



BATTLE OF  
NASHVILLE  
TRUST

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# December 2025 News

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## Message from the President

We have worked very hard this year to fulfill our mission to “preserve, maintain, and educate”. The results are spectacular, and all of the hard work we have done with your help is paying off.

In terms of "preserve and maintain", you are probably aware that we acquired a little over an acre on the NE corner of Shy's Hill last year, reclaimed it from prior development, and cleared it. This is vitally important as this was the section of the hill over which a portion of McMillen's Federal Brigade charged toward the position held by Finley's Confederate Florida Brigade. Up this hill ran Lt. Charles McCleary leading the 72nd Ohio who outpaced his command and was able to capture the flag of the 4th Florida, an

action for which he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

In addition, we have just recently acquired the Summit of Shy's Hill, which we have maintained for years, but was leased from owned by our friends at the Tennessee Historical Society. As you are probably well aware, the action on Shy's Hill decided the outcome of the Battle of Nashville and sealed the fate of "War in the West" if not the war itself. Acquiring the summit means that we will be able to manage and interpret it much more effectively. We plan to add markers to make "education" and interpretation much more effective on the hill, providing visible interpretation via markers and monuments where none exist currently.

Furthermore, the Trust recently cleared Redoubt No. 1 of some invasive plants and reestablished the view to downtown Nashville. There may be even more acquisition discussions at our annual commemoration event being held on December 13th at Traveller's Rest; make sure that you RSVP for that event!

Lastly, the Trust has acquired in a merger, the Nashville Civil War Roundtable and has committed funding and personnel to build it to a level that Nashville deserves.

We cannot save history without you. It is that simple. Please renew your dues and donate at [www.battleofnashvilletrust.org](http://www.battleofnashvilletrust.org) and come to some of our events. We believe you will enjoy what we do and why we do it. I hope you enjoy the look and content of our new publication.

Thank you for your support.

# **Acquisition Finalized in Huge Victory for Shy's Hill**

*November 2025*

BIG NEWS AT SHY'S HILL -- The Battle of Nashville Trust has made "new history" of its own at Shy's Hill -- by acquiring full and complete ownership of the summit. Adjacent to BONT's 1.35 acre access property on Benton Smith Road, the 2.23 acre summit property was donated by a developer to our friends at the Tennessee Historical Society in 1954. In addition to improving the properties with the interpretive kiosk, field artillery, monuments, and memorial flag display, BONT has maintained the trails on both properties for years.

On Monday, Nov. 25, 2025, the Trust finalized purchase of the THS tract and added it to surrounding properties which it has acquired in an effort to preserve this important ground which is soaked in both blood and history. The BONT now owns a total of 4.65 acres of the remaining 17.69 acres encircled by Benton Smith and Shy's Hill roads. All battlefield land owned and maintained by BONT will continue to be protected from development by a conservation easement through the Land Trust for Tennessee and Tennessee Wars Commission. BONT is thankful for the support of the Tennessee Wars Commission and Tennessee Historical Commission.



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## Annual Members Celebration

*5:30 pm for Cocktails and Hors d'oeuvres*

Please join the Battle of Nashville Trust, Inc., for our annual banquet at Historic Travellers Rest on **December 13, 2025**. The annual meeting will be held on **Saturday at 5:30 pm** at The Barn at Travellers Rest Historic House and Museum. This event will include a special presentation from Board Member, Major General (ret) Bradley T. Gericke, as well as a cocktail hour, hors d'oeuvres, and other exciting festivities.

[Click Here to RSVP](#)

## Major General Bradley T. Gericke

Major General (ret) Bradley T. Gericke earned a commission in armor from the United States Military Academy in 1988. He holds a doctorate from Vanderbilt University and is a graduate of the National War College. He has published numerous essays, several college texts on U.S. and European history, a military biography, and two urban warfare

anthologies. He is currently assembling the collected papers of Chief of Staff of the Army General Ray Odierno.



MG Gericke's Army assignments include service as a company-grade officer in tank battalions of the 3rd Armored Division in Germany and the Persian Gulf (OPERATIONS DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM), and with the 2nd Infantry Division in Korea. He has served as aide-de-camp and speechwriter for the Commanding General, U.S. Army Forces Command; strategist and speechwriter for the Vice Chief of Staff, Army; Deputy Director of the Commanding General's Initiatives Group at Headquarters, Multi-National Force–Iraq in Baghdad (OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM); DoD's team chief for China strategy in the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Policy; Assistant Chief of Staff for Strategy and Plans (G5) at U.S. 8th Army in Seoul, South Korea; and as Director of the Army Plans Group, Office of the Chief of Staff, Army. While a general officer Brad served as Deputy Director, Special Plans Working Group (J5), U.S. Central Command, as Deputy Director (J5) for Policy, Strategy and Plans on the Joint Staff, and as the Director (G35) for Strategy, Plans and Future Operations at Headquarters, Department of the Army.

His military awards include the Army Distinguished Service Medal, the Defense Superior Service Medal (two oak leaf clusters), the Legion of Merit (first oak leaf cluster), and the Bronze Star (first oak leaf cluster).

Brad and his wife Tonya retired in 2022 and now happily call Tennessee home. He continues to support the Army as a Senior Mentor of the Army War College and Strategic Advisor to several defense-related organizations.

# Celebration on the Summit

*December 16th, 2025*

Be part of the 161st anniversary of the Battle of Nashville, where we will hold our annual visit to the Shy's Hill Summit. Every year, we meet at **3:30 pm on December 16th** on the Summit for a tour, remarks, and a celebration.

Join us and bring a friend or two!

## Premier Exhibition for Philip Duer

*December 16th, 2025*

Join us to celebrate board member Philip Duer and his terrific depiction of the Battle of Nashville. The reception will begin at **5:30 pm on December 16th** at Jean and Alexander Heard Central Library on the Vanderbilt Campus. After many years of studying the Battle of Nashville and preserving the battlefield through service with the Battle of Nashville Trust, Philip Duer is preserving history through his

E X H I B I T I O N

Join us for the premier exhibition of Philip William Duer's Paintings of the Battle of Nashville



Opening reception on December 16 at 5:30-7 p.m.  
Central Library, 4th Floor Gallery

Please email [susan.grider@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:susan.grider@vanderbilt.edu) to be added to the invitation list



#### ABOUT THE ARTIST:

Philip Duer, inspired by his long study of the battle, his work in the community and his own combat experiences in Vietnam, retired Nashville lawyer and former president of the Battle of Nashville Preservation Society (now the Battle of Nashville Trust) created the only known collection of paintings of the Battle which include scenes of the famed Charge of the 13th United States Colored Troops (USCT), the fall of Compton's Hill (Now Shy's Hill), the USCT Sentry at Fort Negley, and Redoubt #1.

Sponsored by the Jean and Alexander Heard Libraries. Funded by a grant from the Curb Center at Vanderbilt.  
THE CURB CENTER  
FOR THE INTERESTS AND PUBLIC POLICY AT VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

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Jean and Alexander Heard Libraries

artwork that beautifully illustrates the Battle of Nashville on the 161st anniversary of the battle.

To ensure you are added to the guest list for this event, please confirm by sending an email to [susan.grider@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:susan.grider@vanderbilt.edu).

[Click Here for More Information](#)



## Nashville Civil War Roundtable

*January 20, 2026– Our 174th meeting!!*

*We continue our sixteenth year!*

The next meeting of the Nashville Civil War Roundtable will be held at the **Belmont Mansion** on **Tuesday, January 20, 2026, at 6 pm.**

We are excited to hear from guest speaker Ross Hudgins, who will speak on "Maggie Vaulx and the Great Panic in Nashville". There is [no December meeting](#). More details to follow, and we hope to see you in the new year!

# November's program- “Martha Ready Morgan: From Wife to Widow in 630 Days”

*Presented by Shirley Farris Jones*

Mattie Ready was a woman ahead of her time! Having grown up just down the street from where she lived and was married, I became intrigued with her persona at a very early age. And, in a college history class, she was my subject for a term paper. As my research introduced me to this beautiful and incredible young woman, the more I came to admire her courage and respect her dignity, most of all her strength, in very difficult times and situations. She was truly a most extraordinary young woman for that day and time. The dashing, daring, celebrated General John Hunt Morgan would not have married just anybody. He was from a wealthy, aristocratic Bluegrass Kentucky background and greatly admired throughout the hard-pressed Southland as its most celebrated hero. In her own mid-nineteenth century way Mattie Ready was the bold-riding General's match in every aspect. And “The Thunderbolt of the Confederacy” was captured by her charms and fell in love. for probably the first time in his life with “Murfreesboro's Own Southern Belle.” She found the kinder, gentler, and very loving heart of this great cavalryman and the intense love they shared would change both of their lives forever. Civil War historian, Author, and former WQJZ radio host of "Murfreesboro History 101, Ms. Jones retired from Middle Tennessee State University, where she had been a staff member for more than thirty years. She has served as President of the Rutherford County Historical Society, the Association for the Preservation of Tennessee Antiquities, Friends of Stones River National Battlefield, and the Martha Ready Morgan Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy. She is one of the founding members of both the Friends of Stones River National Battlefield

and the Middle Tennessee Civil War Round Table. In addition, she holds membership in Daughters of the American Colonists, Daughters of the American Revolution, Colonial Dames of the 17th Century, and U.S. Daughters of 1812.

A direct descendant of two Confederate great-grandfathers, she has had numerous Civil War related articles published over the past four decades and is the author of six books. Ms. Jones has done extensive research on Martha Ready Morgan, including work for artist John Paul Strain in 1993 for his limited-edition print, “Morgan’s Wedding.” The role of women of the 19th Century has always been of particular interest, and she has presented programs to various heritage groups, high school students, and teaching classes and lectures on a volunteer basis. Ms. Jones is a lifelong resident of Murfreesboro, a graduate of Knox Business College, Middle Tennessee State University, and Leadership Rutherford. She and her late husband, Jerry Jones were the parents of one son, Jeff, and one grandson, Kyle and her little dogs, Chico and Sitka

We hope you enjoyed this fascinating program last month. We hope to see you again in the new year!

[Click here for Nashville CWRT Newsletter](#)

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## ***History Uncovered on Vanderbilt's Campus***

***November 2025***

Amidst the noise of the never-ending construction on the Vanderbilt University campus, a once-forgotten commemoration of the Battle of Nashville is again visible. Obscured by shrubs until recently, a bronze plaque marking the defensive fortifications of Nashville during the Civil War can be seen on the back of the

Round Wing of the Vanderbilt University Medical Center near the Eskind Biomedical Library and the Zerfoss Student Health Center. Originally set in 1939 by the Vanderbilt Garden Club, this plaque was placed on an earthen mound thought to be the last remnant of the breastworks of the Civil War on Vanderbilt's campus behind what was then the University Chancellor's mansion.

The plaque marked the location of the entrenchments until the early 1960s when both the Chancellor's mansion and the entrenchment were demolished to make way for the Medical Center's Round wing (originally called the West Wing) completed in 1962 and later the Zerfoss Student Health Center. The breastworks it commemorated are mentioned on a Tennessee Historical Commission marker on 21st Ave near Medical Center drive, but shrubs obscured the plaque from view until a clean-up of the landscaping earlier this year revealed the still legible plaque which is now easily visible from the sidewalk behind the Round Wing.



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## Article of the Month

*"Thomas Benton Smith story" From John Banks*

Learn more about the story of Confederate Brigadier General Thomas Benton Smith, and his harrowing tale from becoming the youngest Brigadier General in the Army of Tennessee to his fight at Shy's Hill.



Brigadier General Thomas  
Benton Smith

[Link to Article](#)

## Aerial View of the Battle of Nashville Battlefield

*The heart of Green Hills, where the attack on Redoubt No. 4 occurred.*



Abbott-Martin Road - the 1936 home in the  
center is an attorney named Bruce Shepherd  
- Marshall & Bruce Co.



1985 Aerial View

# Help us preserve the Battle of Nashville Battlefields

As Nashville is growing, more and more of the battlefields are being taken and built upon. Help us preserve our nation's history through your efforts. This would not be possible without your help. Please renew your dues and donate to help our preservation efforts at <https://www.battleofnashvilletrust.org/>.

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## Renew Your Membership

Just a reminder to make sure that you renew your Battle of Nashville Trust membership when it expires. Dues are \$50 per family, \$25 for veterans, and free for students, and with the membership comes 2 tickets for a tour of Travellers Rest and a minié ball. This membership also covers your attendance at the Nashville Civil War Roundtable. If you are not sure when it expires send an email to [bobby@bigboardsports.com](mailto:bobby@bigboardsports.com) and we will check for you. You can also renew on our website at [battleofnashvilletrust.org](http://battleofnashvilletrust.org).

[www.battleofnashvilletrust.org](http://www.battleofnashvilletrust.org)

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