

**TENNESSEE WARS COMMISSION
REPORT OF ACTIVITIES**

October 2013

by
Fred M. Prouty

State Approves Camp Blount Site Acquisition

After two years of planning and preparation by the Tennessee Wars Commission, and in conjunction with local preservationist and City of Fayetteville officials, the Tennessee State Building Commission gave its approval (on October 23, 2013) for state acquisition of 39-plus acres known as the historic Camp Blount War of 1812 site. The 1813 encampment location is one of only nine War of 1812 sites remaining in Tennessee and is of great importance not only to Tennesseans but is of national significance. As director of programs for the Tennessee Wars Commission I am tasked with the responsibility for organizing and facilitating land acquisitions and easements connected with our states historic battlefields associated with the French and Indian War, Revolutionary War, War of 1812, Mexican/US War, and the War Between the States.

The Camp Blount site in Fayetteville is most significant because of its integral part of Tennessee's history and the history of our country. Add to this the historic presence of General Andrew Jackson, Sam Houston, David Crocket and many other prominent Tennesseans, and the fact that Camp Blount is part of what earned Tennessee the right to be called "the Volunteer State", and you quickly realize the merit this site carries. Camp Blount was the rendezvous point and mustering ground for thousands of Tennessee soldiers led by General Andrew Jackson against the Creek Indians during the War of 1812. Historical markers placed by both the Tennessee Historical Commission as well as the Daughters of the American Revolution mark the property which rests in the bend of the Elk River southeast of the county Courthouse in Fayetteville, Tennessee.

On Monday September 23, 2013 the Tennessee State Building Commission approved the acquisition of the historic Camp Blount site and on Friday September 26th and Saturday 27th, the Camp Blount Bicentennial Celebration and living history encampment was held on the original site. This was phenomenal timing and bolstered our efforts and hard work, making all concerned to feel very privileged in seeing this come to fruition. Over 3,000 Lincoln County school children visited the site on Friday and enjoyed many living history programs presented by some 70 War of 1812 and civilian reenactors.

We owe a debt of gratitude to many individuals and groups who have assisted in making this possible and it's because of everyone's efforts that Camp Blount's role in the War of 1812

will long be remembered and valued. The acquisition still has a few hurdles to cross, including another survey and re-appraisal, but it is expected that ultimately the Camp Blount site will become a conservation easement of the state of Tennessee and a future memorial park cared for by the City of Fayetteville a “friends of the park” association. As that process unfolds, we are currently working to secure future funding to facilitate the creation of trails and interpretive signs to be erected on these hallowed grounds.

“Expedition Natchez 1813: Becoming Old Hickory”

As a member of Tennessee’s War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission I was fortunate to have attended our April 2013 signature event in Natchez, Mississippi and sites along the Natchez Trace. The event featured a symposium including War of 1812 historian Dr. Tom Kanon of the Tennessee State Library and Archives and other noted speakers, along with living history programs including a military camp of instruction on the grounds of historic Jefferson Collage built in 1802. The event honored Tennessee’s General Andrew Jackson and his military “Volunteers” who were sent to Natchez, Mississippi by Governor William Blount to help protect the Southwest territories during the Wars of 1812.

I have asked Mr. Tony Turnbow, member of the Tennessee War of 1812 Commission and coordinator of the Natchez event, to shares his thoughts on the Expedition Natchez 1813 commemoration. His comments are as follows:

The story of Andrew Jackson and the 1812 Tennessee Volunteers was recounted with a series of War of 1812 bicentennial events from Natchez to Nashville along the Natchez Trace in April. The Natchez Trace Parkway Association joined with the 7th U.S. Living History Association and several other partners to use living history to bring to life accounts of the 1813 Natchez Expedition. The commemoration began as over one-hundred re-enactors marched up the old Natchez Trace and assembled at *Propinquity*, home of Fort Dearborn commander Lt. Col. Leonard Covington, to remember the soldiers who were quartered at Fort Dearborn. The parade of Jackson’s troops through Natchez was re-created, followed by a period reception at the Prentiss Club. The encampment of the troops was portrayed adjacent to historic Fort Dearborn site. At a period living history dinner in Natchez, toasts from Jackson’s original 1812 Fourth of July officer’s dinner were re-created, and Washington Jackson’s descendant William Ferrell accepted public acknowledgment of his ancestor’s supply of hundreds of pairs of boots for the soldiers’ return march (of over 450 miles) on the Natchez Trace. Historic Nashville bankers Washington Jackson and James Jackson also helped finance the military expedition and lent money to Jackson for food and medicines for his troops.

The following week, a detachment of 40 living history participants portrayed the returning soldiers through Mississippi, Alabama, and Tennessee. Over 2,000 middle school students from Mississippi were introduced to the story in living history camps set up along the old Natchez Trace. Grinder's Stand, located at the 1813 recognized Chickasaw Nation/Tennessee border, provided a Tennessee homecoming and dismissal area. Re-enactors from the Regency Society portrayed Tennessee families welcoming home their sons and husbands. The same group that had portrayed the Tennessee Volunteers from Natchez to Nashville ended their journey at the grave site of President Jackson on the grounds of the Hermitage in Old Hickory, Tennessee where a wreath laying ceremony was held.

Mississippi Supreme Court Chief Justice and former Brigadier General of the Mississippi National Guard, William Waller addressed Andrew Jackson's military leadership in a ceremony held at the old Mississippi State Capitol in Jackson. General Buford Blount, who led U.S. troops including the modern 7th U.S. Infantry into Iraq in 2001, was also in attendance, along with Kevin Parker, vice-chief of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. Living history personality Grant Hardin, who portrays General Jackson, read the speech Jackson had prepared to read (but due to illness it was read by another), at the Old State Capitol building on the 25th anniversary of the Battle of New Orleans in 1839.

A ceremony in Tuscumbia, Alabama honored the contribution of the Chickasaw Nation to the soldiers on the 1813 march. The Chickasaws used their stores of winter food supplies to feed Jackson's troops to prevent starvation. Descendants of cavalry commander John Coffee and Chickasaw chiefs George Colbert and Levi Colbert participated in the ceremony. Peyton "Bud" Clark, direct descendant of William Clark, who served as Indian agent in the west and who worked with the Chickasaws, represented his ancestor at the ceremony.

Tennessee Army National Guard Major General Robert Harris spoke at a ceremony at the new War of 1812 Memorial site on the Natchez Trace Parkway. Major General Harris told the audience that Jackson showed extraordinary leadership in refusing to abandon his men and by leading them home on the Natchez Trace. Dr. Sam Gant of the General Society of 1812 commented that the Natchez Trace is hallowed ground because of the men who sacrificed and died on it during the War of 1812.

Bicentennial Hickory trees were planted from the bluff of the Mississippi River in Natchez to the Hermitage and at sites associated with the Natchez Expedition. Andrew Jackson earned the name "Old Hickory" on the 1813 return march when he refused to abandon his men as ordered and walked with them all but the first twenty miles on the arduous march on the Natchez Trace, back to Tennessee. The Tennessee Society U.S. Daughters of 1812, the Tennessee Society Daughters of the American Revolution and other DAR chapters and historical groups sponsored the trees.

Representatives of the Chickasaw Nation, the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, and the Poarch Band of Creek Indians participated in the events to broaden the perspective of the commemoration and to tell the stories of their own people. Through discussions on the contributions of the American Indians in assisting Jackson's troops and later in serving under his command, as well as the consequences of the war and Indian Removal, the groups began a fresh examination of the period when American Indians partnered with the U.S. army to defend the nation against foreign invasion.

The War of 1812 was discussed in lectures in one of the old classrooms at the circa 1802 Historic Jefferson College in Natchez. Speakers included Dr. Tom Kanon of the Tennessee State Library and Archives who spoke about the causes of the War of 1812 and speakers Jim Parker, Mike Bunn and Tony Turnbow. The bicentennial event represents a major step forward for the efforts of the Natchez Trace Parkway Association to create an ongoing living history program on the parkway. The association plans to re-create the end-of-war victory celebrations in 2015.

We thank Mr. Tony Turnbow for his comments and leadership in planning and coordinating the memorable "Expedition Natchez 1813" events honoring those Tennesseans who gave their all and in doing so secured Tennessee's position as, the "Volunteer State".

*A gallery of photos is posted on the web site at www.natcheztrace.org.

"River and Rails: Daggers of the Civil War"
NPT Documentary

As Charles Dickens might have described it, rivers and rails brought the best of times and the worst of times to 19th century Tennessee. ***"Rivers and Rails: Daggers of the Civil War,"*** the latest episode in the "Tennessee Civil War 150" series, a joint venture between Nashville Public Television (NPT) and The Renaissance Center, explores how transportation by water and steel brought great prosperity to the state just before the Civil War, only to give the invading Union Army a highway directly into the Deep South, eventually helping force the Confederacy to its knees.

The Nashville Public Television documentary, co-produced by the Emmy Award-winning team of Stephen Hall and Ken Tucker of The Renaissance Center, premieres **Thursday, May 30 at 8 p.m. on NPT-Channel 8**. It is the seventh episode in the **"Tennessee Civil War 150"** series, a multi-part project coinciding with the Sesquicentennial anniversary of the Civil War. "We didn't want this to be a documentary focused completely on military strategy," Hall said. "It was important to show how the lives of ordinary citizens were disrupted and destroyed. The story shows not only how the Union used boats and trains to their tactical advantage, but how people in Tennessee suffered because of it."

The documentary includes a scholarly lineup of historians, including Dr. Carroll Van West, MTSU; Fred Prouty, Tennessee Wars/Historical Commission; Dr. Minoa Uffelman, Austin Peay State University, Dr. Wayne Moore, Tennessee State Library and Archives, and Melinda Senn, Southern Museum of Civil War and Locomotive History. Following the documentaries premiere on NPT, "Rivers and Rails: Daggers of the Civil War" will be broadcast on other PBS stations around the state. Both NPT and The Renaissance Center were recently honored with a **Tennessee Historical Commission Certificate of Merit** for 2013 in the category "Book/Public Programming" for "No Going Back: Women & The War," "Shiloh: The Devil's Own Day" and "Crisis of Faith." The award recognizes projects that contribute to the history and historic preservation efforts in Tennessee.

The Renaissance Center is a state-of-the-art facility for fine arts, performing arts, media production, technology and education located about 35 miles from downtown Nashville in Dickson, Tennessee. The Tennessee Wars Commission has partnered with the Renaissance Center on several major Civil War productions including the Emmy Award winning film, ***Hallowed Ground, Preserving Tennessee's Battlefields***. Over 2,000 DVD-copies of the above film were sent to all Tennessee school libraries through a grant made possible by the Tennessee Wars Commission.

"Kentucky Battlefields and Beyond" Preservation Kentucky Conference

Mr. Fred M. Prouty, Director of Programs for the Tennessee Wars Commission, was keynote speaker for Preservation Kentucky Conference, "Kentucky Battlefields and Beyond; Civil War Sites in the 21st Century", in August 2013. Mr. Prouty's presentation was entitled, *Civil War Battlefields in Tennessee: Opportunities and Outcomes*. The Tennessee Wars Commission has led efforts across the state to preserve battlefields for almost two decades. One of our most successful has been at Parker's Crossroads in Henderson County. With the Civil War Sesquicentennial underway, opportunities in battlefield preservation exist across Tennessee where more battles were fought than in any other state outside Virginia.

To review information from the above event go to: www.preservationkentucky.org

Tennessee's Civil War National Parks Excellent Economic Generators

In 2011, the National Park Service (NPS) received 279 million recreation visitors who spent \$13 billion in local gateway regions. That spending supported 252,000 local jobs, which had a \$30 billion benefit to the national economy. Every dollar invested in the NPS through Congressional appropriations resulted in a \$10 benefit to the national economy according to the recent report. The NPS annual economic impact data report used National Park and public

data to examine the impacts visitor spending had on the local economy in terms of sales, income and jobs in 2011.

Visitor spending most directly affected lodging, restaurants, retail trade, and recreation and entertainment. Spending from these sources supported 45,200 jobs in restaurants and bars, 34,100 jobs in lodging sectors, 15,500 jobs in the retail and wholesale trade, and 20,000 jobs in recreation and entertainment.

Statistics for **Tennessee's Civil War National Battlefield Parks** sited as recreation visits and total visitor spending are as follows:

	<u>VISITORS</u>	<u>Visitor Spending:</u>
1. Chickamauga & Chattanooga National Military Park:	1,036,699	\$54,908,000
2. Fort Donelson National Battlefield:	257,389	\$9,538,000
3. Shiloh National Military Park:	387,816	\$14,371,000
4. Stones River National Battlefield:	<u>187,208</u>	<u>\$9,911,000</u>
TOTALS	1,869,112	\$88,728,000

The NPS report is available at www.nature.nps.gov/socialscience/products.cfm#MGM and click on "Economic Benefits to Local Communities from National Park Visitation, 2011".

Tennessee has 38 Civil War sites deemed "significant to the outcome of the War" as referred to in the Secretary of the Interior's report, *Civil War Sites Advisory Commission Report on the Nation's Civil War Battlefields* (1998). Currently, a total of 61 Tennessee Civil War tourist destinations are included with in the Tennessee Wars Commission brochure, ***A Path Divided, Tennessee's Civil War Heritage Trail***. Copies are available in all Tennessee Welcome Centers and while there be sure to see the recently installed 150th Tennessee Civil War Sesquicentennial permanent exhibit displays.

Comments should be sent to:

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