

Nashville Civil War Roundtable

Founded April, 2009 – Nashville, Tennessee

Visit our web site: www.nashvillecivilwarroundtable.wordpress.com

July 18h, 2023 – Our 149th meeting!! We continue our fourteenth year!

The next meeting of the Nashville (TN) Civil War Roundtable will be on Tuesday, July 18th, 2023, in the visitor's center of Ft. Negley Park, a unit of Metro Parks, Nashville, TN. This is located off I-65 just south of downtown between 4th Avenue South and 8th Avenue South on Edgehill Avenue/Chestnut Avenue. Take Exit 81, Wedgewood Avenue, off I-65 and follow the signs to the Science Museum.

The meeting begins at 7:00 PM and is always open to the public. Members please bring a friend or two – new recruits are always welcomed.

July is our fiscal year so please plan on paying your membership dues at this meeting if you missed that. Without dues we cannot get speakers and programs so please support the Nashville CWRT.

Our Speaker and Topic – *"The Nashville & Decatur Railroad in the Civil War"*

Commented [KB1]:

The Nashville & Decatur Railroad was the conglomeration of several companies along a track line that ran from Nashville, TN to Decatur, AL where it connected with the Memphis & Charleston Railroad. This connection was important as the latter was the only true east-west line in the Confederacy. The line was important to the Confederacy until Nashville fell in February 1862 and Union troops pushed further south in Tennessee. Later, the N&D became important to the Federals because they used it to transport men, animals and supplies to allow their armies to gain a stronger foothold in the South. Crucial to this was supplying General Sherman for his invasion of Georgia. It became a weapon that the federals used against the Confederacy and was highly contested because cavalry units of the Confederate Army and its sympathizers tried incessantly to disrupt the railroad's operation while the Federals worked hard to keep it open.

Our speaker this month is Walter Green and his recent book describes the work of four key Federal men who were primarily responsible for design and construction of the bridges, trestles and railroad fortifications during the key period when Sherman was sending supplies to Chattanooga. The program will also discuss the most significant military activity near the railroad and covers freed Blacks, U.S. Colored Troops and contraband camps. It also presents recent research about perhaps the most fascinating section of track on the N&D during the war – just north and south of the railroad's one tunnel in southern Giles County.

The railroad is located in almost exactly the same place it was 160 years ago. It, like the battlefields, is a highly visible reminder of the war. Its story needed to be told.

Walter Green is a busy retired Professional Civil/Structural Engineer. He lives in historic Franklin, Tennessee, is happily married and has three daughters and eight grandchildren. He has written study reports for use by the City of Franklin and documents for publication in the local historic journal.



Walter will have copies of his fine book for sale at the meeting. This is a fine program and who doesn't like train tales?

Let's have a great turnout this month!

June 2023 meeting

Our own Ross Massey gave a fine program on CS General William Wings Loring and his division in the Civil War. An interesting man in his own right, serving in the Seminole War, the Mexican War where he would lose an arm, out west in the pre-war US Army, Loring took command of Confederate troops in Western Virginia under Gen. Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson with whom he clashed. Sent west, Loring took command of an infantry division and fought it from Vicksburg through the Tennessee Campaign ending his war in North Carolina. Ross told the tale with full command of the subject matter laced with his trademark sense of humor. Always informative and entertaining, we thank Ross for the fine program.

FUTURE PROGRAMS:

August 2023 – Jim Ogden, historian, Chickamauga-Chattanooga National Military Park – *"Rosecrans' Campaign For Chattanooga, 160th Anniversary"*

September 2023 - Col. Ed Lowe (ret.) – *"James Longstreet's East Tennessee Campaign"* – based on his forthcoming book

October 2023 – Philip Kemmerly, Historian, retired Austin Peay University professor – *"Logistics in U.S. Grant's Vicksburg Campaign"*

November 2023 – Dr. Minoa Uffelman, Austin Peay professor/historian – “*Sarah Kennedy Letters: A Clarksville Woman Looks at Her Civil War*”

Some of our speakers are authors and bring books to sell at our meetings. Please support them by buying their books.

MEMBERS AND DUES – July is our new fiscal year and that means it is time for your dues! Please plan on taking care of your membership renewals at this meeting. The annual dues structure for the Nashville CWRT is as follows:

Single membership - \$20
Family - \$30
Military – Active duty and Veterans - \$15
Military Family – Active duty and Veterans - \$25
Student - \$10
Senior (age 60 plus) - \$15
Senior couple - \$20

Your dues for the 2022-2022 fiscal year will be due at this meeting if you have not paid as yet! Please plan on paying them at that month’s meeting if you have not already.

PLEASE PLAN ON PAYING YOUR DUES THIS MONTH SO WE CAN KEEP BRINGING IN GREAT SPEAKERS AND HELP SAVE CIVIL WAR SITES. If you cannot make a meeting then please drop off your check at Fort Negley.

BOTTOM LINE FOLKS – without your dues we do not have programs so please support the efforts of the Nashville CWRT. We could also use new members so if you have friends or family interested in the Civil War bring them along!

When your dues are paid you will be issued a new name badge with the fiscal year on it. If you do not have a name badge then you are not current.

Our dues go to paying for speakers as well as donations for Civil War preservation causes especially those of a local nature. Please be sure to pay your dues so we can offer the best programs possible for you! We also utilize donated items for sales each month to help add to the treasury. If you have something you would like to donate for these auctions, please bring them to the meetings. Books, art, or anything Civil War, works very well. Thanks very much to all of you who have made such donations!

CIVIL WAR NEWS AND EVENTS

Notes From President Howard Mann

Your editor goofed and did not run Howard’s first notes in last month’s newsletter so we will get a two-fer for this one. My apologies to Howard Mann.

May 16, 2023 - Dinner with General Ulysses S. Grant

I had the privilege of dining with General U.S. Grant, i.e. Dr. Curt Fields, Memphis, Tennessee and National Parks Service representative for General Grant. Despite his many degrees from the University of Memphis and Michigan State University, Dr. Fields/General Grant, had absorbed the detail of Grant's memoirs, papers, documents and persona so well that he remains in character, unlike some Civil War celebrity re-enactors..... so much so that dinner was with a soft-spoken, focused, soldier's soldier, not unlike those who followed him in World War II, Omar Bradley, Earl Rudder of the Rangers, and Eisenhower. Lunch wasn't a quiz show (I found myself mostly talking about myself to my commanding officer). He, like a true leader, remained humble, focused, and open about himself and his ongoing goal to represent Grant for who he was. Dinner was a delight and his presentation was a continuation of his immersing himself in his role.

His talk stands on its own. Grant would have been pleased.

Howard Mann

July 6, 2023 - Our Own Ross Massey

It is always gratifying to hear about Nashville Civil War history, the battle of Nashville and lesser-known individuals who played a significant role in our past. It is even more satisfying to hear all this from one of our own, Ross Massey. Ross's presentation was both enlightening and enjoyable, peppered with anecdotes, humor, passion for the subject and reminds us of Ross's long-standing eminence in Nashville's much needed preservation of history.

It also suggests that we need to continually focus on the Civil War Roundtable's relationship with our preservation partners, Franklin, Stone's River, Johnsonville, Traveler's Rest, Bell Meade, Spring Hill, Thompson's Station and, to my surprise, the Maxwell House, along with other points of historical interest across Nashville's landscape.

I was reading up on the Battle of Nashville Preservation Society newsletter and found a reference to the Maxwell House. While I had heard about the hotel and President Teddy Roosevelt's visit I was not aware of any relationship to Nashville's Civil War history. I read John Bank's Blog of June 11, 2023 on this little known (to me) event of the collapse of a third floor staircase pitching Confederate prisoners and a few Union guards three stories below on September 23, 1863, killing between 25 and 45 men. John had also written in his Rambling Column on this in the Civil War Times. The Maxwell House Hotel burned down Christmas day, 1961 and was located at Church and 5th Street. Interestingly enough, Captain Lakin, 89th Ohio, in charge of the prisoners was held blameless, but rather the poor construction of the interior of the hotel.



I did locate a couple of interesting items through online search, that touch on this tragedy. I found a cover (an envelope from a Confederate prisoner) noted from the Maxwell House prison, in a book on Prison Covers.

NASHVILLE, TENN. (O.R.) The state penitentiary. No covers known.
 Nashville, Tenn. (O.R.) Exchange Barracks No. 1 and up were in operation from September, 1863 to September, 1865, with eleven hundred and sixty-six prisoners the most that were there at any

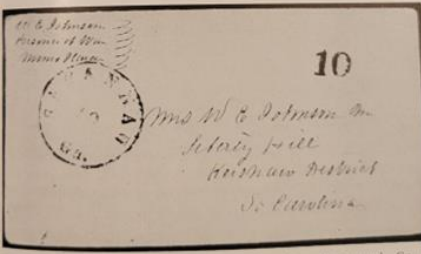
Federal Prisons and Their Mails 63

one time. In September, 1863 the diary of Dr. J. B. Lindsley refers to a "horrible catastrophe" at the Maxwell House where the stairs gave away and precipitated two hundred Confederate prisoners from the 5th to the 2nd floor. The *Nashville Dispatch* of September 20, 1863 news item:

"a dreadful accident occurred yesterday morning about 8 o'clock at the Maxwell House called Barracks No. 1. Confederate soldiers (prisoners) were housed in the building. When going down to breakfast, too many crowded on the stairway and the steps collapsed."

Four hundred and sixty-six Confederate prisoners died while there. *New Albany, Ind.* Fourteen graves of Confederate prisoners.

•NEW ORLEANS, LA. (O.R.) In operation from December, 1863 to July, 1865. The New Orleans Custom House above the postoffice was used as a prison, and two homes in New Orleans were also used to keep Confederate officer prisoners, one of these being at No. 21 Rampart Street. Two hundred and thirty-five Confederate prisoners died there. Captain Jules C. Dennis was the Confederate Provost Marshal of Mobile, Ala. who handled the flag of truce mail through Mobile and smuggled mail from New Orleans



From a prisoner of war at Morris Island, 1861, through Savannah, Ga. to Liberty Hill S. C. Due 10 on arrival.

I also found a list of known survivors and a few victims of the collapse in Find-a-grave, among whom were Daniel N. Ford, 24th Mississippi (1836-1902), John Marshall Dickey, 44th Tennessee (1840-1920), Moses Walters, (1841-1905), and Private Cornelius G. Odom, 10th Texas Cavalry (1836-1914). Mr. Odom's memorial mentions the collapse of the building.



Company I 10th Texas Cavalry Regiment
 Confederate States of America. Info from CIVIL WAR RECORDS OF CHEROKEE COUNTY, TX Vol. 1-2; Huttash - C. G. Odom, Co. I, 10th Texas Cavalry

Captured at the battle of Chickamauga, Georgia, Sept. 19th, 1863; wounded in Zollicoffer House Disaster in Oct. 1863 at Nashville, Tenn.; carried to Camp Morton Prison, Ind. Remained a prisoner until the war ended, and now living near Rusk, Tx.

In a newspaper report on the collapse, L.B. Scott, Company A, 9th Tennessee was noted as killed in the collapse while L. M. Poe, Company E, 28th Alabama was noted as dangerously wounded. He died shortly afterward and is buried in Mt. Olivet Cemetery.

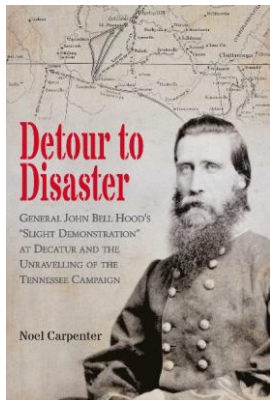
Larkin enlisted into Co. E. 28th Alabama Infantry along with his brother Thomas G. Poe on April 20, 1862 at Corinth, Mississippi. He was captured in battle at Chickamauga, Georgia on September 20, 1863 and sent to Nashville, Tennessee to be forwarded to a Federal Prisoner of War Camp in the North. Tragically, on September 29, 1863 while being held in the Maxwell House Hotel (also called the Zollicoffer Barracks over six hundred Confederate soldiers being held there were lining up on the stairs to go to breakfast when twenty feet of the fifth floor gave way and came crashing down through the fourth and third floors on to the second floor on top of the men who had previously proceeded downstairs. Sixteen men died and dozens more were injured. Larkin was mortally wounded and died on September 30th, 1863 from "paralysis".

Sadly, his brother Thomas died almost a year later as a POW in Camp Chase, Ohio. More should be found in this Nashville story. Thanks to those like John Banks, who have brought this piece of history to light.

Howard Mann

Reprint of a classic book on the Tennessee Campaign and the Battle of Decatur, Alabama

Noel Carpenter was a historian and Air Force veteran from Decatur, Alabama. He spent years researching the engagement at Decatur in Hood's Tennessee Campaign on the banks of the Tennessee River. Sadly, Carpenter passed away before his book could be finished but his daughter followed through and put it out entitled "*A Slight Demonstration: Decatur, October 1864' Clumsy Beginning of Gen. John B. Hood's Tennessee Campaign.*" A very under-appreciated aspect of the campaign and the book is outstanding. Now, Savas-Beatie has reprinted the book which is great news for students of this campaign. A case can be made that between the repulse at Decatur and the three weeks at Tusculumbia is where Hood lost the campaign.



In October of 1864, Confederate General John Bell Hood set out through Alabama on what would be the final campaign of the Army of Tennessee. One event in particular, overlooked and misunderstood for generations, portended what was to follow and is the subject of Noel Carpenter's *Detour to Disaster: General John Bell Hood's "Slight Demonstration" at Decatur and the Unravelling of the Tennessee Campaign.*

By late 1864, Hood's army of hardened veterans had one thin ray of hope: they would somehow invade Tennessee and defeat Union General George Thomas outside Nashville in a victory that would force General William T. Sherman to follow them into Tennessee (and perhaps even Kentucky). While weighing his options for a Tennessee River crossing, however, Hood diverted his army to the town of Decatur, Alabama, a decision that undermined his own plan for a rapid move north to Nashville.

In his only mention of his army's action at Decatur, Alabama, Hood described it all in just one sentence: "While the Army turned Decatur, I ordered a slight demonstration to be made against the town till our forces passed safely beyond." In fact, this four-day detour was a turning point that set the stage for the disastrous Tennessee Campaign that followed.

In this fascinating and meticulously detailed and documented account—the first book-length study of the weighty decision to march to Decatur and the combat that followed there—the author investigates the circumstances surrounding these matters and how they overwhelmed the controversial young army commander and potentially doomed his daring campaign. *Detour to Disaster* is required reading for everyone interested in the Western Theater, and especially the doomed Tennessee Campaign.

The 26th Kentucky (U.S.) Infantry In the Battle of Nashville – by Derrick Lindow (Courtesy of the Western Theater in the Civil War Facebook Page)

If you are not familiar with the Western Theater in the Civil War Facebook page it is loaded with wonderful articles, period letters and accounts from battles and campaign of the Western Theater as well as the Trans-Mississippi Theater. Several known authors frequent the site. One of the main features is from Dan Masters of Toledo, OH who has a terrific Civil War blog but he cross-publishes on this Facebook page as well. Derrick Lindow, a good friend, Middle School teacher (award winning by the way) and soon to be book published author from Owensboro, KY is a frequent contributor (heck – it's his Facebook page!) and he recently ran an account of the 26th Kentucky Infantry in the Battle of Nashville which is published here:

Cicero Maxwell began his wartime service as the lieutenant colonel of the 26th Kentucky Infantry under the infamous "Butcher of Kentucky," Stephen Burbridge. Maxwell, however, was not like Burbridge, and it appears they had a major disagreement or falling out in 1862. Maxwell was granted sick leave, but Burbridge insisted on marking him AWOL anyway.

The regiment spent 1861-1862 marching and camping between Calhoun and South Carrollton, Kentucky on the Green River without ever seeing any major combat, though they did have a few skirmishes with Confederate forces that ventured into the area. The winter at Camp Calhoun was full of rain, mud, and illness.

Maxwell led the regiment during the Battle of Shiloh, where it fought on April 7th, the second day. They advanced through the old Hornet's Nest and through Daniel Davis Wheat Field and helped drive off the Washington Artillery. Maxwell commented that they were not engaged long, but suffered several casualties in the short amount of time, including two brothers of my 3x great grandfather.

After the advance on Corinth, the 26th, now under the command of Maxwell, moved back into Kentucky during the Kentucky Campaign. Once Bragg abandoned the Commonwealth, the regiment stayed there until 1864, acting as a garrison and anti-guerrilla force. In some of my other research, I saw that Maxwell's wife died sometime in the first half of 1864, something other Kentucky soldiers saw in the Louisville papers during the Atlanta Campaign. Many Kentucky soldiers "lamented the loss of a fine lady."

When John Bell Hood invaded Tennessee in the fall of 1864, the 26th moved to Nashville. Here, Maxwell reports that the regiment encamped near Fort Negley, which still stands today. There Maxwell led the regiment again in several charges against the Confederate lines. He wrote after the battle, "The color-bearer, James Scott, was severely wounded in the leg as he ascended the hill, but would not go to the rear until he had planted our regimental flag on the top, and he was among the first there."

Maxwell received a slight wound in the battle, and had battled chronic illness throughout the entire war, which ultimately led him to resign his position as colonel and return to civilian life. Unfortunately, the combination took his life on February 17, 1865 while he was in Bowling Green, Kentucky. He was only 33 years old.

After the Battle of Nashville, the 26th was put on a train for Washington, and from there, an ocean steamer bound for Wilmington, North Carolina. The 26th was the first Union regiment to enter the city just five days after his death.

Report of Col. Cicero Maxwell, Twenty-sixth Kentucky Infantry, of operations December 15-16, 1864. (Image below)

Camp Twenty-sixth Kentucky Volunteer Infantry, Five Miles North of Columbia, Tenn.
December 22, 1864.



Captain: In compliance with orders I respectfully submit the following report of the part taken by the Twenty-sixth Kentucky Volunteer Infantry in the actions near Nashville, Tenn., on the 15th and 16th instant:

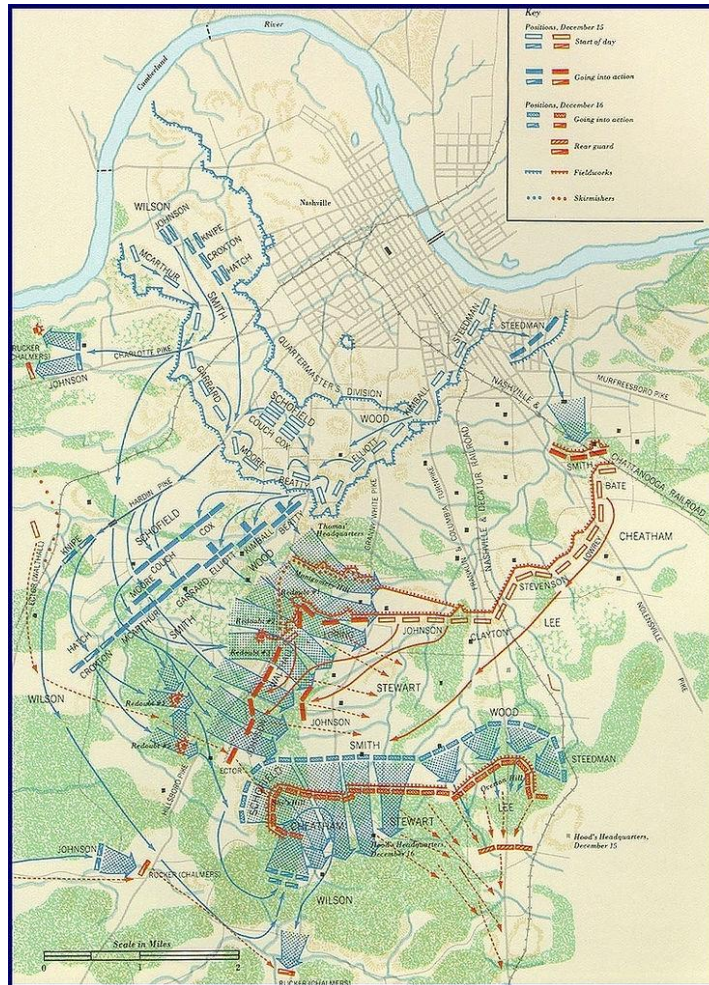
We left our camp near Fort Negley about 8 a. m. on the 15th instant; moved slowly two or three miles toward the right, passed through our outer line of works on the Hardin turnpike, and formed line of battle at 11 a. m., just outside the works and on the left of the pike, the Twenty-sixth Kentucky Volunteers being the right of the First Brigade. In forming line one of our men, James H. Cohron, Company B, was instantly killed by the accidental discharge of his own gun. Between 12 m. and 1 p. m. we were moved forward about a mile, the right considerably advanced, and halted in a lane. A heavy cannonade was going on at the time, and the enemy's shells occasionally exploded near us, but no one was injured. After remaining here an hour or so we were moved by the right flank, changing direction somewhat to the right, a mile perhaps, again formed in line of battle, and moved briskly forward. As we commenced to move a strong position of the rebels in our front was gallantly charged by some dismounted cavalry, and a number of prisoners and several pieces of artillery were captured. We continued to move, our right advancing, until our line was nearly or quite perpendicular to the one first formed in the forenoon. At little more than a mile from where we formed line the second time, our brigade charged a strong position of the enemy on one of the high hills, or knobs rather, between the Hillsborough and Granny White pikes, about five miles from Nashville, and though the men were exposed to a galling front and cross-fire, they moved steadily and rapidly forward, drove the rebels in great disorder from their positions, and captured a number of prisoners and several pieces of artillery. In a few minutes we were moved about half a mile farther, and took position at sundown on a high hill exposed to a cross-fire from the enemy posted on another hill on our right. Here we remained all night and threw up earth-works. Our regiment was not regularly engaged on the 16th, but was moved forward with the First Brigade as the final charge was made late in the afternoon, and bivouacked for the night near the new house of Mr. Lea, on the left of the Granny White pike.

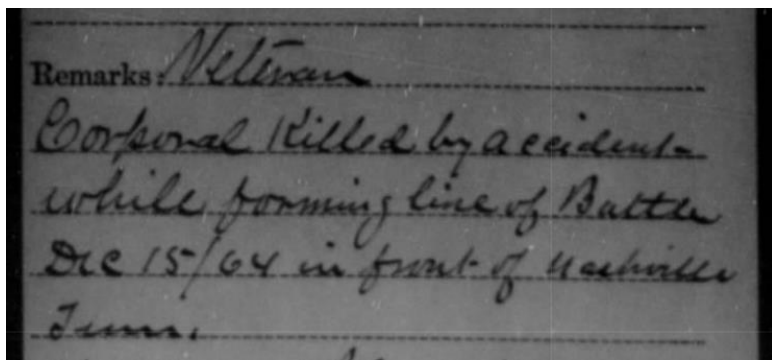
The 26th Kentucky, a part of Couch's division, was a part of the Union assault on the Confederate left.

The line officers of the Twenty-sixth Kentucky, without exception, and the enlisted men, with few exceptions, behaved very gallantly. We lost 2 men killed, besides Cohron, and had 44 wounded, some severely, but the most of them slightly. Captain Hackett, who, as senior line officer, was assisting me in the absence of the lieutenant-colonel and major, and was severely wounded while bravely urging the men forward. The color-bearer, James Scott, was severely wounded in the leg as he ascended the hill, but would not go to the rear until he had planted our regimental flag on the top, and he was among the first there. Lieutenant Brown, acting adjutant, behaved with great gallantry and rendered me great assistance.

I enclose herewith a list of the names of the killed and wounded.

I am, captain, very respectfully, your obedient servant,
 C. MAXWELL, Colonel Twenty-sixth Kentucky Volunteer Infantry.





From the service record of Corporal James Cohron.

Thanks Derrick for letting us use this account.

Books Still Available at the Nashville CWRT This Month!

We appreciate those of you who bought from this great book selection last month! The CWRT needs funds to keep getting in speakers and the book sales go towards that so thank you! The prices for these great books - 50 per cent off or more off retail prices so there's some great deals here for your library! Please keep buying and supporting your CWRT!

We sold a good number of books last month - thank you to those that supported our CWRT!

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