



FROM THE PRESIDENT

To say the least, 2022 has been a significant year for the BONT. We learned in 2021 that we were the beneficiary under the will of William Dorris for the proceeds from the sale of a trailer park on Dickerson Road and that we would receive ownership of the strip of land along I-65 S near Brentwood where the infamous statue of Nathan Bedford Forrest was located.

Although we did not immediately recognize the value of that property, it did have two cell towers located on it which produced a significant monthly rental income. As 2022 began, we listed the property for sale and somewhat to our surprise we not only received multiple offers, the two best offers were for a high price. We have now entered into two letters of intent to sell the towers. The details of the transaction are discussed elsewhere in the newsletter, but as a result of this process, for the first time in its existence, the BONT would have the financial resources to look at significant projects to enhance the Battlefield experience for our members and visitors to the area.

In September we added three new members to our Board with terms beginning January 1, 2023: Jimmy Pickel, Rob Chilton and Sam Whitson. We are looking forward to their participation in planning future projects. Several of those projects are discussed in this newsletter.

Finally after a year's hiatus due to Covid, we have scheduled an annual meeting of our members on the 158th anniversary of the first day of the battle—December 15 at 6:00 p.m. The event will be held in the event center at Traveller's Rest where General Hood had his headquarters from his arrival in Nashville on December 2, 1864 until he relocated on the second day of the battle to be closer (much closer than he probably anticipated) to the action which resulted in a total disaster from the Confederate viewpoint. All are welcome. Please RSVP to Ellen McClanahan at edmcclanahan79@gmail.com.

Thank you for your participation in the Trust and we look forward to seeing you on December 15th!

-Bill Ozier



SHY'S HILL CANNON REPAIR

As we had previously reported, the wheels and carriages on the two cannons displayed on Shy's Hill had deteriorated from the elements and become a hazard to visitors. In September a group of Board members including Jim Kay, Clay Bailey, Bobby Whitson, Jim Atkinson, Jimmy Pickel and Bill Ozier removed the cannons with the expectation that they would be picked up by Steen Cannon & Ordinance Works to rebuild the wheels and carriages for them. Unfortunately we just learned that Steen is closing its doors so we will have to locate a new source for the repairs. Hopefully we will have them back on site by late spring.



SHY'S HILL TRAIL WORK

One project we intend to address is the improvement of the trail up Shy's Hill. If any of you have been up there recently it has become very hard to navigate. There are many roots and rocks which make footing very uneven.

We have contacted Tailored Trails from Atlanta which is currently upgrading the "Red" hiking trail in Percy Warner Park. They use existing soil and compact it with natural berms to deflect and control the rainwater runoff. The pictures accompanying this article show a view of the trail up Shy's and a trail that they have redone in similar terrain in the Park. We hope to get together with them soon to see what they think they might be able to do and get a cost estimate.

THE FIRST ASSIGNMENT OF BLAME

Most have read the official reports of the corps and division commanders, and belatedly, John Bell Hood himself concerning the actions of the Confederate Army of Tennessee on December 15th and 16th, 1864. But these reports were days after the Battle of Nashville. One of, if not the earliest assignment of blame comes from Colonel Andrew J. Kellar, commanding Strahl's Brigade, Cheatham's Division, who transmitted to Major A. P. Mason, Asst. Adj. General, Army of Tennessee the following:

**Hdqrs. Strahl's Brigade, Cheatham's Division,
Army of Tennessee In the Field, December 18,
1864.**

**Maj. A. P. Mason
Assistant Adjutant -General, Army of Tennessee:**

SIR: It is a duty I owe myself, brigade, division, to the commanding general, and to the country to state facts in regard to the panic of the army on the afternoon of the 16th. The lines were broken about 3 p.m. on a high hill west of the Granny [White] pike about half a mile, which hill was occupied by Tyler's brigade, Bate's division, and given up to the enemy without a struggle. My command was on Tyler's left, and the right of Cheatham's division. This hill, occupied by the enemy, overlooked the right of the army, and the troops seeing it in the hands of the enemy, and seeing the left wing of the army running without making a stand, fled also. It was not by fighting, nor the force of arms, nor even numbers, which drove us from the field. As far as I can now learn, I did not lose more than thirty men and about thirty-five small arms, already replaced. For the first time in this war, we lost our cannon. Give us the first chance and we will retake them.

Respectfully, your obedient servant,

**ANDREW J. KELLAR,
Colonel Commanding.**

Col. Kellar, appointed Colonel of the 4th Tennessee after Otho French Strahl was appointed as brigadier general of the brigade (Strahl's Brigade) in 1863 became brigade commander after Franklin, commanding a much reduced unit that was devastated at Franklin, resulting in the loss of its commander, General Otho Strahl. It is not the wonder that a rout occurred in Nashville after the horrors of Franklin, but a wonder that the army stayed together as a cohesive fighting unit and followed Hood to Nashville in the first place. As such it was a testament to the men of the Army of Tennessee.

Philip W. Duer, BONT



INSTALLATION BEGINS ON IMPORTANT "CIVIL WAR TRAILS" SIGNAGE HONORING TRAIL-BLAZING AFRICAN AMERICAN SOLDIERS

The Battle Of Nashville Trust's campaign to have two new Civil War Trails markers honoring United States Colored Troops soldiers who fought in the Battle of Nashville moved a step closer to reality on October 21, 2022, when work began on the first of the structures.

Drew Gruber, Executive Director of Civil War Trails, and his team, installed the initial directional sign and interpretive signage stand on the grounds of STEM Prep High School. USCT troops advanced into this area on the first day of the Battle of Nashville on Dec. 15, 1864.

The Battle of Nashville Trust (BONT) initiated contact in early 2022 with Civil War Trails, spearheaded by BONT board member John Banks. The plan ultimately came together after BONT received grants from the Tennessee Wars Commission to fund the marker, and BONT board member Clay Bailey secured permission for its placement on the school property at 1252 Foster Avenue, marking the USCT's involvement on the first day of the battle. The grant also funds a second marker to be placed later in the area of the Dec. 16, 1864, battle at Peach Orchard Hill.

The historic area where the new Foster Avenue marker is being installed is only a half mile southeast of the important sites on Polk Avenue, including the preserved remnants of Granbury's Lunette as well as the first-ever historical marker commemorating the USCT's role in the Battle of Nashville, erected in October, 2021, by the Tennessee Historical Commission, signifying the important and unique role played by African-American troops in the battle.

These photos show Director Gruber and his CWT assistants placing the initial structures for the marker and interpretive signage. The final story board will be placed soon, explaining the military and historical significance of the area. The Civil War Trails program works with historical groups within a six-state area encompassing major Civil War battlefields to help visitors locate and understand notable Civil War events, and "to put them in the footsteps of the generals, soldiers, citizens, and the enslaved who found themselves in the midst of this Civil War." Civil War Trails has erected some 1,200 interpretive signs since 1994, 350 of which are located throughout Tennessee.

BONT is continuing its efforts to locate a suitable spot for a CWT marker at Peach Orchard Hill, commemorating a battle that featured battlefield bravery by USCT troops so remarkable that it drew praise from commanders for both armies in their reports.

In addition to the two markers for the assaults on Granbury's Lunette and Peach Orchard Hill, we have also begun work with the Tennessee Historical Commission to obtain a CWT marker for the Battle of the Nashville Monument on Granny White Pike. The existing tablet describing the Monument's history has been severely vandalized and is virtually illegible.

Renew Your Membership

Just a reminder to make sure that you renew your BONT membership when it expires. If you are not sure when it expires send an email to wnozier@bellsouth.net and I will check for you. You can also renew on our website at Battleofnashvilletrust.org.

www.battleofnashvilletrust.org

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