



City of Franklin

Mailing Address:
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Franklin, TN 37064
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Meeting Agenda

Civil War Historical Commission

Thursday, May 14, 2026

8:00 AM

Eastern Flank Event Facility

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Comments on agenda items may be made in person or by emailing PlanningIntake@FranklinTN.gov before noon on the day of the meeting. Emailed comments will be provided to the Commission and included in the minutes, but not read aloud in their entirety during the meeting.

CITIZEN COMMENTS (Open for citizens to be heard on any issue or concern, including those related to items on the agenda. Please submit a Speaker Card at the beginning of the meeting if you would like to address the Commission. If you would like to speak on an agenda item, the Chair will hold your comment until the public comment period associated with the item. As provided by law, the Commission shall make no decisions or consideration of action of citizen comments for items not on the agenda, except to refer the matter to the Planning Director/Staff for administrative consideration, or to a schedule the matter for consideration at a later date. Those addressing the Commission are requested to come to the microphone and identify themselves by name and address for the official record. The Chair may restrict the period for public comment, including the length of the public comment period, the number of individuals who can speak and the length of time each individual may speak. When time allows, the standard individual public comment time is two minutes.)

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APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Consideration Of Approval Of Minutes

ADMINISTRATIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS

NEW BUSINESS

2. Discussion Of Preservation Plan Update
3. Presentations By Organizations

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

4. Historic Parks Audio Tour

5. U.S. Line Markers

COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS

ADJOURN

Anyone needing accommodations due to disabilities please contact the ADA Coordinator at 615-791-3277 at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.



Meeting Minutes

Civil War Historical Commission

Thursday, March 19, 2026

8:00 AM

Eastern Flank Event Facility

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Chair Morreale called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. and took an official roll call.

Commissioners Present: Heather Doleshel, Kelly Kautzman, Alan Simms, Colbi Layne Hogan, Alma McLemore, Bill Macon, Tony Morreale, Tina Jones, Pam Lewis (8:07), Patrick Baggett, Sam Huffman, Marlene Holmes, Mary Pearce (8:03)

Commissioners Absent: Eric Jacobson, Rachael Finch, Ray Eldridge, Eddie DeGarmo, Sean Aiello

Staff Present: Emily Huffer, Elizabeth Bulay, Kelly Dannenfelser, Brian Walker, Lisa Clayton

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This is open for citizens to be heard on any issue or concern. Are there any citizens who would like to speak to the Commission?

Chair Morreale stated, hearing none, we will move on to the next item.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Consideration Of Approval Of Minutes

Sponsors:

Commissioner Simms moved to approve the March 8, 2026, meeting minutes. Commissioner Macon seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously 11-0.

ADMINISTRATIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Huffer thanked everyone for coming to the recent BOMA meeting. Ms. Huffer stated there will be a Preservation Plan meeting coming up on April 28th from 10 am to 11 am at Eastern Flank. Ms. Huffer stated everyone would be sent an Outlook invitation. Ms. Huffer stated they would be joining AAHS Porch Talk at the Library on April 27th and more information would be sent out later.

NEW BUSINESS

2. Discussion Of Carter Hill Park Expansion Concept.

Sponsors: Lisa Clayton

Ms. Clayton stated that as the park expands, the goal is to create a cohesive plan overall of the entire park. Ms. Clayton stated it has been several years since the original master plan was developed. Ms. Clayton stated this is a plan for us to create a budget checklist so that our residents, commissions, and colleagues see an overall master plan. Ms. Clayton stated they will repurpose a roadway, and she named off various groups of people she will go before to show the master plan to. Ms. Clayton referenced the PowerPoint being shown and explained the details of the plan. Ms. Clayton pointed out the section of Strahl Street and a previous conversation with Commissioner Jacobson, which involved removing a portion of Strahl Street and returning to a natural grassy area with water, there would be benches, interpretive signage, and a walking path, so this park will tell a story. Ms. Clayton pointed out what she was discussing on the PowerPoint. Ms. Clayton stated that Strahl Street would not completely go away. Ms. Clayton explained the county currently runs the existing park and she has talked to them about their plan. Ms. Clayton stated that if it didn't happen on the property, it shouldn't go on the property. Ms. Clayton stated she would like feedback from this commission.

Chair Morreale stated he thought Strahl Street going away was a good idea. Chair Morreale requested to know if there has been any talk about satellite parking.

Ms. Clayton stated probably not.

Commissioner Lewis stated she would like to see trees.

Commissioner Doleshel asked whether there was a signal there currently.

Ms. Clayton stated that there was not one at Strahl, but there was one at Cleburne Street and Granbury Street.

Commissioner Baggett stated the Major Throughfare Plan has Cleburne coming down and aligning with Granbury.

Ms. Clayton referenced the projector screen showing where it will be realigned.

Commissioner McLemore stated that this needs to be explained to the people in the neighborhood to try to make sure they understand the plan.

Ms. Clayton stated she did not have a date set yet for a neighborhood meeting, but it would be sometime before June.

Discussion ensued regarding parking at Strahl Street.

Ms. Clayton stated she got a lot of feedback from this meeting that she could use and appreciated the time.

Chair Morreale asked whether any citizens wished to comment on this item.

No one requested to comment.

3. Discussion Of Organization Presentations

Sponsors: Elizabeth Bulay

Ms. Bulay stated this is a concept she has talked to the Chair about in passing, and explained the commission is all part of various organizations, and we would like to spotlight each organization on what you do. Ms. Bulay stated that presenting a presentation would let everyone know what your organization does and could announce upcoming events. Ms. Bulay stated she would have a sign-up sheet.

Chair Morreale stated it would only be for 4 to 5 minutes.

Everyone liked the idea.

Chair Morreale asked whether any citizens wished to comment on this item.

No one requested to comment.

OTHER BUSINESS

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

4. Historic Parks Audio Tour.

Sponsors:

Commissioner Hogan stated that at the last BOMA meeting, we had a great presentation with great questions afterward. Commissioner Hogan stated that at their next meeting, they will be finishing up the scripts and discussing the audio portion of the tour. Commissioner Hogan stated this is the closest it has ever been to being finished.

Chair Morreale asked whether any citizens wished to comment on this item.

No one requested to comment.

5. U.S. Line Marker.

Sponsors:

Ms. Huffer stated that for the line markers, we have talked to Purchasing and the manufacturer to get the process going, to have them installed by June 30th. Ms. Huffer stated they wanted to propose a location for the marker on Natchez Street and get input on it. She stated that we have been able to acquire an easement on one location and another easement on the county's property. The proposed third location is discussed for the Merrill-William Site at 264 Natchez Street.

Commissioner McLemore stated that it was voted on by AAHS, and they agreed that it could be on the property.

Commissioner Baggett asked whether Commissioner Jacobson had been spoken to about this.

Ms. Huffer pointed out the locations on the screen.

Discussion ensued on whether it should be at 264 Natchez or not, or whether one of the other markers should not be placed in its location. It was decided that one on one side of Natchez would not be placed.

Chair Morreale asked whether any citizens wished to comment on this item.

No one requested to comment.

COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Jones stated she was down in Chattanooga last month speaking at the National Medal of Honor Heritage Center and stated they have an enormous display setup for Sergeant George Jordon and suggested if you are in Chattanooga, stop by and see the center.

Commissioner Lewis stated there will be interpretive signage at Bicentennial Park about Benjamin Franklin, and the signs are done and will go up in April.

Commissioner Baggett stated they closed on the property on Columbia Avenue and received grant money. Commissioner Baggett stated that in May, they will be honoring Dr. Van West's retirement.

Commissioner McLemore stated that at 264 Natchez Street, they are finally getting there, and maybe by the end of April, it will be finished. Commissioner McLemore stated that it will most likely be June.

Commissioner Pearce stated that at 264 Natchez, all the old woodwork is being reinstalled and all the old colors are back, so the historic fabric is still there.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:13 AM.

Chair

Date

THE FRANKLIN'S CHARGE STORY



CHP MTSU Center for Historic Preservation
History • Education • Architecture



This 2019 publication is a project of the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area, prepared for Franklin's Charge Inc. Contents are written by Colbi Layne W. Hogan, and Dr. Carroll Van West.

A special thank you to those who provided assistance or agreed to be interviewed: Ernie Bacon, Julian Bibb III, Angela Calhoun, Lisa Clayton, Melanie Crosby, Walker Entwistle, Rachael Finch, Paul Gaddis, Kelly Gilfillan, Roderick Heller, Robert Hicks, Colbi Layne Hogan, Laura Stewart Holder, Sam Huffman, Eric Jacobson, Laurie McPeak, Mary Pearce, Tom Powell, Joanna Stephens, Frances Regan, Chris Robinson, Greg Wade, Deborah Warnick, Stacey Watson, Dr. Carroll Van West, and Christina Willow

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On the Back Cover

Archaeological research at Carter Hill Battlefield Park (Battle of Franklin Trust)

Carter House (Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area)

Deborah Warnick, K. Lynn Berry (National Park Service), and Stacey Watson on the Eastern Flank in 2014 (Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area)

Franklin's Charge members pose on the Holt House porch, 2009 (Franklin's Charge, Inc.)

Julian Bibb speaks at Carter Hill Battlefield (Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area)

Marianne Schroer, Stacey Watson, and Mary Pearce at Carnton (Photo by Will Jordan)

McLemore House Juneteenth Celebration, 2016 (Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area)

Tommy Murdic speaks to local media with Mary Mills (Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area)

On the Front Cover

Angela Calhoun, Deborah Warnick, and Thelma Battle at the demolition of Franklin's Pizza Hut (Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area)

Reenactment at Eastern Flank Battlefield Park during the 2007 Symposium (Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area)

Eastern Flank Battlefield Park (Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area)

Winter at Carter Hill Battlefield Park (Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area)

Carter Hill Battlefield Park (Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area)

Ernie Bacon, a Civil War Trust representative, Robert Hicks, MTSU's Dr. Carroll Van West, Julian Bibb, Rick Warwick, Mike Grainger, and Eric Jacobson at the Columbia Avenue Domino's in 2008 (Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area)

A Vision for Battlefield Reclamation through Community Activism

“Our greatest legacy to this community will be that everyone will forget we did this, and that what they will remember is what happened when those boys, men, came here on Nov. 30, 1864. That’s hopefully what we are laying the foundation for. That someday there will be a seamless piece of land that tells that story.”

– Robert Hicks, Co-founder and President, Franklin’s Chargeⁱ

“Of all the Civil War’s major engagements, the Battle of Franklin is the most unjustly forgotten.”

– Adam Goodheart, *National Geographic*ⁱⁱ

For generations, calls periodically came forth for the preservation of the places associated with the Civil War Battle of Franklin, which happened on November 30, 1864. As the 150th anniversary of that critical, pivotal battle neared, only small portions of the battlefield had been saved. The slow pace of preservation over the decades did not seem to matter—Franklin was a small town and few worried that the past would be paved over. By the last decades of the 20th century, however, Franklin was surging and growth was everywhere, with the past suddenly viewed as a burden, a hindrance for future progress. What to do about the disappearing Franklin battlefield?

Like-minded citizens and organizations banded together on October 21, 2004, to celebrate the incorporation of Franklin’s Charge Inc. This nonprofit organization is devoted not only to the strategic acquisition of the places significantly associated with Franklin’s Civil War history but also to use that open space as a platform for telling the whole story of the Civil War era, a time of death, destruction, and transformation. Franklin’s Charge provides a wide and inviting umbrella under which Civil War enthusiasts, educators, preservationists, tourism officials, and those who simply appreciate history and green space can all gather and work together.

Franklin’s Charge, a reference to the charge made at Carter’s Hill by 20,000 Confederates in the Army of Tennessee—a military maneuver 14 times the size of the infamous Charge of the Light Brigade and twice as long and large as Pickett’s Charge at Gettysburg—hints at the battle’s importance. But what makes the organization unique is that it was not formed to replace any of the independent preservation or historical groups involved; rather, it established one entity that would simplify fundraising efforts and preservation advocacy for battlefield land.

The collective vision extends well beyond preserving pristine battleground to actual battlefield reclamation, where a hundred years of growth and development had displaced historic landscapes, seemingly forever. Now in Franklin, thanks to Franklin’s Charge and its many partners, historic landscapes once considered lost are thought of as “yet to be preserved.” Reclaiming over 150 acres of battleground through public-private partnerships is a remarkable achievement. Today, Civil War sites in Franklin receive more than 100,000 visitors each year and the town is nationally recognized as a unique, special historic environment.

Partnerships, sometimes formal but most often based on conversations and handshakes, are at the core of Franklin's Charge's success. Organizations that have united efforts with Franklin's Charge include:

African American Heritage Society of Williamson County

The Battle of Franklin Trust

City of Franklin

Civil War Trust (now American Battlefield Preservation Trust)

Franklin Tomorrow

Franklin/Williamson County Chamber of Commerce

FranklinIs.com

Harpeth River Watershed (now Harpeth Conservancy)

Heritage Foundation of Franklin and Williamson County
(now The Heritage Foundation of Williamson County)

Land Trust for Tennessee, Inc.

Lotz House

National Trust for Historic Preservation

Save the Franklin Battlefield, Inc.

Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area

Tennessee Civil War Preservation Association

Tennessee Historical Commission

Tennessee Preservation Trust

Williamson County Commission

Williamson County Convention and Visitors Bureau (now Visit Franklin)

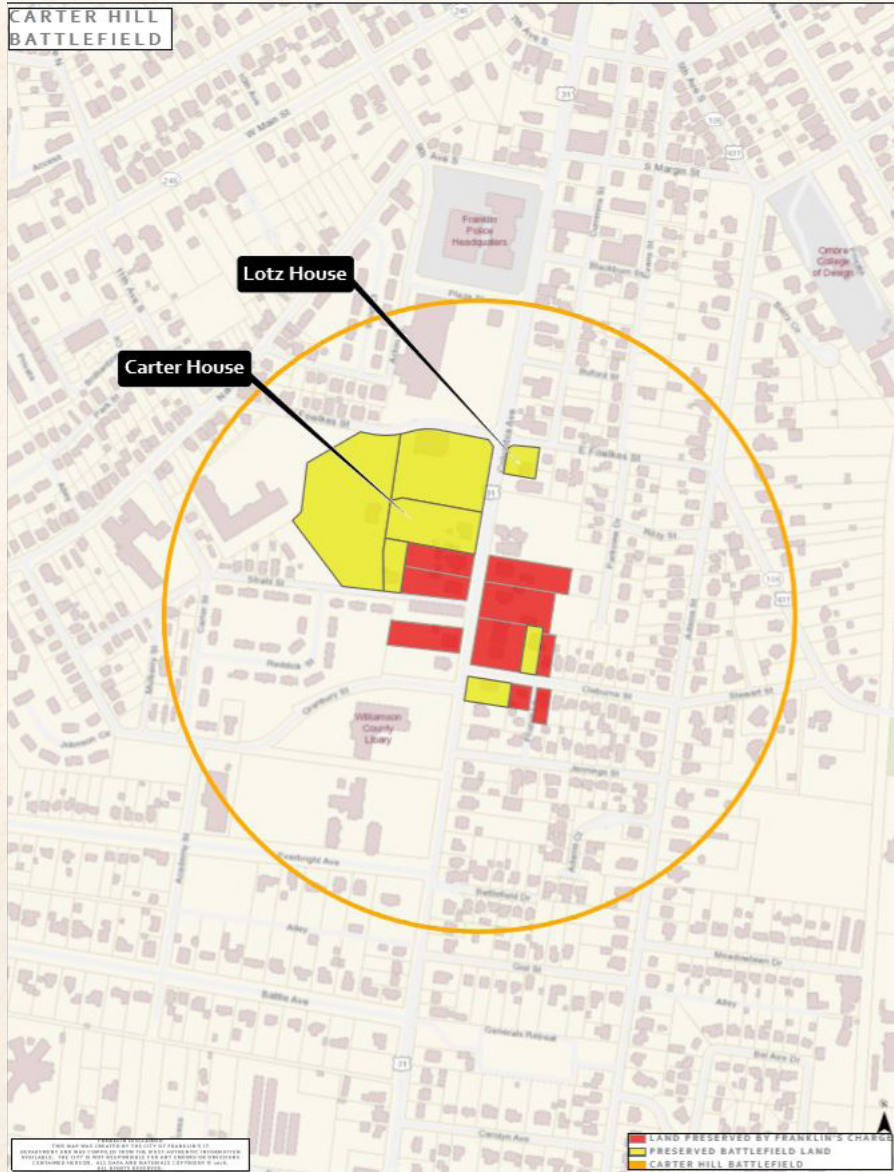


Eastern Flank Battlefield Park (City of Franklin Parks Department)

Why Franklin Matters

“The Battle of Franklin, fought Nov. 30, 1864, was the most destructive of human life, in proportion to the number engaged, of any battle in the four years war. . . . At midnight on the battlefield of Franklin, the finger of destiny was lifted pointing the open road to Appomattox.”

—General Isaac R. Sherwood, 111th Ohio Infantry



Carter Hill Battlefield Park (City of Franklin Parks Department)



Battlefield in front of Franklin, Tennessee, 1874 (Library of Congress)

The Battle of Franklin was a pivotal moment in the American Civil War—and its story continues to shape our understanding of the contested past. After the fall of Atlanta in September 1864, U.S. General William Tecumseh Sherman marched southeast toward Savannah as part of his March to the Sea. Instead of pursuing Sherman, Confederate General John Bell Hood headed northwest to Tennessee with plans to recruit soldiers and reclaim Kentucky for the Confederacy. Hood's Army of Tennessee faced several skirmishes throughout northern Alabama and southern Middle Tennessee before meeting U.S. General John M. Schofield's troops head-on at Franklin, Tennessee, where five of the war's bloodiest hours wreaked havoc on soldiers, the town, and memory.

With plans to continue to Nashville, Union troops arrived in Franklin as day broke on November 30, 1864. However, damaged bridges along the Harpeth River slowed their movement, and Schofield commanded the entrenchment of his troops until the bridges were repaired. Around 4:00 p.m., 20,000 Confederate troops traveling north from Spring Hill advanced on the federal lines. Despite discouragement voiced from other officers, Hood launched the Army of Tennessee in a frontal attack against the entrenched Union troops. A brutal, chaotic battle ensued as night fell and many soldiers engaged in hand-to-hand combat. That evening, the Confederate attack almost succeeded at Carter Hill, but instead the Army of Tennessee was left decimated, with approximately 8,000 casualties and the deaths of six generals: Otho French Strahl, John Adams, John C. Carter, Hiram Granbury, Patrick Cleburne, and States Rights Gist. The Army of Tennessee was only a shell of its former self, and two weeks later after the Battle of Nashville, major fighting in Tennessee and the western theater of the Civil War was over.

The battle drastically affected civilian life in Franklin as some 30 homes and buildings, such as the Masonic Hall and the Courthouse, were used as makeshift hospitals. For African Americans, the end of the war a few months later provided opportunity, a life free from enslavement. Out of the ashes of war would come a new community, drastically altered from its antebellum glory.

"The battle is a pivotal moment in the Civil War, when one of the South's great armies, the Army of Tennessee, was crushed and battered, effectively bringing to an end the war in the western theater. Today the battle reminds us of how transformative the Civil War was to America, to Southern society, and to our own neighborhoods and landscapes."

—Dr. Carroll Van West, Tennessee State Historianⁱⁱⁱ

Past Efforts to Preserve the Franklin Battlefield, 1880–2002

In the late 19th century, veterans, citizens, and government officials formed commissions that petitioned to save battlefields across the United States. In Franklin, citizens erected a cenotaph to honor Confederate General Patrick Cleburne in the late 1880s. Nevertheless, by 1906 the cenotaph was dismantled and replaced with suburban homes. Twice during the first two decades of the 20th century, Franklin residents like Tennie Pinkerton Dozier, a founding member of the local chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC), appealed to U.S. representatives and senators for the establishment of a national battlefield park at Franklin. However, Congress never approved funding to acquire property in Williamson County, and in the subsequent decades more development occurred on Franklin's battlefield as U.S. legislators began to focus on the world wars and economic depression.

In 1948, the UDC received the donation of the Winstead Hill Ridge, acquiring the point where the Confederate attack began. In 1951, the Tennessee Historical Commission purchased the Carter House. A generation later, in 1971, the City of Franklin bought the Union occupation base, Fort Granger, as part of a new city park. In 1978, Carnton Plantation and 38 acres of surrounding land were deeded to the Carnton Association, which in 1983 transferred it to the state government to serve as a second historic site in Franklin. More had happened to preserve the battlefield in these 30 years than in the eight decades before.

When the 125th anniversary of the battle came in 1989, those disjointed parcels were all Franklin had of the battlefield. So much had been seemingly lost forever. Several houses, a pizza joint, and a small shopping center covered the point of heaviest fighting at Carter Hill. Concerned citizens formed Save the Franklin Battlefield, Inc., to interject new hope for battlefield preservation, and by 1992 the group had saved its first parcel—a lunette, part of Fort Granger—at the junction of Mack Hatcher Parkway and Liberty Pike. That year also began a series of local conferences on battlefield preservation, which started to attract greater interest from local government and nonprofits.



Union and Confederate veterans pose in front of the bullet-riddled Carter smokehouse during the battle's 50th anniversary reunion in 1914. (Battle of Franklin Trust)

Citizens understood the time for preservation was now because everyone could see Franklin's booming growth in the 1990s. Before the century was over, Franklin's municipal government added 63 adjacent acres to Winstead Hill Ridge to become a city park. The Heritage Foundation of Franklin and Williamson County purchased Roper's Knob, an Union signal station, as well as the property where the Carter Cotton Gin once stood and much of Franklin's decisive fighting occurred. In 2001, Save the Franklin Battlefield acquired the Collins Farm, another important 3.22 acres of battlefield.

Then came the controversy over the construction of a new library on former battleground near the Carter House along Columbia Avenue. Mary Pearce, Executive Director of the Heritage Foundation, led an effort to save this battlefield land but later admitted her supporters lacked political power and access to turn the tide in favor of battlefield preservation.

The 21st century brought new voices and a focused yet broader vision of what battlefield preservation could mean for Franklin. In 2002, the Civil War Trust (CWT) held a Franklin event where leadership called for a more aggressive preservation effort. The initiative had immediate results as the Lotz House, a core battlefield property, was privately purchased and later opened as a historic site. Also in 2002, the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area, based at Middle Tennessee State University's Center for Historic Preservation, gained federal funding to support Franklin and brought invaluable strategy, research, and advocacy to the local efforts from that point forward. Then, former Franklin mayor Lillian Stewart convinced a slate of preservation-minded residents to run for office. In 2003, Pam Lewis, Dennis Phillips, and Robert Kriebel were elected as new aldermen, joining re-elected incumbent Ernie Bacon and creating a new majority on the Board of Mayor and Aldermen in support of preservation. Tom Miller, another strong preservation voice, was selected as mayor. But was it too late to save the Franklin Battlefield?

Into the Breach: The Fight for the Eastern Flank, 2003–2005

The emerging alliances of local leaders, nonprofit activists, and the Heritage Area proved timely once it was announced in 2003 that the Franklin Country Club golf course—more than 110 acres of open space next to Carnton and its cemeteries—would be sold and converted into a suburb. The prospect of homes and swimming pools standing next door to Civil War tombstones horrified so many, but to take control of the land, it would cost—the asking price started at \$7 million.



8 Robert Hicks speaks to preservation supporters in 2013. (Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area)

If the Franklin Battlefield had been endangered for years, it now was on life support. Leaders at Carnton, Board President Robert Hicks and Executive Director Angela Calhoun, first stood up to be counted. Hicks, Calhoun, and a host of supporters and consultants had transformed the historic site in the prior years; they had no intention of letting out-of-control development overwhelm what had been achieved. Hicks immediately began reaching out to friends and partners; one meeting on the Carnton porch included Angela Calhoun, Nashville attorney Warner Bass, Alderman Ernie Bacon, and real estate agent Danny Anderson. Mary Pearce and Rick Warwick of the Heritage Foundation of Franklin and Williamson County provided preservation advocacy and history research expertise. The group quickly united in an effort to save the Eastern Flank Battlefield, what historically-minded locals called the land currently occupied by the golf course. They excitedly began recruiting others to form a coalition of preservationists, conservationists, and political leaders.

The first important recruits were Julian Bibb III, a Stites & Harbison attorney who had been involved in several preservation projects in the past, and Stacey Watson, the Stites Director of Community Development. Bacon approached Bibb, who demurred until he could talk with a group of African American pastors and gain their support. Bibb and Watson had been working with the pastors and others on important racial reconciliation projects. They viewed the Civil War story as a platform to reconsider what freedom meant in the past and what it means today. Hicks reached out to Tom Murdic, an African American civic and political leader, who joined the voices saying that telling the whole story of the Civil War era was just as important as saving Civil War battlefields.

Then, in June 2003 came Kay and Roderick Heller, who joined a core group of preservationists meeting at Carnton. Hicks invited the Washington, D.C., couple to support the cause. Roderick Heller was the great-grandson of Carnton's Civil War owners John and Carrie McGavock along with being founding chair of the Civil War Trust and former vice chair of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Hicks and Kay Heller knew each other through their associations with the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts. The Hellers understood the urgency of the situation facing Franklin. Concerned that plans to fundraise the entire purchase price would fail, Heller said he would give the preservationists two years to raise the money by purchasing the property outright and holding it. He negotiated with the golf course owner for five months before offering the owner's asking price of \$5 million. With no counteroffers, the Hellers' proposal was accepted and the property was officially transferred on November 1, 2003.



Kay and Roderick Heller (Courtesy of Roderick Heller)

The Hellers "really saw the value of this for our nation. They got it that this is not only Heller's family story. This is an American story."

—Robert Hicks, Co-founder and President, Franklin's Charge^{iv}

Now it was time for the citizens of Franklin and preservationists from across the country to do their part. And the clock was ticking. As leaders quietly began raising money, the public campaign to announce Franklin's Charge began in August 2004 with a kickoff party at Carnton, hosted by honorary chairs Amy Grant and Vince Gill, that raised \$40,000. By September, pledges reached approximately \$925,000. Then Franklin Mayor Tom Miller announced that the city would match \$2.5 million. Miller also established the Battlefield Preservation Task Force in 2003, which later became the city's official Battlefield Preservation Commission. The commission would eventually hold monthly public meetings, advise local leaders on preservation issues, and serve as a pass-through organization to receive grant money for battlefield reclamation and interpretation.

Miller's actions as mayor in 2003–04 certainly had immediate and long-term impacts, but he could not bind the city to \$2.5 million without the approval of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen, which came in March 2005. Such public support for battlefield reclamation was unprecedented in Tennessee, if not the nation. But city leaders understood that battlefield reclamation, if done right, not only preserved history, it also created new heritage tourism opportunities and promised to reinforce Franklin's reputation as a community where quality of life truly matters.

On March 29, 2005, Franklin's Charge organized a breakfast at The Factory to celebrate and then push harder—passing the bucket raised another \$40,000—because the clock was still ticking to meet the Hellers' \$5 million asking price. Richard Moe, President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, proclaimed that Franklin was “a model of what grass-roots preservation can do to strengthen a community's economy without sacrificing the qualities that make it unique, appealing and livable.”^v

“I was impressed that the community realized that the tourism would have a ripple effect benefit on the community, not just in terms of adding jobs and adding prosperity but that it would have a positive impact on the school system.”

—Martha Teichner, Reporter, *CBS News Sunday Morning*^{vi}

Next month came new national publicity for what had been a local effort. In the April 2005 issue of *National Geographic*, journalist Adam Goodheart compared Franklin's importance to that of more broadly known battles such as Gettysburg and Antietam and praised the efforts then ongoing in the city. *National Geographic* initially planned to give Franklin a brief mention, but when staffers learned of the breath and vision of Franklin's efforts, Goodheart visited the city. Hicks and Bibb joined him for lunch and introduced him to several local leaders involved with Franklin's Charge.

Later, when *National Geographic* invited groups from Fredericksburg, Manassas, and other battlefields included in Goodheart's article to discuss preservation with Congress, attendees from Franklin—Hicks, Bibb, and Miller, joined by the Hellers from Washington—were the only ones asked to talk about what they were doing locally.

By now many had stepped up and supported the cause. Under the leadership of county commissioners Mary Brockman and Judy Hayes, Williamson County provided \$10,000 from its tourism budget. Organizations with representation on Franklin's Charge's board each supplied their donor lists so that all the preservation and historical groups could collectively fund the project. Members of Save the Franklin Battlefield, led by Sam Gant and Sam

Huffman, pledged over \$24,000, while a concert headlined by Nashville entertainers Gill and Grant raised \$10,000. The National Park Service's American Battlefield Protection Program contributed \$500,000 and the Civil War Trust added \$350,000.

Detractors remained, wanting to keep the golf course open. Those who complained about the possible public funding failed to understand how battlefield parks are and have been funded in Franklin. The city does not use funds from its general account. Rather, it uses the local hotel tax, which is greatly increased by heritage tourism. The more impactful heritage sites, in other words, the more hotel tax would be generated by visitors. Golf club advocates hoped that preservationists were unsuccessful since the Hellers had continued to keep the course open—because their financial risk in purchasing the property was considerable—until the private-public funding goal had been achieved.

On April 28, 2005, Congressman Marsha Blackburn and Senators Bill Frist and Lamar Alexander introduced the Franklin National Battlefield Study Act in which Congress authorized a special resource study of Civil War sites from Spring Hill to Franklin to consider whether any of the properties should become National Park Service units. Almost everyone welcomed the federal government interest, but several leaders understood that the likelihood of a federal intervention was slim since the National Park Service was already underfunded. The study, released three years later, did not recommend the creation of a new National Park Service unit but strongly encouraged the Franklin partners to work closely with the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area, a directive that has spurred a close working partnership between Williamson County battlefield preservation efforts and the Heritage Area ever since.

While the federal government stepped away, local government moved forward. Efforts to reclaim battlefield land on Columbia Avenue became the joint target of the city and the partners of Franklin's Charge. Fortunately, several parcels of land near the Carter House had already been preserved by various groups such as the Heritage Foundation, Save the Franklin Battlefield, Carter House Association, and City of Franklin. In August 2004—when Franklin's Charge was planning the launch of its public fundraising campaign—the city issued a letter of intent to purchase the Columbia Avenue Pizza Hut property and convert it to parkland for interpreting the fight at the Carter Cotton Gin. The city's historic preservation planner, Shannon Shea Miller, played an important role in the negotiations and plans for park development. A year later, the city purchased the almost half-acre lot for \$300,000. On November 30, 2005, just hours before the city formally closed on the Eastern Flank Battlefield property, the 141st anniversary of the Battle of Franklin was commemorated at the Pizza Hut site with bulldozers. Mayor Tom Miller, U.S. Representative Lincoln Davis, historian Thomas Cartwright, and national and local preservationists spoke before the mayor symbolically took a sledgehammer to the building.



Hicks' *The Widow of the South*

By late 2005, the momentum for preservation in Franklin came from many directions. The release of Hicks' *The Widow of the South* in September caused a spike in interest as readers from near and far became acquainted with Carrie McGavock and the Battle of Franklin. The book spent eight weeks on *The New York Times* bestseller list, and its effects on heritage tourism in Franklin remain visible today since visitors still come to Franklin because they have read Hicks' compelling novel. Now and for years to come, Franklin's Charge continued to broaden its support and audience by bringing in educators such as Stuart Tutler from New Hope Academy and Shanna Jackson from Columbia State Community College and respected business/community leaders like Juanita Patton, Joe Cashia, and Steve Gebhardt.



Top: Franklin's Pizza Hut before demolition (Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area)

Middle: City Preservation Planner Shannon Shea Miller at the demolition of Franklin's Pizza Hut (Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area)

Bottom left: Carter Hill Battlefield Park, 2009 (Franklin's Charge, Inc.)

Bottom right: Reenactors watch as the Pizza Hut is razed. (Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area)

Despite the upswing in support and interest, the \$2.5 million match for the city's funding was not in hand. Bibb spoke with six local banks to join the community partnership. First Tennessee Bank, National City Bank, Pinnacle Bank, SunTrust Bank, Regions Bank, and AmSouth Bank all agreed to donate \$25,000 in addition to providing loans for the remaining debt of \$1.35 million with no collateral. Franklin's Charge Treasurer Tom Powell's management of these complicated partnerships was masterful. Now with over 400 individual donors, Franklin's Charge was ready to put up \$2.5 million to match the city's grant and purchase the Eastern Flank Battlefield from the Hellers. In December 2005, the couple closed the deal for the purchase price of \$5 million less their \$100,000 personal contribution. Critical to the transaction was the placement of conservation easements on the battlefield by the Hellers. The Tennessee Historical Commission, Land Trust for Tennessee, and National Trust for Historic Preservation held the easements.

What happened in Franklin between 2003 and 2005 has been called a miracle by some preservationists. It was never that. Rather it is a testament of how public and private partners can work together and create new opportunities for their community. The great umbrella that is Franklin's Charge allowed private groups and government agencies to work to their strengths, and their combined effort left a permanent preservation legacy and a transformed community. No miracle—just hard work and total community commitment.

From Reclamation to New Understandings, 2005–2014

On the Eastern Flank, the transformation of golf course to Civil War park did not happen overnight, which frustrated many. Some residents of the neighborhood surrounding the former Carnton Country Club did not care for the prospect of looking out to a decaying, abandoned golf course and tennis courts. Lisa Clayton, City Parks Director, was instrumental in helping residents and former country club members find common ground with the city. Her department began removing elements of the club and golf course and transformed the old clubhouse into a public event space. Once the community saw Clayton was not only listening but also acting on their concerns, plans for a new park became more palatable since the vision for a battlefield park became much clearer, especially after the city released a 2008 park master plan prepared by John Milner and Associates.



Cart path removal at the Country Club of Franklin (City of Franklin Parks Department)



Former swimming pool at the Country Club of Franklin (City of Franklin Parks Department)



Eastern Flank Battlefield Park (Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area)

Skeptics remained, claiming that nothing significant happened on the Eastern Flank, that indeed what happened in Franklin during the Civil War really was not that important. In response, Franklin's Charge approached the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area and the Williamson County Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) for support. Together the three groups, led by Stacey Watson, Laura Stewart Holder, and Deborah Warnick, respectively, decided to host and fund a series of symposiums under the banner "Why Franklin Matters!" The concept was simple: There would be sessions from professional historians and national preservationists combined with boots-on-the-ground experiences at key points within the Franklin battlefield. To make it happen, Franklin's Charge, the Heritage Area, and the CVB relied on their partnerships with such key stakeholders as the city of Franklin, Heritage Foundation of Franklin and Williamson County, Save the Franklin Battlefield, Tennessee Historical Commission, Tennessee Civil War Preservation Association, Tennessee Preservation Trust, Civil War Trust, and heritage groups from throughout the county. A grant from Middle Tennessee Electric Membership Corporation and scholarships donated by Hicks allowed area teachers and local authors to attend the weekend's events free of charge.

The first symposium, "Why Franklin Matters: Exploring the Preservation and Interpretation of Franklin's Civil War Story," took place in June 2007. Over 200 attendees learned about Franklin's significance during the Civil War era through roundtable discussions, luncheons, and lectures. The Eastern Flank Battlefield was highlighted during living history events organized by Bobby Hargrove, Sam Huffman, and Save the Franklin Battlefield, as well as during a special dinner event hosted on the property. Attendees also took a six-hour tour of the battlefield, stopping at the Harrison, Carter, and McLemore houses; Winstead Hill; Fort Granger; Carnton; Confederate Cemetery; and Eastern Flank Battlefield.

Attendees also gained insight about the battlefield's heritage tourism potential. Susan Whitaker, Tennessee's Commissioner of Tourism, and State Representative Steve McDaniel shared Franklin's unique battlefield reclamation story and discussed its heritage tourism potential. Whitaker and McDaniel were instrumental in bringing the marker program of



Fisk University's Dr. Reavis Mitchell and the Heritage Area's Dr. Antoinette van Zelm at the 2007 Symposium (Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area)

Civil War Trails, Inc. to Tennessee. The trail became a key part of the city's heritage tourism efforts in the years to come. The symposium not only demonstrated the national significance of Franklin's Civil War story, but also began to advocate for other communities to adapt the Franklin model to their own preservation projects.

Efforts to educate did not stop with the 2007 symposium. The year also marked the formation of the Franklin Civil War Round Table, established after Landmark Booksellers' owner Joel Tomlin approached Civil War enthusiast and author Greg Wade about starting a book club. The group quickly outgrew its meeting space at the bookstore and relocated to the Williamson County Library in May 2008. With continued growth and interest from the community, the Round Table began hosting monthly speakers. In 2009, Hicks approached Wade about the group joining Franklin's Charge. The two decided that both organizations would mutually benefit from merging. Since that time, the Round Table has served as the educational wing of Franklin's Charge, and its members have sponsored preservation projects like the erection of the Hollow Tree Gap historical marker. The Round Table continues to organize tours to other Tennessee Civil War battlefields sites and host lectures from renowned historians, authors, former U.S. ambassadors, and high-ranking military officers who focus primarily on Tennessee but also touch on a wide range of topics telling the whole story of the Civil War era. In less than 10 years, the Franklin Civil War Round Table has become one of the largest and most active in the nation.

Despite all of these education efforts, a few continued to claim that nothing happened on the Eastern Flank. In 2008, to put those issues to rest, the city of Franklin hired archaeologist Larry McKee and TRC Environmental to excavate portions of the 110-acre property for

\$46,184. McKee's team discovered approximately 15 Minié balls and a pre-20th-century well. Opponents claimed that the artifacts were staged. Lisa Clayton rebuked that claim by stating those in the parks department had "better things to do than hide bullets."^{vii}

The success of the first symposium fed the second gathering a year later. The theme was "Fighting for the Middle Tennessee Heartland," a strategy to emphasize

to participants and attendees the importance and the preservation needs of many related battlefields associated with the Civil War in Tennessee. In 2008 Mitch Bowman of Civil War Trails, Inc. and heritage tourism consultant Carole Morris joined such noted historians as Earl Hess, Chris Losson, and Sam Elliott in various panels. The attendees then visited key properties in Thompson's Station, Franklin, and Murfreesboro before concluding with an evening walk through the re-enactor camp on the Eastern Flank Battlefield, followed by a reception and dinner at Carnton.

With historic and archaeological evidence on the table and the park master plan completed, the city, Franklin's Charge, the Tennessee Historical Commission, and the Heritage Area



Angela Calhoun, Julian Bibb, and Ernie Bacon at Murfreesboro's Heritage Center during the 2008 symposium (Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area)

asked state government to step up. In 2008 the state's Tennessee Heritage Conservation Trust Fund, under the administration of Governor Phil Bredesen granted Franklin's Charge \$900,000 toward the cost of the Eastern Flank Battlefield Park. Three years later, Governor Bill Haslam joined Franklin Mayor Ken Moore and John Schroer, Tennessee's Commissioner of Transportation, at Carnton to announce his administration's grant of \$500,000 for the Eastern Flank's loop road project. The City of Franklin allocated

\$369,000 for the 1-mile road that connects Carnton to Lewisburg Pike, bypassing Carnton Lane and the Heath Place subdivision that was previously the only way for tens of thousands of annual visitors to reach Carnton or the park. The loop road not only created a safer way to enter the park but also restored Carnton's historic entrance.



Greg Wade leads a tour group in Thompson Station, May 2, 2015. (Franklin Civil War Round Table)

In between the two state grants came a local development, creating a secure institutional base for both the preservation and interpretation of the Franklin Battlefield, which has shaped so much of the work of the current decade. Deborah Warnick, the Williamson County CVB cultural heritage tourism director, hired a consultant to discuss how Civil War sites in Franklin might work together more effectively. She described the process of bringing the Carter House and Historic Carnton, Inc. together as the work of many people behind the scenes. In June 2008, both Thomas Cartwright and Angela Calhoun, influential executive directors who led the Carter House and Carnton, had recently resigned, thus providing a logical time to make changes regarding the two historic house museums. So, Warnick gathered preservation leaders Tom Murdic, Marianne Schroer, Joe Smyth, Robert Hicks, and Eric Jacobson at Green's Grocery in Leiper's Fork where they met with Magellan Group consultant Chris Cavanaugh. After agreeing that Carter House and Carnton should come together, the two groups held joint meetings with their staff and boards for 13 months.

On August 20, 2009, the boards from the Carter House Association and Historic Carnton, Inc. each unanimously chose to create a new nonprofit, the Battle of Franklin Trust, to manage the sites. Jenny Esler served as the organization's first CEO until February 2011, followed by Eric Jacobson, who remains at this crucial leadership post today. Detractors were in full voice, directing most of their venom at Jacobson and Board President Marianne Schroer throughout the sesquicentennial, the 150th anniversary of the American Civil War. Jacobson managed all three groups individually at their monthly board meetings until December 2015, when the Trust officially became a successor organization for the dissolved boards of the Carter House and Carnton. The timing was perfect because by that date the Eastern Flank Battlefield was a reality attracting tens of thousands each year and the prospect of a downtown Civil War park was nearing the finish line. Franklin's Charge always focused on acquiring key properties; the Battle of Franklin Trust has the expertise and staffing to manage these lands as well-interpreted battlefield parks and museums.



Markers at the Eastern Flank Battlefield Park (Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area)

After receiving multiple grants from the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area for \$240,000, local historians Dr. Thomas Flagel, Eric Jacobson, and Rick Warwick worked with Heritage Area staff to interpret the Eastern Flank Battlefield with 20 interpretive markers and three kiosks that detail the 1864 Battle of Franklin as well as the McGavock family and enslaved laborers who lived and worked at Carnton. On April 3, 2014, the Eastern Flank Battlefield Park was formally dedicated. Franklin's Charge initial mission was complete, but for some years already, attention had been focused on reclaiming the Carter Hill Battlefield. Let's turn our attention there.

Carter Hill Battlefield Park, 2008–19

"The reason battlefield preservation and reclamation works in Franklin is because our groups are working toward the same goal, telling the whole story of the American Civil War, as it impacted Franklin. The cooperation here has been just incredible. We know we have a lot of work to do, but, we are very excited about our progress."

—Julian Bibb III, Co-founder, Former President, and Director Emeritus,
Franklin's Charge^{viii}

Franklin's Charge knew that more needed to be accomplished downtown. Besides the Tennessee Historical Commission's protection and extension of the Carter House museum and the Pizza Hut demolition in 2005, little had been accomplished outside of the successful nomination of the adjacent Natchez Street neighborhood to the National Register. Alderman Pearl Bransford, historian Thelma Battle, and city preservation planner Shannon Shea Miller encouraged MTSU's Center for Historic Preservation (CHP) to undertake the project. Laura Stewart Holder and CHP Director Dr. Carroll Van West finished the project in 2003, and this historic African American neighborhood on the edge of the downtown battlefield was listed the following year. Then, right before the second "Why Franklin Matters!" symposium in 2008, a property owner opened a new door of opportunity, and Franklin's Charge stepped right in.

At that time, Franklin's Charge president Paul Gaddis learned of available prime battlefield land at 1219 Columbia Avenue, facing the Carter House museum. The circa 1900 Queen Anne house had been converted into offices for Kenneth Holt Construction Company. Gaddis reported to the board that owner Barbara Lehew Holt was willing to sell the property for \$950,000. By September 17, 2008, Franklin's Charge closed the deal with the owner. Now came the fundraising. Grants ranged from \$5,000 from the Tennessee Civil War Preservation Association to \$492,000 from the National Park Service's Land and Water Conservation Fund. The CHP documented the property for its architectural significance. After Michael Lee of Lee Restoration removed what was salvageable, the unstable portion of the house was demolished. Franklin's Charge paid off the final \$125,000 through private donations and celebrated with a note-burning ceremony in December 2011.

As the fundraising for the Holt property moved forward, Sarah Faye Fudge of Katy, Texas, agreed to sell the site of her childhood home at 111 Cleburne Street, another crucial part of the Carter Hill Battlefield. With a \$99,500 grant from the American Battlefield Protection Program, Franklin's Charge purchased the Fudge Property on June 24, 2010 for \$199,000. "The Rascals," a group of Civil War Trust members including attorney Warner Bass, who was instrumental in forming Franklin's Charge, donated \$100,000 for the acquisition. Additional



*Holt House
(Tennessee Civil
War National
Heritage Area)*

funding for the Fudge House came from a \$150,000 grant previously awarded to Franklin's Charge by the Civil War Trust, which also was used to help pay down debt owed on the Holt House property. Also similar to the Holt House, once preservationists reclaimed historic features from the Fudge House, local businessman Ron Crutcher hired a crew to demolish what remained.

The removal of properties opened the door for battlefield archaeology. In 2010, the Tennessee Wars Commission granted Franklin's Charge a \$34,000 grant that was used to survey the family garden site at the Carter House. Four years later, additional archaeological explorations, funded by Franklin's Charge via a \$20,000 grant from the Tennessee Wars Commission, led to the unveiling of Union trench lines at the Carter Cotton Gin site.



*Dr. Thomas Flagel and his student assistants cleaning up the
cotton gin site, September 5, 2014 (Franklin's Charge, Inc.)*

The momentum for a Carter Hill Battlefield Park took a huge step forward in late 2011. After two years of discussion, Hicks successfully negotiated with owner Donnie Cameron to sell his commercial strip and Domino's Pizza property on Columbia Avenue. Julian Bibb worried that Franklin's Charge was over-extended and felt the organization should pay off its existing debt first. Hicks saw Cameron's offer to sell as too important to delay. He returned to Bibb's office the next day with a check from an anonymous donor for \$250,000. The ball was rolling on the next great campaign of Franklin's Charge. The Civil War Trust offered the challenge of an additional \$250,000 grant if Franklin's Charge could raise a total of \$500,000 by May 30, 2012. Franklin's Charge supporters loved such a challenge. The Hellers donated \$40,000. Local business owners Marilyn and Calvin Lehew contributed \$200,000. Another \$30,000 was raised in a most creative way: Mary Pearce's idea to sell \$1,000 pizzas was a hit among community members. Many five-year pledges and donations of various amounts allowed Franklin's Charge to meet Cameron's offer. The Franklin's Charge all-volunteer board, in addition to countless hours of administrative and legal work donated by Bibb and the staff at Stites & Harbison, allowed the group to focus money on the mission itself.

The will and money were there, but the way to success proved difficult. Obtaining state funding for the project was uncertain since minority-owned businesses were tenants of the commercial strip. Stacey Watson recalled this issue as one of the most difficult she faced while solving so many problems for Franklin's Charge. But as was true in so many situations, Watson solved the displacement issue and the project moved forward. With her dogged determination and expertise, Watson solved a career's worth of challenges for Franklin's Charge throughout the years.



Carter Hill Battlefield Park before the removal of Domino's and other buildings (Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area)

On December 5, 2012, Mark and Joy Neel sold a small lot at 108 Cleburne Street for \$230,000. The removal of the Neel House opened a critical perspective on the Carter Hill attack and provided affordable housing for Franklin residents at its new location on West Main Street. A true win-win.



Cotton Gin Park (Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area)

Then, two weeks later, Franklin's Charge and the Civil War Trust closed on the strip center, for \$1.85 million. As planned, Domino's and other tenants who rented commercial spaces from Cameron Properties remained until they could relocate. With this accomplished,

the Heritage Area and Civil War Trust gathered all of the downtown stakeholders at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in 2013. This full discussion of the vision and strategy moving forward reminded everyone that land had been preserved but now the downtown park had to be developed wisely and following the Heritage Area's mantra of "telling the whole story" of the Civil War era. The strip center was demolished on November 26, 2014, just in time for the Battle of Franklin sesquicentennial commemoration. Civil War Trust Chair Mike Grainger, a resident of Williamson County who played a critical role in engaging the national preservation organization in Franklin's efforts for years, led the speakers when the community gathered to celebrate the demolition of Domino's on April 22, 2015.

The effort to reclaim as much of the Carter's Hill Battlefield as possible did not rest. In May 2014, Franklin's Charge joined forces with the Battle of Franklin Trust to purchase two tracts—known as the Lovell properties—totaling 1.6 acres at 1152 and 1164 Columbia Avenue for \$2.8 million. The groups received \$200,000 from the Civil War Trust, a \$100,000 donation from Donna and Mike Grainger, as well as financial support from the city of Franklin, the American Battlefield Protection Program, and other donations from local citizens.



Franklin Flower and Gift Shop (Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area)

Reid and Brenda Lovell's properties included the Franklin Flower and Gift Shop, established by his father prior to 1980, and the Williamson County Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) office. The MTSU Center for Historic Preservation documented the properties, and then the buildings were offered free of charge to anyone willing to relocate them. Franklin resident Robanne Legan moved the former CASA office and an outbuilding to her farm off of Southall Road in November 2016. Legan also salvaged windows and other historic features from the former flower shop before the building was razed.

On June 30, 2014, a month after the Lovell tracts were secured, the Civil War Trust worked together with Franklin's Charge to acquire 0.2 acres at 110 Cleburne Street, a property previously owned by Maggie Louise Eley. After the \$240,000 purchase, a conservation easement was approved by the Tennessee Historical Commission to ensure preservation of the Eley Tract, which was later transferred to the City of Franklin once the Eley house was razed in 2017.

By 2016, it was time to formally create the Carter Hill Battlefield Park. In February, the Franklin Board of Mayor and Aldermen approved the transfer of preserved battlefield land from Franklin's Charge and the Battle of Franklin Trust to the city on February 10, 2016. In exchange for the land, valued at \$6.8 million, the city contributed \$1.5 million toward the Lovell Tract debt, which was paid using Franklin's hotel tax over the course of seven years. To aid the acquisition, Chuck Isaacs from First Farmers and Merchants Bank organized the loans and oversaw the bank's \$25,000 donation. Once the land transfers were finalized, the parks department graded the land, removed unwanted vegetation, and designed walkways. The Tennessee National Civil War Heritage Area created and funded markers and exhibit installations, working with Eric Jacobson at the Battle of Franklin Trust. The almost 20-acre Carter Hill Battlefield Park included the Lovell, Holt, Fudge, Neel, and Cameron properties; the Blue House (preserved by the Heritage Foundation in 1997); and Carter Gardens (preserved by the Carter House Association in 2006).



Mayor Ken Moore and Julian Bibb III at the 2016 Carter Hill signing ceremony (Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area)

The creation of Carter Hill Battlefield Park “is an important step forward in achieving the vision of a park that honors Franklin’s history, welcomes our visitors, and brings the community together.”

—Eric Stuckey, City Administrator^{ix}

Left: Tim Hyder, Ken Moore, and Eric Jacobson listen as State Historian Dr. Carroll Van West addresses a crowd at the Carter Hill Battlefield Park dedication. (Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area)



Right: Ben Johnson's rendering of Carter Hill Battlefield Park (Battle of Franklin Trust)

Boundaries for the park continued to expand with strategic acquisitions. A \$637,500 grant from the American Battlefield Protection Program and a \$630,000 grant from the Tennessee Civil War Sites Preservation Fund, administered by the Tennessee Historical Commission, fueled the January 2018 purchase of the Spivey Tract at 1214 Columbia Avenue by Franklin's Charge and the Battle of Franklin Trust. To complete the \$1.365 million purchase price, Franklin's Charge raised over \$69,000, matched in part with \$56,250 from the American Battlefield Trust (the former Civil War Trust).

Once all of the necessary historical and environmental review is completed, the Ceramic and Craft Workshop building located on the Spivey Tract will be removed and the property transferred to the city for the Carter Hill Battlefield Park. Amanda Rose, the city's preservation planner, worked with these efforts to ensure a smooth compliance with applicable laws and regulations. As Parks Director Lisa Clayton told the Heritage Area, once Franklin's Charge “purchases property and helps master-plan it, they're hands-off.” In return, Clayton has “tried to make everybody in the parks a preservationist.” No matter who



better understanding of its significance. The parks department also creates signature cedar fences for battlefield land, even for property the city does not own, to designate all parts of the battlefield regardless of who possesses or manages it.

Interpretation at the former Domino's (Franklin's Charge, Inc.)

Such an involved private-public partnership is the Franklin way. Preservation and heritage groups, along with Ellie Chin at Visit Franklin (formerly the Williamson County CVB) and such media/community leaders as Nancy Conway, Alderman Brandy Blanton, Lamont Turner, Kelly Gilfillan, Alma McLemore, Rachael Finch, and Bari Beasley then promote each other's events and sites as part of the "whole story of the Civil War" experience at Franklin. Advocates understand that working together makes individual groups more successful, and for the past 15 years Franklin's Charge has been encouraged and supported that partnership strategy.

On November 10, 2017, State Historian Carroll Van West, Mayor Ken Moore, and Tim Hyder, the Tennessee Wars Commission Director, joined Battle of Franklin Trust CEO Eric Jacobson and Franklin's Charge Chair Cullen Smith to dedicate three 3-inch Ordnance rifles (with a fourth installed later), representing ones used by the 1st Kentucky Battery, at Carter Hill Battlefield Park. Led by Smith, Franklin's Charge's Cannon on the Battlefield Committee worked with the Battle of Franklin Trust and the city to secure \$40,000 from the Tennessee Wars Commission along with many individual donations. The new exhibit installation provides a more accurate interpretation of the cotton gin area where artillery contributed greatly to Union victory.



Cannons installed at Carter Hill Battlefield Park in 2017 (Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area)

The Battle of Franklin Trust directs the invaluable interpretive agenda the Carter Hill Battlefield needs. "Saving the ground doesn't mean much if you don't use it the right way," Jacobson asserts. The Trust's programming, both on the battlefield and at the Carter House's forthcoming Herbert Harper Visitor Center, a joint venture of the Trust and the Tennessee Historical Commission, asks visitors to think deeply about Franklin's importance and of the scars of the Civil War that still need healing and understanding today.

Looking Forward

"Twenty-five years from now, when you're walking in that park with your kids, no one's going to care what we paid for it. They're only going to care that it was saved."

—Greg Wade, Founder, Franklin Civil War Round Table*

Prior to 2005, few would have predicted the incredible feat Franklin has accomplished in saving its Civil War legacy. For newcomers and visitors, the city's battlefield parks and historic sites appear pristine, accessible, and well-planned. But those who know the story intimately acknowledge the fight to make Franklin what it is today and credit Franklin's Charge, among many others, for what the National Park Service calls "the largest battlefield reclamation in North American history."^{xi}

Several of Franklin's Charge members have been individually honored for their contributions. In 2007, Ernie Bacon received the Ragland Award from the Tennessee Civil War Preservation Association, which also acknowledged Robert Hicks with the same award. In 2009 and 2010, Hicks and Mary Pearce, respectively, received the Dozier Award from Save the Franklin Battlefield Inc. In 2011, the Civil War Trust presented its Shelby Foote Preservation Legacy Award to Julian Bibb. The American Battlefield Trust honored Hicks with the Edwin C. Bearss Lifetime Achievement Award in 2019.

Such meaningful recognition is profoundly appreciated. But being part of Franklin's Charge was never about the recognition, it was and is about the impact for the community. The true strength of Franklin's Charge lies in its philosophy that it is a partnership of equals, made up of key individuals certainly, but one that has its most impact when it acts quietly and effectively as a group of dedicated citizens committed to battlefield reclamation and sharing the whole story of the Civil War with all who come to Franklin.

Now is the time to take the Franklin's Charge model to new challenges across Franklin and Williamson County. At and around Thompson's Station, Triune, Spring Hill, and of course Franklin are battlegrounds "yet to be saved." In addition to protecting battlefield land, Franklin's Charge will continue its focus on education and holistic interpretation of the Civil War so that future generations might understand, appreciate, and visualize the rich history of Williamson County.

Franklin's Charge has led the way. Now it's your charge to keep.
Make a donation today: franklinscharge.org/support.

Franklin's Charge
Attn: Frances Regan
1345 Eastern Flank Circle
Franklin, TN 37064

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