission.

The different regiments escorted the 12th regiment to the N. W. Railroad depot, and then marched through the streets. We regret to record the fact than an officer of the Army Commis'y [sic] Dep't., so far forgot himself as a soldier and gentleman to give commands to the as they passed his office on Cedar street. We trust hereafter that he will discontinue the practice of putting an enemy in his mouth to steal away his brains. We would gladly give an account of the rise and progress of the organization of negro troops in this Department but time will not permit.⁴⁵

⁴³12th U.S.C.T., Organized in Tennessee at large July 24 to August 14, 1863 as 1st Alabama infantry (African descent).

Designation changed to 84th U.S. Colored Troops, April 4, 1864.

Designation changed to 1st U.S. Colored troops, later to 12th U.S. Colored infantry.

Railroad guard and garrison duty in the Dept. of the Cumberland till January, 1866

Mustered out January 16, 1866. Cited in

https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/12th_Regiment_United_States_Colored_Infantry

⁴⁴Most likely an abbreviation for "Fighting Forces."

⁴⁵Nashville Daily Times and True Union, July 28, 1864.



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Public Comment Solicited

The Tennessee Historical Commission is again soliciting public comment and advice on its administration of the National Historic Preservation Act. Especially, we are seeking input on such matters as geographic areas or classes of properties which should be a priority for survey and/or registration efforts, criteria and priorities which should be established for restoration grants, and ways and means through which local efforts at preservation of historic properties can be most effectively assisted. Comments and advice on other areas and issues of a more general nature are also encouraged. Activities carried out by the Commission under the mandate of the Act include efforts to survey and inventory potentially-historic properties across the state and to nominate the most significant to the National Register of Historic Places. Other activities involve programs to protect and preserve properties once they are identified by reviewing Federal projects to determine if they will adversely affect historic properties and wish to earn the investment tax credits which are available; awarding and administering grants for the restoration of National Register properties; and providing technical assistance and advice to local governments which are attempting to establish local programs and ordinances to protect historic properties. Besides the restoration grants program, some of these activities are carried out in part by the provision of grant support to local groups and agencies. These grant funds are federal funds which are appropriated under the authority of the National Historic Preservation Act to assist states in carrying out the purposes of the Act. The comments received will be used to structure the annual application to the National Park Service for these funds. The Tennessee Historical Commission expects to solicit applications for grants-in-aid in June of this year for the 2015 Fiscal Year (10/01/2014-9/30/2015). The public input and advice which we are soliciting now will help to set both general office objectives and to establish priorities and criteria for the review of grant applications. Comments are requested by April 15, 2014, and may be addressed to Claudette Stager, Assistant Director for National Register Programs, Tennessee Historical Commission, 2941 Lebanon Road, Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0442.

This program receives Federal funds from the National Park Service. Regulations of the U.S. Department of the Interior strictly prohibit unlawful discrimination in departmental federally assisted programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, age or disability. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against in any program, activity or facility operated by a recipient of Federal assistance should write to: Director, Equal Opportunity Program, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

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