



Photo: Parkers Crossroads Battlefield Blanketed in Springtime Snow.

Tennessee Wars Commission Annual Report, December 2024



The Tennessee General Assembly enacted legislation in April 1994, creating the Tennessee Wars Commission (TWC), as a part of the Tennessee Historical Commission (THC). Since its establishment 30 years ago—and with only one staff position--the TWC has helped acquire and permanently protect over 8,000 acres of historic properties, including Davis Bridge Battlefield in Hardeman County and Parkers Crossroads in Henderson County. To date, our grant funding has supported over one hundred different projects that preserve, protect, and interpret Tennessee’s military heritage. These projects have included funding archaeological excavations that pinpointed the location of Union fortifications in Franklin, publishing *A Survey of Sites Related to the American Revolution and War of 1812 in Tennessee*, and the creation of *A Path Divided: Tennessee’s Civil War Heritage Trail*, long-recognized as the most-requested brochure at Tennessee Welcome Centers.

The Tennessee Wars Commission helps coordinate planning efforts, preservation, and promotion of structures, buildings, sites, and battlefields in Tennessee from the French and Indian War (1754-1763), American Revolutionary War (1775-1783), War of 1812 (1812-1815), Mexican-American War (1846-1848) through the Civil War (1861-1865) era. The Tennessee Wars Commission is also charged with acquiring or providing funds for the acquisition of battlefields, cemeteries, Underground Railroad sites, and other properties associated with these conflicts. The Wars Commission’s mission is realized in part by funding grants for a wide variety of projects, through civic and governmental engagement, education and interpretation, and by way of conservation efforts.

The business of the Tennessee Wars Commission is conducted at the regular meetings of the Tennessee Historical Commission. One staff member, Ms. Nina Scall, works on behalf of the Wars Commission as Director of Programs, THC Executive Director, Patrick McIntyre, Jr., serves as the Executive Director of the TWC.

Grant Funding

The administration of two grant funds, the Wars Commission Grant Fund (WCGF) and the Civil War Sites Preservation Grant Fund (CWSPF) support the Wars Commission’s preservation initiatives and help to preserve and promote the structures, buildings, sites, cemeteries, and battlefields of Tennessee.

Wars Commission Grant Fund:

This grant fund is available for various projects within Tennessee’s diverse communities relating to the aforementioned wars. Any individual, museum, educational institution, private organization, or local government body can apply. Although matching funds are not a requirement, additional contributions are favorable. This year’s grant funds totaling \$111,200.00 were awarded to four applicants during the 2024 fiscal year (FY). The successful applicants and their projects are as follows:

1. Hazen Historical Museum Foundation, Knox County, “Bethel Cemetery - Interpretive Signage and Limited Archaeological Survey.”

The Hazen Historical Museum Foundation was awarded \$8,400.00 in grant funds to install three Civil War Trails signs at the Bethel Cemetery which serves as the final resting place for 1,700 Civil War veterans and several widows. The three markers will explore themes related to death during the Civil War and the establishment of the cemetery, the history of the Confederate monument and context related to monument building in this era, and lastly, will provide an account of the Winstead Family and information on the National Register of Historic Places listed Bethel Cottage. The first step of the project, performing a ground penetrating radar (GPR) survey of proposed signage locations, concluded this summer. The University of Tennessee Laboratory of Environmental Archaeology conducted the survey, collecting data for nearly 200 square feet of the cemetery. Signage will be installed in the new year, in anticipation for the tourism season.



GPR Team Clearing the Site for Signage at the Bethel Cemetery.

2. Historic Castalian Springs, Sumner County, “The Cultural Impact of War on the Historical Landscape.”

Twelve-thousand dollars in grant funds were awarded to install six interpretative signs on the much-altered historic landscapes of Cragfont and Wynnewood State Historic Sites. Interpretation will focus on the cultural impact of the Revolutionary, War of 1812, and the Civil War on the people who made these landscapes home. These signs will assist in creating a holistic and comprehensive interpretation of the sites, reflecting on the following locations:

- Cragfont State Historic Site -
 - Fort Tuckahoe/Croft's Mill
 - Winchester Cemetery
 - Site of Enslaved Housing
 - Site of the Holston Road

- Wynnewood State Historic Site -
 - Site of Enslaved Housing
 - The Lick & Sulphur Spring

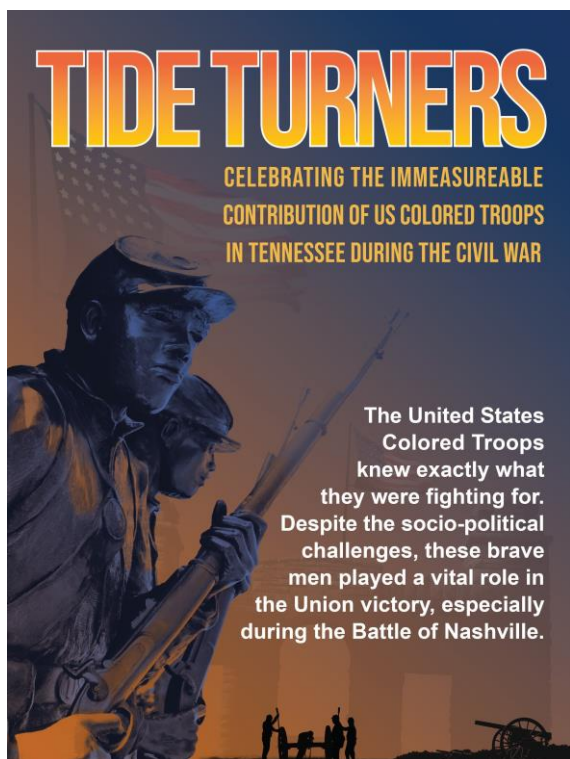
3. Metropolitan Historical Commission, Davidson County, “Documenting the Battle of Nashville: Community Archaeology in Sevier Park.”

The Battle of Nashville raged across much of south Nashville, impacts can still be seen on both the landscape and the built environment today. Recent renovations of the Sunnyside Mansion in Sevier Park have documented extensive damage to the building from the battle. Metro Nashville Police Department’s Forensics Team conducted a forensic analysis of the structure, that generated wide public interest. Although new research on the Battle of Nashville is emerging, specifics of the engagement in Sevier Park are not well documented.

The Metropolitan Historical Commission was awarded \$6,420.00 in grant funds to build on recent research by performing a metal detecting survey in conjunction with public archaeology days. On October 26, 2024, archaeologists surveyed the northwest quarter of Sevier Park hoping to locate firing lines associated with the Union advancement across the property. The archaeological survey will help to build a more complex narrative of the battle, guide future interpretation, and will direct site preservation.

4. Mind Balloon Films, Davidson County, “Tide Turners - 13th US Colored Infantry.”

Mind Balloon Films was awarded \$48,575.00 in grant funds to create the short film, “Tide Turners – 13th US Colored Infantry.” Designed to fill a 30-minute air slot and presented by WCTE/PBS, the program will air locally and regionally and will be presented to American Public Television for consideration in their national catalog. The film focuses on the 13th USCT, recognizing their valor, sacrifice, and significant contribution towards the Union victory in the Civil War.



Filming is underway for the documentary, with a number of interviews completed. In addition to descendants of USCT, such as Mr. Gary Burke, a variety of subject matter experts are to be included in the film. Amongst them are historian, Myers Brown; Former State Librarian & Archivist, Chuck Sherrill; Founder of Slaves to Soldiers, Tina Jones; and Vanderbilt Professor, Dr. Angela Sutton. Dr. Curt Fields as General Ulysses S. Grant and Dennis Boggs as President Abraham Lincoln also lend their voice and knowledge. B roll footage was captured during the 160th Anniversary of the Battle of Nashville events at Shy’s Hill and Fort Negley this December 2024.

The application process for the 2024-2025 Wars Commission grant cycle concluded on November 27, 2024. Projects will be scored and will be presented to the Tennessee Historical Commission board for final approval during the upcoming February 2025 meeting. The Wars Commission Grant Fund has budgeted \$111,700.00 for grants in this cycle.

“Tide Turners – 13th U. S. Colored Infantry” Movie Poster.

Civil War Sites Preservation Fund:

The Civil War Sites Preservation Fund provides matching funds for the acquisition and preservation of Civil War battlefields. Properties must be associated with the 38 most significant Civil War sites in Tennessee, as defined by the National Park Service. Funds can also assist in the acquisition and

protection of Underground Railroad sites eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, or eligible for designation as a National Historic Landmark. Applicants must be a 501(c)(3) and this grant fund does require a one-to-one match of nonstate funds. Since its conception in 2013, this grant fund has preserved approximately 1,100 acres of battlefield land. In fiscal year 2024, this grant fund awarded \$7,319,500.00 for the acquisition of the following four parcels:

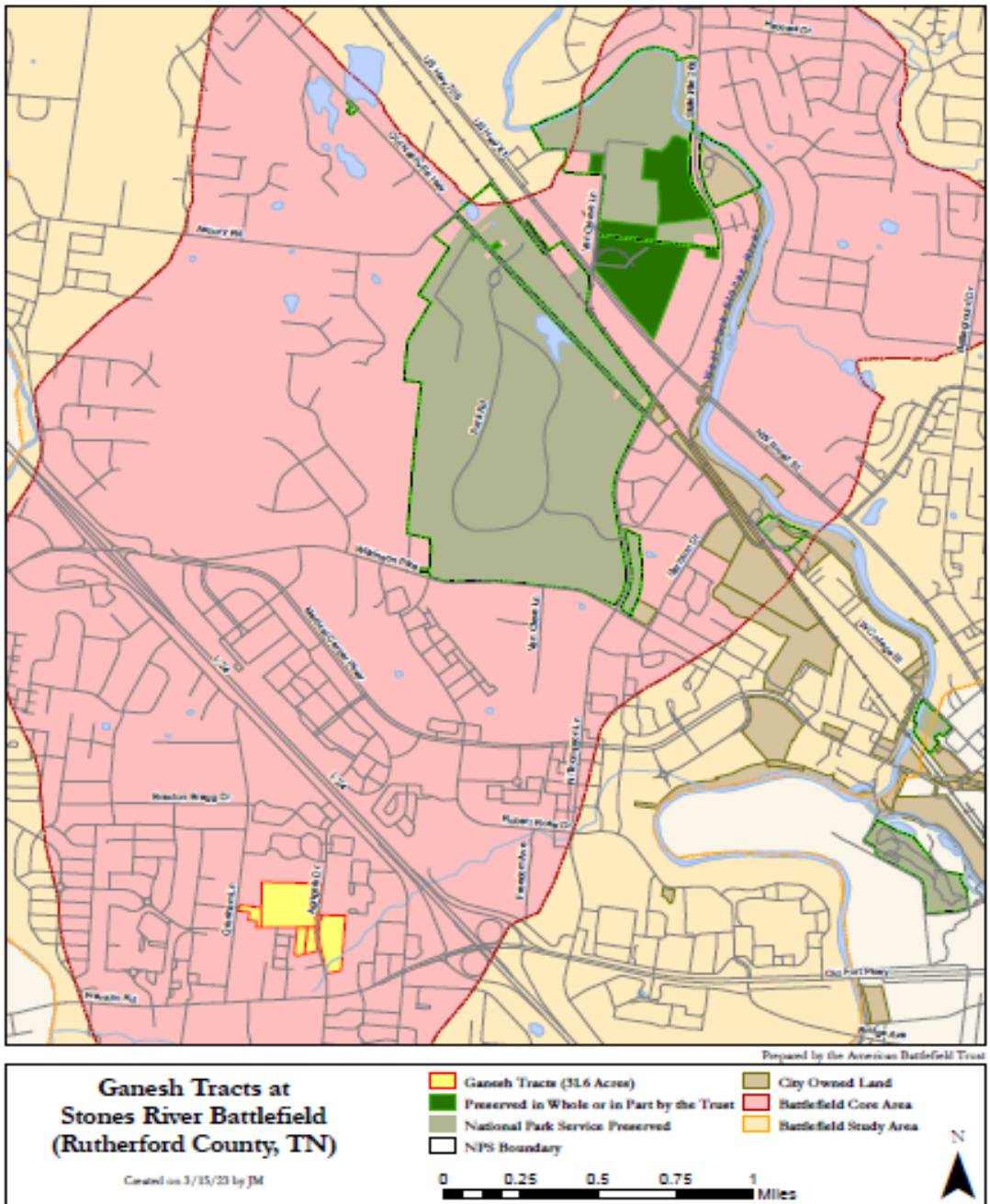
1. Franklin's Charge, Inc., Danmark/DePriest Tract at the Franklin Battlefield, Williamson County.

The preservation of the Danmark Tract was just in time to honor the 160th Anniversary of the Franklin-Nashville campaign. Franklin's Charge, with the support of the American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP), acquired the final 0.6278-acre parcel at the epicenter of the Franklin Battlefield. This property is adjacent to the Spivey Tract, preserved in 2019, and is neighboring the Williams Tract, preserved in 2024, as well as among a cluster of preserved battlefield property near the Carter House State Historic Site. Franklin's Charge intends to incorporate this parcel into the Carter Hill Battlefield Park and have the Tennessee Historical Commission hold the easement.

Positioned just south of the Carter House State Historic Site, this parcel was originally part of F.B. Carter's farmstead, whose house became the headquarters of the Union 23rd Corps during the November 30, 1864, battle. Together with several contiguous parcels, the Danmark Tract was the scene of heavy casualties as Confederate General John Brown's Division, chiefly elements of Generals George W. Gordon and Otho F. Strahl's brigades swept north toward the Federal earthworks that were defended by elements of General Thomas Ruger's men. Additionally, across this tract, Brown's men pursued fractured portions of George Wagner's Division after they were routed from a position further south. The Danmark Tract was also swept by artillery fire from two directions, killing and wounding scores of Confederate soldiers. Post-war, the Danmark tract returned to the Carter family who continued to farm the property. Franklin's Charge was awarded \$957,500.00 in grant funds towards this acquisition.

the Confederate line forcing General Patrick Cleburne to unleash his reservists too soon in the fighting. At 7:00 am, the brigades of Confederate Generals Lucius E. Polk and Bushrod Johnson faced Colonel Sidney Post's brigade on the Ganesh Tract, and fierce fighting ensued.

Ultimately, the bloody Union victory at Stones River was a morale boost for Union forces and provided further validation for the Emancipation Proclamation. Additionally, this battle helped to set the stage for further campaigns in the South.



3. The American Battlefield Trust, the Green Tract at Fort Negley, Nashville, Davidson County.

Similar to the Danmark Tract in Franklin, the Green Tract at Fort Negley, the Battle of Nashville, was also preserved during the 160th Anniversary of the Franklin-Nashville campaign this December. The approximately 2.36-acre acquisition was supported by a \$2,315,000.00 CWSPF grant and spearheaded by the American Battlefield Trust with backing from the Metro Nashville, the American Battlefield Protection Program, and with technical support from the Friends of Fort Negley, a true collaboration of preservation partners. Long-term preservation plans include the incorporation of this parcel into the Fort Negley Park and the adaptive reuse of the 1890s industrial brick structure in keeping with the new Master Plan. THC will hold the conservation easement on this property.

Following its surrender to Union Forces on February 25, 1862, Nashville became a stronghold second only to Washington, D.C. The largest inland stone fortification built during the Civil War, Fort Negley was constructed over five months by more than 2,700 free and formerly enslaved men, women, and children who were conscripted into service by Union forces. Many of those who worked on the fort, lived at its base in contraband camps which are thought to have extended into the Green Tract.

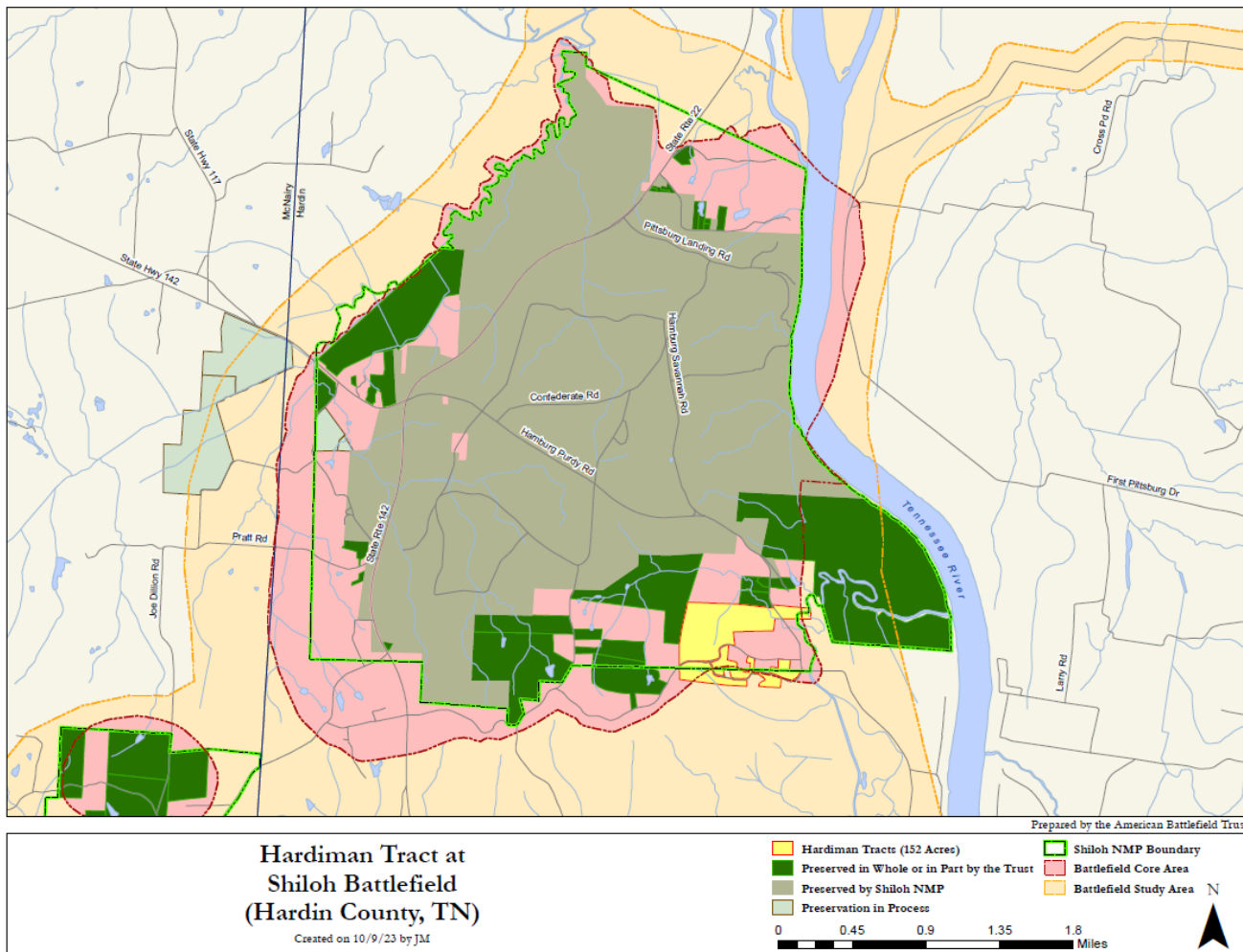
When it was completed in December 1862, Fort Negley contained some 62,500 cubic feet of stone, 18,000 cubic feet of earth, and almost a dozen artillery pieces, making it the centerpiece of the city's seven-mile-long defensive line. The sheer size and location of the fort effectively discouraged Confederate attacks until Gen. John Bell Hood's Army of Tennessee assaulted the city on December 15-16, 1864.



4. The American Battlefield Trust, the Hardiman Tract at the Shiloh Battlefield, Hardin County.

The American Battlefield Trust was awarded \$250,000.00 in total grant funds for the acquisition of the approximately 152 acres Hardiman Tract. Roughly 126.12 acres are located in the core battlefield area and within the 1894 legislated park boundary, and roughly 25.88 acres within the battlefield study area. The property is adjacent to the 2019 and 2020 Cotner Tract acquisitions as well as being surrounded by additional preserved lands.

On the morning of April 6, 1862, following two hours of bitter fighting, Confederate forces successfully overran Brig. Gen. Benjamin M. Prentiss' division camps. Confederate Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston, alerted to the presence of additional Union forces lying in wait to flank his right, deployed two brigades to outflank Maj. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's Army of the Tennessee. Confederate forces deployed, forming battle lines along the Hardiman Tract, approximately 800 yards south of Union camps, and unleashed a long-range bombardment on Union troops leading to a full-on firefight. Defeated Confederate troops retreated across the Hardiman Tract on April 7, 1862.



The application process for the 2024-2025 Civil War Sites Preservation Fund grant cycle concluded on November 1, 2024. Projects will be scored and will be presented to the Tennessee Historical Commission board for final approval during the upcoming February 2025 meeting.

Civic and Government Engagement

In addition to grants, the Wars Commission’s mission is in part realized through civic and government engagement. Director Scall has been serving as a historic preservation advocate to city, county, and local governments as well as to various nonprofit historical associations and historic sites throughout Tennessee. Additionally, she serves as a board member and advises several boards and organizations on historic preservation and archaeology.

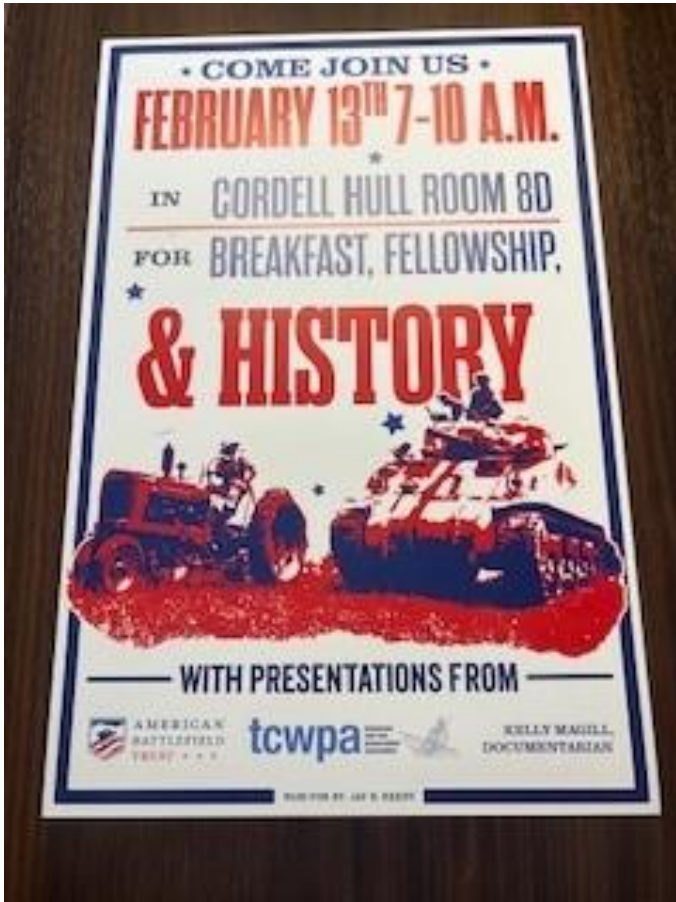
Through education and preservation support, the Wars Commission has expanded historic interests and preservation participation by formulating new and strengthening existing relationships with historic sites and battlefield parks, historical societies, and heritage groups throughout Tennessee and neighboring states.

Examples of engagement and collaboration are as follows:

The culmination of five years of collaboration, technical support, education, and advocacy has come to fruition on September 11, 2024, with the signing of the Management Agreement between the Tennessee Historical Commission and Madison County, facilitating the creation of the Salem Cemetery Battlefield Historic Site and Park that will interpret the December 19, 1862 battle. The initial planning phase has kicked off, as the Friends of Salem Cemetery Historic Site and Madison County partner to locate grants, identify initial planning needs, and outline desired capital improvements for the site.



Symbolic Ribbon Cutting – Signing of the Management Agreement for the Salem Cemetery Battlefield Historic Site and Park Wars Commission Director Scall, Historical Commission Executive Director McIntyre, THC Board Member Mrs. Loni Harris, Mayor Massey, Sen. Ed Jackson and Rep. Chris Todd, Madison County Parks Executive Director, Matthew Martin, Friends of Salem Cemetery Delegates Dr. Cox, and Executive Director Jon Rawl.



In February, the Tennessee Civil War Preservation Association and the American Battlefield Trust hosted the Wars Commission, the Historical Commission, and several of our legislators including Representative Jay Reedy, in the Cordell Hull Building for a “Breakfast, Fellowship, & History” to discuss historic and battlefield preservation in Tennessee. This was an opportunity to highlight the role of the Wars Commission, and the work of our preservation partners in preserving Tennessee’s military heritage. Battlefield preservation is immensely successful in Tennessee, and it is in part thanks to the strong partnerships between the TWC and community-based friends groups and non-profit organizations. The Wars Commission is grateful for these partnerships and for this opportunity for outreach, education, and advocacy with our legislators.

Poster for the Engagement Breakfast – “Breakfast, Fellowship, & History” Hosted by ABT and TCWPA, Cordell Hull Building.

Encompasses the last 40 undeveloped acres that held the significant mustering site of Tennessee’s volunteers during the War of 1812, the Camp Blount Historic Site was purchased by the State in 2016, and since has partnered with the City of Fayetteville and the Camp Blount Historic Site Association (CBHSA) to preserve, protect, and interpret the site. Due to the successful planning and execution of the site’s development and its preliminary projects, Camp Blount has graduated to the next phase in planning, the creation of a National Park Service (NPS)-level foundation document.



The Camp Blount Historic Site Association's Foundation Document Committee came together for a second meeting with state and community stakeholders on November 13, 2024, to review and discuss the draft document. Comments and edits have been taken under advisement and adjustments are being made to the working draft. Tennessee Wars and Historical Commission await a final review.

Foundation Document Meeting in Fayetteville
 Director Scall, Ms. Dirksen, THPA, Mr. Cooley,
 Historic Sites, Former TWC Director, Fred Prouty,
 Ms. Jillian Rael with TVAR, and Stakeholders.

Interpretation and Education

Interpretation and education efforts help to further advance the Wars Commission’s mission throughout Tennessee. Recently, educational opportunities have included speaking engagements, project collaboration, and technical restoration and reconstruction support as well general interpretative measures. Highlights are as follows:

Much of the Wars Commission’s work occurs throughout the state, creating varied speaking opportunities including the invitation to speak at the signing of management agreement in Jackson for the Salem Cemetery Battlefield Historic Site and Park. Yet closer to home here in Nashville, the Wars Commission was honored by Assistant Director Wynn with an invitation to address the Metropolitan Historical Commission on August 19, 2024. Director Scall presented a PowerPoint complete with question-and-answer session on the varied work of the Wars Commission for local history and preservation professionals in attendance.

Director Scall has been collaborating with contracted historian, Myers Brown, and his team on the upcoming update to the most requested heritage tourism brochure in Tennessee Welcome Centers, *A Path Divided: Tennessee’s Civil War Heritage Trail*. Our goal with this project is to thoroughly review the existing version, updating the verbiage while expanding the current narrative, and including more sites for visitation. In addition to the printed brochure, a longer-term project goal is to create a digital map that features recommended sites and their associated important visitation information.



Director Scall Speaking in
 Jackson, Tennessee.



Executive Director McIntyre and Mr. Cooley Inspect Building Conditions at the ca. 1803 Historic Browns Ferry Tavern in Chattanooga.

Director Scall, Executive Director McIntyre, and Mr. Bobby Cooley with THC’s Historic Sites Program have been teaming up, consulting on two substantial preservation projects; the restoration of the ca. 1803 Brown’s Ferry Tavern in Chattanooga, containing both Civil War and Trail of Tears histories as well as the reconstruction of the ca. 1810 log cabin in Fayetteville containing histories of the Frontiersman and Revolutionary War Kings Mountain Messenger, Joseph Greer. Collaborating with the Tennessee Division of Archaeology (TDoA), various preservation professional, and site stewards, the Wars Commission and Historical Commission staff have been providing education, technical support and advising on best preservation and archaeological practices, consulting on material choices, and construction techniques. These are long term construction projects, and the Wars Commission is thrilled to support these undertakings.

Once complete, these structures will interpret their varied histories and will be open to the public and school groups for visitation.



Reconstruction Progress at the ca. 1810 Frontiersman Cabin in Fayetteville.

In addition to the larger preservation projects, the Wars Commission continues to further its goals of education and interpretation by updating our website, expanding the Preservation Resources Section to highlight Wars Commission funded research-based projects and making those easily accessible to the citizens of Tennessee. Exciting examples include the “Battle of Nashville Story Map” by Vanderbilt Professor Hulette, that provides users with a comprehensive geovisualization of the

Battle of Nashville landscape then and today; or the “MTSU Bass Street Community Archaeology Project,” by Dr. Andrew Wyatt and Clelie Cottle Peacock featuring an accessible artifacts database that examines the community that emerged from the contraband camps at Fort Negley. For more

information on these groundbreaking projects, or to explore more featured research, please visit the Wars Commission’s website at:

<https://www.tn.gov/historicalcommission/state-programs/tennessee-wars-commission.html>.

Conservation Efforts

Conservation efforts have been a priority for the Wars Commission. In 2023, Director Scall’s work focused on the expansion and strengthening of the conservation easement program. The expanded program includes a conservation easement monitoring strategy that features both a boots-on-the-ground and an “eyes-in-the-skies” approach. The aerial strategy was made possible through the application of LENS software which is designed to harness satellite technology and through the application of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology.

The use of GIS technology is the result of the ongoing collaboration between the Wars Commission and the Department of Environment and Conservation GIS staff. Through the creation of a series of map layers identifying state-owned war-related properties and properties held under easement, the Wars Commission can monitor those sites more closely. Site visits and property inspections ensure that the preservation clauses and conditions of these conservation easements are being met by the property owners, as well as provide an opportunity to photograph baseline conditions at some of the more recently acquired easement tracts.

The expanded program launched in 2024, featuring a review process for both new projects and demolitions, includes procedures to report suspected violations, and contains a volunteer component where Tennessee’s citizens can collaborate with the Wars Commission to monitor protected battlefields across the state.



Additionally, state ownership and conservation easement signs have been fabricated, designating the properties as protected by the State and the Tennessee Historical and Wars Commissions. The Wars Commission continues the extensive process of signage installation throughout Tennessee. Conservation easement and state ownership signs have been installed at properties in Davidson, Hamilton, Henderson, Lincoln, Madison, Maury, Robertson, Stewart, and Williamson Counties with the final counties Hardin and Rutherford, to follow over the next year as additional acquisitions close. Currently, the Historical Commission holds conservation easements on approximately 1,200 acres of battlefield property in nine counties throughout Tennessee.

Conservation Easement Sign Installation in Chattanooga.

2024 was an exciting year in military heritage preservation in Tennessee, with several Wars Commission Grant Funded projects focusing on interpretation and heritage tourism, education, and research. Several legacy acquisitions closed this year and new important acreage is on the horizon for

preservation utilizing vitally important Civil War Sites Preservation Funds. The strengthened conservation easement program continues to expand and improve, ensuring our battlefield properties are protected in perpetuity. In fiscal year 25, the Wars Commission will continue working diligently to save our rapidly disappearing battlefields and to continue to meet the preservation mission of the Tennessee Wars Commission.



Closing Photo: Donation of the Giclee Titled *Patriot's Farewell*, by Artist David Wright and the Ladies from the Jethro Sumner Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR) to the Tennessee Historical Commission Executive Director McIntyre and Wars Commission Program Director Scall.

The image features the patriot heading to the 1780 Battle of King's Mountain, American Revolutionary War.

