

## THC Awards 37 Historic Preservation Fund Grants

The This June Gov. Bill Haslam and the Tennessee Historical Commission announced 37 Historic Preservation Fund grants that were awarded to community organizations for programs and activities that support the preservation of historic and archaeological sites, districts and structures.

“Protecting Tennessee’s historic places is critical to preserving our state’s heritage,” Haslam said. “Today’s announcement of more than \$600,000 in assistance to communities across the state helps ensure that Tennessee’s rich history will continue to be shared with future generations.” State Historic Preservation Officer and THC Director Patrick McIntyre noted that “This enormously successful program is extremely valuable in facilitating preservation planning, technical assistance, surveys, and the restoration of historic properties in our state.”

The grants awarded from the Federal Historic Preservation Fund allocated to the Tennessee Historical Commission have been awarded to community and civic organizations for projects that support the preservation of historic and archaeological resources. Awarded annually, 60% of the project funds are from the federal Historic Preservation Fund and 40% of project funds come from the grantee.

Grants are competitive, and this year the Tennessee Historical Commission reviewed 63 applications with funding requests totaling approximately \$1.9 million. This year’s selection included archaeological surveys, design guidelines for historic districts, rehabilitation of historic buildings, posters highlighting the state’s history and archaeology and brochures related to historic tourism. One of the grant priorities is projects that are in Certified Local Governments, a program that allows communities to participate closely in the federal program of historic preservation. Ten Certified Local Government communities were awarded grants this year. Additional priorities include

areas experiencing rapid growth and development, other threats to cultural resources, areas where there are gaps in knowledge regarding cultural resources and the restoration of the state’s historic buildings that are owned by civic or nonprofit organizations. Properties that use the restoration grants must be listed in the National Register.

The grant recipients and/or sites of the projects include:

In Carter County:

- Carter County - \$12,000 to fund the restoration of windows in the National Register-listed Carter County Courthouse.

In Claiborne County:

- Claiborne County Historical Society - \$12,000 to fund the brick and mortar restoration in the third phase of the restoration for the National Register-listed Claiborne County Jail.

In Clay County:

- Clay County - \$7,200 to fund the upgrading of the electrical system in the courthouse, the first phase in the restoration of the National Register-listed building.

In Davidson County:

- Metro Historical Commission - \$12,000 to fund the completion of nominations for two residential historical districts in the Inglewood community of Davidson County.
- Middle Tennessee State University, Public History Program - \$15,000 to fund an archaeological survey of a historic archaeological site in Davidson County.

In Fayette County:

- Fayette County - \$12,000 to fund the restoration of windows in the National Register-listed Fayette County Courthouse.

The THC will meet at Maryville, October 24  
at 9 AM at the Maryville Municipal Building, 416 W  
Broadway Ave, Maryville, TN 37801



# FEDERAL PRESERVATION GRANTS

The Tennessee Historical Commission will begin accepting grant applications for historic preservation projects for the 2014-2015 fiscal year in November 2014. These federally funded grants will be available after Congress passes the federal budget. The exact amount of funds available for grants is not known but it is expected to be in the range of \$300,000. Applications will be reviewed, rated, and ranked. Decisions on those to be funded will be made when the exact amount of funding is known. This may be as late as August 2015, depending on when Congress completes work on the budget.

The selection process will emphasize projects such as architectural and archaeological surveys, design guidelines for historic districts, and restoration of historic buildings that are listed in the National Register and have a public use. Priorities for grants will be based on the preservation plan A Future for the Past: A Comprehensive Plan for Historic Preservation in Tennessee ([http://www.tn.gov/environment/history/history\\_preservation-plan.shtml](http://www.tn.gov/environment/history/history_preservation-plan.shtml)) It includes areas experiencing rapid growth and development, other threats to cultural resources, areas where there are gaps in knowledge regarding cultural resources, and communities that participate in the Certified Local Government program.

For surveys, the projects should identify and record historic districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant to Tennessee's history and built before 1965.

Surveys may be for a specific geographic area or for sites associated with themes or events significant in the state's history, such as the development of railroads in the 19th century or post World War II residential development. Preservation plans for towns, neighborhoods, and historic districts and the preparation of nominations to the National Register of Historic Places are other areas for possible grant funding. In addition to the restoration of buildings, predevelopment work necessary to undertake rehabilitation is an acceptable grant category. Restoration of historic buildings must follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

The grants are matching grants that will reimburse up to 60% of the costs of approved project work. The remaining 40% must be provided by the grantee as matching funds. Applications for grants will be available November 1, 2014. For further information or for an application, contact the Tennessee Historical Commission at (615) 532-1550, 2941 Lebanon Road, Nashville, Tennessee 37214. Applications may also be downloaded from the Tennessee Historical Commission website [http://www.tn.gov/environment/history/history\\_preservation-grants.shtml](http://www.tn.gov/environment/history/history_preservation-grants.shtml). Completed applications must be in our office on January 31, 2015.

## THC Preservation Grants...continued from page 1

### In Greene County:

- Town of Greeneville - \$10,000 to fund window restoration for the National Register-listed Dixon-Williams Mansion.

### In Haywood County:

- City of Brownsville - \$18,000 to fund maps, brochures and digital access showing the historic areas of the city.

### In Jackson County:

- Town of Gainesboro - \$12,000 to fund the restoration and replacement of tile in the National Register-listed Fox School, part of a phased restoration.

### In Jefferson County:

- Town of Dandridge - \$9,000 to fund the restoration of the exterior of the National Register-listed Hickman Tavern/Dandridge Town Hall.

### In Knox County:

- Knox Heritage - \$6,000 to fund the restoration of windows in National Register-listed Westwood.

### In Lewis County:

- City of Hohenwald - \$12,000 to fund the restoration of the National Register-listed Hohenwald Depot.

### In Monroe County:

- Monroe County - \$12,000 to fund the continued restoration of brickwork on the National Register-listed Monroe County Courthouse.

### In Overton County:

- Shirley Bohannon American Legion Post #4 - \$12,000 to fund the restoration of the National Register-listed American Legion Post #4 building.

### In Pickett County:

- East Tennessee State University - \$15,000 to fund a multi-disciplinary study of a prehistoric archaeological site in Pickett State Forest.

THC Preservation Grants cont. page 3

**THC Preservation Grants...continued from page 2****In Putnam County:**

- City of Cookeville - \$1,200 to fund a self-guided walking tour for three local historic districts.

**In Roane County:**

- City of Harriman - \$12,000 to fund design guidelines for National Register-listed and locally designated historic districts.

**In Shelby County:**

- City of Memphis - \$7,200 to fund a historic structures report for the National Register-listed Mallory-Neely House.

**In Sumner County:**

- City of Portland - \$12,000 to fund stabilization and restoration of the National Register-listed Moye-Green House.

**In Warren County:**

- William H. Magness Community House and Library - \$12,000 to fund masonry restoration on the National Register-listed Magness Library.

**In Williamson County:**

- City of Franklin - \$20,000 to fund ground penetrating radar investigations and digital drafting of the National Register-listed Rest Haven Cemetery and Franklin City Cemetery.
- Heritage Foundation of Franklin and Williamson County - \$9,000 to fund the restoration of windows in the National Register-listed Old, Old Jail.

**Multi-County Grants:**

- Tennessee Preservation Trust - \$12,000 to fund the 2015 Statewide Historic Preservation Conference.
- Tennessee History for Kids - \$10,000 to fund posters for Tennessee schools and libraries, highlighting historic preservation in Tennessee.
- Middle Tennessee State University, Department of Sociology and Anthropology - \$3,738 to fund posters for Tennessee Archaeology Week.
- Middle Tennessee State University, Fullerton Laboratory for Spatial Technology - \$50,000 to digitize data for historic/architectural survey files and for survey data entry for computerization of survey files.
- Tennessee Division of Archaeology - \$10,000 to fund a continuation of a survey of Rosenwald schools and school sites.
- Southeast Tennessee Tourism Association - \$7,200 to fund a driving trail, rack cards and digital information for historic mining resources in southeast Tennessee.
- East Tennessee Development District - \$32,000 to fund a preservation specialist staff position for the First Tennessee Development District.
- First Tennessee Development District - \$25,000 to fund a

preservation specialist staff position for the First Tennessee Development District.

- Greater Nashville Regional Council - \$25,000 to fund a preservation specialist staff position for the Greater Nashville Regional Council.
- Memphis Area Association of Governments - \$32,000 to fund a preservation specialist staff position for the Memphis Area Association of Governments.
- Northwest Tennessee Development District - \$36,000 to fund a preservation specialist staff position for the Northwest Tennessee Development District.
- South Central Tennessee Development District - \$50,000 to fund a preservation specialist staff position for the South Central Tennessee Development District.
- Southeast Tennessee Development District - \$52,000 to fund a preservation specialist staff position for the Southeast Tennessee Development District.
- Southwest Tennessee Development District - \$54,000 to fund a preservation specialist staff position for the Southwest Tennessee Development District.
- Upper Cumberland Development District - \$50,000 to fund a preservation specialist staff position for the Upper Cumberland Development District.

**NEW COMMISSION MEMBER  
APPOINTED**

In June Gov. Bill Haslam appointed Tiny Jones of Columbia to the Tennessee Historical Commission for a five year term. Mrs. Jones replaced Kathie Fuston of Columbia, who resigned earlier this year when she and her husband relocated to Texas. An interior designer by profession and graduate of the University of Tennessee, Mrs.

**Tiny Jones**

Jones served as state president of the American Society of Interior Designers in 2008-2009. She is also the current chair of the Maury County Election Commission. Mrs. Jones has an interest in and record of service to history and historic preservation. She has served on the Board of the James K. Polk Memorial Association for nine years, including two years as president. The Association is responsible for the operation and administration of the James K. Polk Home State Historic Site. Mrs. Jones has also been actively involved with the Association for the Preservation of Tennessee Antiquities and the Maury County Historical Society. She is married to the Hon. Robert L. Jones, and they have two children and three grandchildren.



# National Register of Historic Places News

By Christine Mathieson

## NORRIS DAM STATE PARK RUSTIC CABINS HISTORIC DISTRICT

The Norris Dam State Park Rustic Cabins Historic District is located in the eastern portion of Norris Dam State Park in Anderson County, Tennessee. The district comprises approximately 37 acres of the park's total 4,038 acres and is situated to the south of Norris Lake. The buildings in the district were constructed from 1934-1937, through the joint efforts of the Civilian Conservation Corps, the Tennessee Valley Authority, the United States Forest Service, and the National Park Service. Norris Dam State Park Rustic Cabins Historic District comprises 19 Rustic style cabins, a linen house, a tea room (formerly the Lodge), an amphitheater, two ranger residences with supporting buildings and structures, and an original rustic cut stone water fountain.

The landscape of the district is characterized by hilly terrain, and the cabins are arranged in an irregular pattern so that they fit in with the landscape. The cabins are in the Rustic style, with weatherboard or wood siding

and rustic cut stone pier foundations. Each cabin is one of five types. The cabins of the same type all follow the plan, but many have subtle variations, such as the addition of stone or additional/different windows, or a difference in siding—some of the cabins are clad in weatherboard and



Norris Dam State Park Rustic Cabins Historic District, view to the east



Cabin #2

some in shiplap wood siding. The most predominant floor plan is Type One, which has one main room that encompasses the living, dining, and sleeping area, a screened porch, and separate bathroom. All cabins have original wood walls, ceilings and floors, as well as rustic style fireplaces.

Aside from one cabin that was demolished, all buildings in there have some changes, including replacement of the cabins' original wood casement and double-hung wood sash windows with double-hung vinyl sash windows and vinyl fixed windows circa 2004. Original wood shake roofs have been replaced by asphalt shingle and entry doors to the cabins are also modern replacements. Based on historic photographs, the current wood siding on the cabins is historic and dates to the 1950s, when the State replaced the

**Historic Places** *cont. page 5*

Since the last issue of The Courier there have been four entries to the National Register of Historic Places from Tennessee. The properties are the following:

- Norris Dam State Park Rustic Cabins Historic District, Anderson County
- C.C. Card Auto Company Building, Bradley County
- Picardy Place Historic District, Shelby County
- Miller Farmstead, Carter County

There are now 2,118 entries in the National Register from Tennessee including 278 districts for a total of 42,273 resources now listed.

— Statistics compiled by Peggy Nickell.

**Historic Places...continued from page 4**

original siding.

The arrangement of the cabins in the natural setting remains essentially as it did after construction in the 1930s. The other resources in the district also remain much as they did historically. Cabin 9 was demolished at some point, and the Linen House is a historic building, but it was added in the 1950s after the acquisition of the park by the State. As a whole the Norris Dam State Park Rustic Cabins Historic District retains a high degree of integrity.

The district is a tangible extant example of the cooperation of Federal agencies coordinating public works projects during the Depression era. The cabins also housed workers from the “Clinton Engineer Works” who in actuality were employees for the Manhattan Project, attaining significance from their association with this important chapter in history. The district was also listed for its significance in Architecture, as its layout and architectural elements are a fine example of the 1930s era of Rustic style park architecture. The cabins are illustrative of this Rustic style that would define the government parks of the period. The district retains a high degree of integrity as an intact park of the Depression era. The period of significance begins in 1934 at the start of construction of the park and extends to 1964, when the condition of the Park began to deteriorate and visitorship declined from its 1950’s high as the most visited park in Tennessee. Tennessee State Parks is currently working on plans to rehabilitate and upgrade the cabins so they are able to be used year-round, but also continue to reflect their



The Miller Farmhouse



The Miller Farmstead

historic character.

*The National Register nomination for the Norris Dam State Park Rustic Cabins Historic District was prepared by Christine Mathieson of the Tennessee Historical Commission.*

**MILLER FARMSTEAD**

The Miller Farmstead is situated at an elevation of 3,700 feet within Roan Mountain State Park, Carter County. The Miller Farmstead consists of the main farmhouse, the farm yard, outbuildings, the cemetery, and the landscape of the farmstead itself. The farmhouse was constructed in 1908 by Nathaniel and Dave Miller, using timber from the surrounding woodlands. The Millers used a portable mule-powered saw-mill to fashion the logs into suitable building material. The house is one and a half stories and of frame construction, clad in shiplap wood siding, and rests on a dry stack stone foundation. The the roof is standing seam metal, which was put on the house circa 1994, replacing the house’s original tin and sod roof. The outbuildings of the farm include a privy, a smokehouse, a chicken house, a small wood bridge and water flume, small and large barn, springhouse, corncrib, and hog pen, all dating to circa 1908. The Miller Farmstead also encompasses the Miller Cemetery which dates to circa 1915 and is located approximately a quarter mile to the northeast of the farmstead. The cemetery is the resting place for many Miller family members. The overall landscape of the farmstead also contributes to the significance of the district. The landscape encompasses approximately 56 acres, and includes the location of former agricultural fields and an apple orchard, as well as extensive



## PUBLICATIONS TO NOTE

By Linda T. Wynn • Assistant Director for State Programs & Publications Editor

Publications of The University of Arkansas Press, McIlroy House, 105 N. McIlroy Avenue, Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701 include:

*Breaking Through: John B. McLendon, Basketball Legend and Civil Rights Pioneer* by Milton S. Katz is the first biography of John B. McLendon and his struggle for equality in 1940s and '50s America. He rejected the idea that basketball teams at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) like North Carolina College (now North Carolina Central University) and Tennessee State were unable to achieve national prominence. McLendon, the last living protégé of basketball's inventor, Dr. James Naismith and according to Columbia Broadcasting System's (CBS) basketball analyst Billy Packer was "one of the top ten basketball coaches of the century."

Coach McLendon added a number of firsts to his far-reaching career. The list of firsts includes being the first coach to win three consecutive national titles (Tennessee State, 1957-59); the first black coach of an integrated professional team (the ABL's Cleveland Pipers); the first black coach at a predominately white college (Cleveland State); the first black coach in the American Basketball Association; the first black coach to publish a book on basketball, the first black coach on the Olympic staff; and the first black coach

inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame. As a basketball ambassador, McLendon traveled to fifty-eight countries, teaching the fundamentals of the game and the value of sportsmanship. It is believed by many that he contributed more to the proliferation of basketball worldwide than any other individual. His creative and courageous efforts to "break through" the color lines of institutional racism include the famous "secret game" between his North Carolina College players and the Duke University Medical School in 1944, ten years before the landmark Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court decision. McLendon's players included such NBA standouts as Sam Jones, Dick Barnett, and John Barnhill. He achieved a 76 percent winning mark over a twenty-five-year collegiate coaching career. He was an early pioneer of game preparation, conditioning, the fast break, the full-court press, and a two corner offense that became the seed for Dean Smith's famous four corners. Between 1941 and 1952, Coach McLendon won eight CIAA titles at North Carolina College. Because the majority of his pioneering was experienced in non-mainstream settings, his contributions were ignored. However, this detailed, carefully researched biography is a positive step in bringing McLendon's contributions to the basketball's forefront and secures his rightful place in sports history. Cloth, \$29.95.

### Historic Places...

*continued from page 5*

gardens surrounding the farmhouse. The Miller Farmstead is significant under National Register Criterion A, for its local significance in Appalachian agricultural history and the history of settlement patterns in the region. The farmstead is also significant under National Register Criterion C, as it is an excellent example of a working Appalachian farmhouse with extant outbuildings. The Farmstead as a whole illustrates what subsistence farming life was like in Appalachia during the early to mid- 20th century. The house was inhabited by members of the Miller family until 1967, and electricity was never installed. Today, the farmstead is owned by Tennessee State Parks and the farmhouse is used as an interpretive site to demonstrate to visitors what life was like on the farmstead over a century ago. Tennessee State Parks installed a plaque recognizing the Miller family which reads: "Three generations of Millers carved a home and a living out of this rocky mountain soil, Mountain farmers were compelled to be tough, strong practical, and innovative. They were bound to one another by the bonds of family, hard work and faith... This farmstead is preserved as a testament to the grit and courage possessed by the people who farmed the ridges and valleys of the southern Appalachians." Currently, the Farmhouse is open to visitors from Memorial Day to Labor Day Wednesday through Sunday, and on weekends in October.

*The National Register nomination for Miller Farmstead was prepared by Gray Stothart of the First Tennessee Development District and Peggy Nickell of the Tennessee Historical Commission*

## HISTORICAL MARKERS

At its meeting on June 20, 2014 the Tennessee Historical Commission approved six historical markers: *Civil War "No Man's Land*, Bradley County; *Cox Mill*, Jefferson County; *First African American Church*, Knox County; *Maury County Colored Hospital*, Maury County; *Old Federal Road*, McMinn County; and *Dr. Clarence Cameron White*, Maury County. Those interested in submitting proposed texts for markers should contact Linda T. Wynn at the Tennessee Historical Commission, 2941 Lebanon Road, Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0442, or call (615) 532-1550.



## RUTHERFORD COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGY RESEARCH PROGRAM: Re-writing the Prehistory of the County one site at a time

Tanya M. Peres, Middle Tennessee State University • Jesse W. Tune, Texas A&M University

At The Tennessee State Archaeological Site File lists approximately 275 known prehistoric sites in Rutherford County, the majority of which are in the Percy Priest Lake vicinity. The number of sites in Rutherford is markedly low compared to Davidson and Williamson counties, with a combined total of over 1,300 prehistoric sites. Some believe the low number of sites in Rutherford is because Native Americans did not physically live in the area in the centuries and millennia before European settlers arrived, and instead kept this area as a communal hunting ground. In reality, there is much more to the story, but since the county is still largely agricultural, few archaeological surveys have been undertaken to identify and locate areas where prehistoric Native Americans lived.

That is, until this year and the new information recovered from several sites in our county. The Rutherford County Archaeology Research Program (RCARP) is focused on learning more about the ancient peoples that called Rutherford County, Tennessee, home 12,000-500 years ago. RCARP is based at Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, and is directed by Dr. Tanya M. Peres, Associate Professor and Anthropology Program Director. Archaeologists with RCARP are working with alumni, the City of Murfreesboro Parks and Recreation, and interested Rutherford County citizens to meet our goals of: 1) documenting the prehistory of the county, and 2) engaging the public with the county's archaeological resources. RCARP received a Historic Preservation Grant through the Tennessee Historical Commission to fund the summer 2014 fieldwork at Magnolia Valley (co-directed by Jesse W. Tune) and analysis of selected samples from both Magnolia Valley and Black Cat Cave.

The work at Magnolia Valley was part of the MTSU Archaeological Field School and included three levels of investigation: remote sensing with near-surface geophysical equipment, traditional shovel test survey, and excavation. One of the aims of archaeological excavations is to uncover physical evidence of humans' whereabouts and activities in a given area. Of course artifacts (any object made, modified, or used by humans) can tell us some of this, but what really interests archaeologists are the features (evidence of human activity that cannot be removed, such as a post hole or hearth). The remote sensing work that was completed at Magnolia Valley formed the basis for our excavation strategy. Remote sensing allows archaeologists to "see" things below the Earth's surface without digging. Our remote sensing specialist, Tim de Smet, uses several pieces of high-tech equipment (Magnetometry, Electromagnetic induction, and Ground Penetrating Radar) to help us determine below-surface deposits that are expected (i.e., rock formations) or anomalous (i.e., features). In this way remote sensing is like a medical CT scan in that anomalies can be detected by the



RCARP Archeological Volunteers

technician, but the experts (in this case the archaeologists) must confirm the findings via survey and excavation since none of these machines can tell us exactly what any given anomaly is. We conducted remote sensing on portions of the property that were known to have been used during historic times in addition to the area we suspected to have the prehistoric Native American component.

Through historical document research conducted by RCARP's Historic Preservation Graduate Intern, Susan London-Sherer, we learned that for two centuries much of the Magnolia Valley property was used as a horse farm, and thus was not mechanically plowed, which resulted in some features being identified as soon as the sod

**Archeology** *cont. page 8*



## Archeology...continued from page 7



Prehistoric Oven

was removed. This is a rare occurrence in southeastern US archaeology and a boon for our excavations. We exposed a total of 8 features, most of which were large (over 1 m/3.5 ft. in diameter) and occupied more than one excavation unit.

The main historic feature was first seen in the geophysical data as “something that looks like a road” oriented southeast to northwest running in more less a straight line. We interpret this as a historic two-track horse and wagon/buggy road. The excavation of a portion of it revealed that the earlier parallel ruts were filled in or covered with similar size rocks – whether this was the result of later historic road improvements or an attempt by subsequent landowners to fill in dips in the horse pasture remains to be answered.

One of the more impressive prehistoric features we excavated was seen in the geophysical data as a medium to large roughly circular anomaly. Through our excavation of this feature we determined it to be a prehistoric earth oven, which would have been used for cooking a number of plant and animal food items. Prehistoric earth ovens cook food through radiant heat emitted by rocks heats in a fire. The food is typically wrapped in some sort of plant material, and then baked or steamed.

Our THC Historic Preservation Grant funded radiometric dating of some specimens from these sites. In February and March 2014, RCARP coordinated a salvage and stabilization effort at Black Cat Cave, in conjunction with the City of Murfreesboro Parks & Recreation Department. During the salvage work we recovered a number of diagnostic stone tools – some of these were made around 8,000 years ago. However, we were able to take burned wood (carbon) samples from undisturbed deposits before backfilling the looter holes. We collected similar samples at the Magnolia Valley site. These samples have been sent to a lab that specializes in radiocarbon analysis, and we are awaiting the results. The diagnostic stone tools recovered from Magnolia Valley thus far indicate the earliest peoples at the site were likely there 12,000 years ago (Paleoindian period); however, we believe the features date to the Archaic period, ca. 5000-8,000 years ago. The radiocarbon dates will tell us for certain the antiquity of both of these sites important to Rutherford County prehistory. You can follow along with the different aspects of RCARP’s work on our website: [www.mtsu.rcarp.wordpress.com](http://www.mtsu.rcarp.wordpress.com)



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**Public Comment Solicited**

The Tennessee Historical Commission is again soliciting public comment and advice on its administration of the National Historic Preservation Act. Especially, we are seeking input on such matters as geographic areas or classes of properties which should be a priority for survey and/or registration efforts, criteria and priorities which should be established for restoration grants, and ways and means through which local efforts at preservation of historic properties can be most effectively assisted. Comments and advice on other areas and issues of a more general nature are also encouraged. Activities carried out by the Commission under the mandate of the Act include efforts to survey and inventory potentially-historic properties across the state and to nominate the most significant to the National Register of Historic Places. Other activities involve programs to protect and preserve properties once they are identified by reviewing Federal projects to determine if they will adversely affect historic properties and wish to earn the investment tax credits which are available; awarding and administering grants for the restoration of National Register properties; and providing technical assistance and advice to local governments which are attempting to establish local programs and ordinances to protect historic properties. Besides the restoration grants program, some of these activities are carried out in part by the provision of grant support to local groups and agencies. These grant funds are federal funds which are appropriated under the authority of the National Historic Preservation Act to assist states in carrying out the purposes of the Act. The comments received will be used to structure the annual application to the National Park Service for these funds. The Tennessee Historical Commission expects to solicit applications for grants-in-aid in June of this year for the 2015 Fiscal Year (10/01/2014-9/30/2015). The public input and advice which we are soliciting now will help to set both general office objectives and to establish priorities and criteria for the review of grant applications. Comments are requested by April 15, 2014, and may be addressed to Claudette Stager, Assistant Director for National Register Programs, Tennessee Historical Commission, 2941 Lebanon Road, Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0442.

This program receives Federal funds from the National Park Service. Regulations of the U.S. Department of the Interior strictly prohibit unlawful discrimination in departmental federally assisted programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, age or disability. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against in any program, activity or facility operated by a recipient of Federal assistance should write to: Director, Equal Opportunity Program, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

Tennessee Historical Commission, Authorization Number 327324, 8,000 copies promulgated at a cost of \$0.23 per copy, 011/10.





# The Tennessee Contraband Conundrum: 1862-1865. A Documentary Narrative.

PART 2 OF 5 [CONTINUED FROM JUNE 2014 ONLINE EDITION.]

BY JAMES B. JONES, JR. ©

“Lady will you please tell me you name?”

I did so, when she thanked me and said: -- “Miss P\_\_\_\_\_ can you please hear our Third Reader this morning.” It was not an idle question either, for the school is so large that now, while two of the teachers are absent, from illness, some of the classes are each day necessarily neglected. And so eager are the generality of the pupils to learn, that most of them are in two or three reading and spelling classes at the same time.

One might now not only exclaim with Galileo, “The world does move,” and we move with it. For though but a little time since the negro dared to say :I think,” lest the master might exclaim,-- “You think, you black neggar [sic]-never you mind about that, I’ll do your thinking for you.” But would instead, say ‘deferentially, with bent head and hand in his wooly hair, “Wall, massa, I’s been a studyin’ about dat dar,” is now learning to stand erect and confess that he does think; as well as learn to read and write.

One of the more advanced pupils told me that her father taught her to read and write before it was safe to let anyone know that he did, or that he could himself read.<sup>1</sup>

Ms. Elvira Powers remarked on the progress of her contraband students at the Refugee farm the ages of the student body ranged from four to thirty. According to her the negro pupils were quite apt in their lessons and learning. Some had even learned the alphabet in three days, others within a week.

....I will confess my belief that were I to teach in this school very long, I might become so interested in some of my pupils I should sometimes forget

that they were not of the same color as myself, and really believe that God did make of one blood all nations of the earth.

They present every shade of color from the blackest hue to a fairer skin than my own. It is often necessary to find out who the mother is before you know whether the person is white or black....

The progress of some is really astonishing. One little black girl of seven years, and with wooly head, can read fluently in the Fourth Reader, and studies primary, geography, and arithmetic, who has been to school but one year. I inquired if any one taught her at home, if she had not learned how to read before that time. “Oh, no, I learned my letters when I first came to school, and I live with my aunt Mary, and she can’t read. She’s no kin to me, and I haven’t any kin, but I call her aunt.”

Perhaps she never had any, or is related to Topsey,<sup>2</sup> and if questioned farther, might say she “spects she grew.” A boy about twelve, who has been to school but nine months, and who learned his letters in that time, reads in the Third Reader and studies geography. Some are truly polite. The first day of my taking charge of one of the division, a delicate featured, brown-skinned little girl of about nine years came to me and said with the sweetest voice and manner: --

“Lady will you please tell me you name?”

I did so, when she thanked me and said: --

“Miss P\_\_\_\_\_ can you please hear our Third Reader this morning.” It was not an idle question either, for the school is so large that now, while two of the teachers are absent, from illness, some of the classes are each day necessarily neglected. And so eager are

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One might now not only exclaim with Galileo, “The world does move,” and we move with it. For though but a little time since the negro dared to say :I think,” lest the master might exclaim,-- “You think, you black neggar [sic]-never you mind about that, I’ll do your thinking for you.” But would instead, say ‘deferentially, with bent head and hand in his wooly hair, “Wall, massa, I’s been a studyin’ about dat dar,” is now learning to stand erect and confess that he does think; as well as learn to read and write.

One of the more advanced pupils told me that her father taught her to read and write before it was safe to let anyone know that he did, or that he could himself read.<sup>3</sup>

Not all Tennesseans were enamored of the contraband schools. Take for example an entry in Alice Williamson’s [Sumner County] diary concerning a regiment of East Tennesseans (Union) billeted near her home portrays the enmity some felt for contraband and their efforts to become literate. She believed the East Tennessee regiment was composed of “the meanest men I ever saw; but they have one good trait they make the negroes ‘walk a chalk.’”<sup>4</sup> They were “....behaving very well [and] I do not suppose the negroes think so though they threatened to burn the old tavern last night (that like every thing else is filled with contrabands) but the citizens told them if they did Gallatin would burn; they let it alone but say if they get up a school in it they will burn it and G[allitan], may go to H\_\_\_\_\_.” Nevertheless they did burn a schoolhouse “last night it was a contraband school.

**Contraband...continued from page 9**

They say they will have none of that while they stay here.” She added that the next day: “A contraband was killed today; he insulted one of Miss B’s scholars & a soldier being near killed him. Go it my East Tenn [sic]”<sup>5</sup>

A New York Times reporter noted that “I regret to hear from trustworthy sources, that the contrabands in the western part of the State within our lines... are suffering much from want of proper food, medicine and sanitary arrangements.... The enlisted Negroes fared better than did the thousands of free but unskilled country workers in the contraband camps<sup>6</sup> where “the Negro camps of refugees-women, old men and children-are in a sad condition; disease and disorder prevailing, and the poor creatures dying by the hundreds. No one seems to have any supervision over or concern for them. What is needed to some sanitary officer, who should be authorized to compel a proper camp police among the Negroes, and who could provide when needed suitable food and medicines.”<sup>7</sup>

The 1863 Times report was headlined; “CONDITION OF CONTRABANDS IN GEN. GRANT’S DEPARTMENT.”

Mr. ISAAC G. THORNE, who has just returned from Memphis, visited the Contraband’s Relief Commission at their regular weekly meeting, last night, and gave the following interesting statement regarding the general condition of the fugitive blacks in the Department of West Tennessee: The number of contrabands at ... Memphis, 5,000, and constantly arriving, 2,000 more having come in, during the late heavy snow-storm, in an entirely destitute condition. At Bolivar 1,100 are congregated, where they are laboring for the Government....At Jackson about 200 are collected, shifting about under nobody’s especial charge. At Memphis the negroes [sic] are quartered in sheds, tents and old buildings. The women and children outnumbering the men, two to one....Many die from

neglect, and it is evident some system of ameliorating their sufferings should not fail to attend the policy which induces them to seek the protection of our arms.<sup>8</sup>

Housing was difficult for white soldiers seeking a place to establish their families in Nashville because of the contrabands. According to James H. Kile, 1st Sergeant, Tennessee Artillery, who wrote Military Governor Johnson:

I find that nearly all of the confiscated, as well as individual houses are occupied by negroes, [and] poor white soldiers [sic] families are left out of doors, more than once have I tried to rent vacant houses only to receive the assurance from some rebel citizen that they were rented to negroes [sic], this being the case I would most respectfully ask that you grant my family a pass to Charleston Tenn....<sup>9</sup>

In March, 1864 Adjt.-Gen. Major General Lorenzo Thomas, when he entered Nashville found the majority of his time was absorbed in making arrangements for “the vast number of ‘contrabands’ congregated in our midst” issued a new policy toward the contrabands. It gave assurance that the African Americans who sought freedom and protection within the Federal lines the Cumberland area “will not be permitted to suffer from want and destitution.” His plan was similar to the views of Military Governor Johnson’s, namely to put contraband to work on abandoned plantations and cease providing them welfare.<sup>10</sup>

Accordingly Major General Thomas issued Orders No. 2, composed of four sections, with four addendums, initiating the new policy for contrabands.

I. A camp for the reception of contrabands will at once be established in the vicinity of Nashville Tenn. The entire control and supervision of... the same will be under ..., First Regiment Kentucky Volunteers, subject to such orders as he may receive from the

Commanding-General of the Department of the Cumberland. The Quartermaster’s Department will furnish all the materials and supplies necessary to shelter and protect the negroes destined to be located in this camp. If practicable, the contrabands will be quartered in log houses, to be constructed by the negroes themselves; but in the interim, tents will be furnished for their accommodation. The several Staff Departments will issue all supplies necessary for the wants of these people, on the requisition of the officer in charge of the camp, approved by the officer commanding the nearest post.

II. A detail of eight subalterns from regiments of African descent, will be ordered to report for duty ... It shall form a part of their duties to visit the plantations, farms, wood-yards, and other places where negroes may be employed, for the purpose of inquiring into their condition, and to see that the engagements between them and their employers are promptly and faithfully carried out on both sides. Any failure on the part of the employer to carry out his engagements will be immediately reported to the Commanding-General of the nearest Military District, who will at once take action in the matter.

III. The following regulations for the government of freedmen in the Department of the Cumberland, are announced for the information of all concerned:

1. All male negroes coming within our lines, who, after examination, shall be found capable of bearing arms, will be mustered into companies and regiments of colored troops....All others, including men incapable of bearing arms, women and children, instead of being permitted to remain in camp in idleness, will be required to perform such labor as may be suited to their condition in the respective...plantations or farms, leased or otherwise, within our

**Contraband...continued from page 10**

lines; as wood-choppers, teamsters, or in any way that their labor can be made available.

2. All civilians of known loyalty, having possession of plantations, farms, wood-yards...may, upon application to the Commandant of the contraband camp, hire such negroes, (including a fair proportion of children,) as they may desire, if possible, for actual service. In all such cases, the employers will enter into a written engagement to pay, feed and treat humanely all the negroes turned over to them, and none shall be hired for less a term than one year, commencing on the 1st day of January, 1864. Should it be desirable, and the employer, furnish clothing to the hired hands, the same shall be deducted from their pay at the actual cost price.

3. When found impracticable to find persons of sufficient character and responsibility to give employment to all negroes liable to be employed, the respective Generals of Districts may designate such abandoned or confiscated plantations or farms as they may deem most suitable, to be worked by the negroes, upon such terms as in their judgment shall be best adapted to the welfare of this class of people -- taking care that in all cases the negroes shall be self-sustaining, and not a burthen upon the Government.

4. The wages to be paid for labor shall be as follows: For all able-bodied males over fifteen years of age, not less than \$7 per month; for able-bodied females over fifteen years of age, not less than \$5 per month; for children between the age of twelve and fifteen, half the above amounts; children under fourteen years of age shall not be used as field hands, and families must be kept together when they do so desire. The employer also must furnish such medical advice as may be required, at his own expense.

IV. In order the more fully to carry

out the requirements of this order, the Commanders of military districts are authorized when necessary, to lease abandoned plantations to loyal citizens, on such terms as may be equitable.<sup>11</sup>

Some contraband took advantage of their former master's property rather than seeking employment with the government. One reporter, for example, told of his visit with former slaves at an abandoned plantation near Jackson, Tennessee, energetically working, picking cotton:

I remarked to one of the "intelligent contraband" that it was pretty hot work for such a day.

"Yes," said he, "but we's in a mighty hurry."

"What makes you in a hurry?"

"Cause we want's to get massa's cotton out of de way so's we can gin on em. We's afeard dem Confederate soldiers is coming again, and dey'll burn it all up. Does you tink dey's comin' soon, massa?"

"Guess not, my boy. How much cotton have you?"

"I reckon we boys have about seven bales, and we's mighty skeered that we shan't get it sold. When will dem Confederates be here?"

"Not for the present. You will have plenty of time to get your cotton off."

"Does ye think so?"

"Yes, certainly."

"Dat's good!"

And, evidently much relieved in his mind, he commenced hurrying up the work. I thought, considering "massa" had but eleven bales, that seven was a pretty good share for four "boys," and at thirty cents per pound,<sup>12</sup> which it is now bringing, it would make them quite a handsome pile.<sup>13</sup>

Life for contraband near urban areas was at first marked by confused federal authority in Memphis. Indeed, Major General William T. Sherman's June 4, 1862

report to the Union command headquarters in Corinth that it was plain that the potential for trouble could increase with the contrabands' constant arrivals in Memphis by steamboats, or by other means. He doubted that the policy of housing, feeding and clothing the contraband, was sound, given the already crowded streets of the city. It was a bad idea and he questioned

the policy of burdening ourselves with such, as we can give them no employment and idle negroes [sic] of either sex are of no use to us in war. If they seek refuge in our lines we cannot surrender them or permit force to be used in recapturing them, but I doubt the propriety of making them captive. We had over 1,300 negroes [sic] on the fort, but since I have allowed the quartermaster and regiments to use contrabands the force at the fort<sup>14</sup> has fallen to 800. The enemy has made herculean efforts to prevent negroes [sic] getting to our lines, and they partially succeed, but all say that the negroes everywhere are very saucy and disobedient. I do not think it to our interest to set loose negroes [sic] too fast.<sup>15</sup>

A letter noted that unforeseen social change arrived with the attendant increase of free bondsmen, that contrabands were, as Sherman put it "saucy and disobedient." The correspondence written by Mary Judkins, in Clarksville, complained to her cousin that "we are now truly subjugated by the negros [sic], we are not allowed to crop<sup>16</sup> them, they will walk over you, if we resent it, they report and we are put in Jail." She continued to voice her concerns, saying in part:

there are thousands of negros [sic] here. The streets are filled with boys from 8 to 15 years. They will knock a white child down and stomp on it, and we can't say a word, now where is a man that has one drop of patriotism in his veins, that would

**Contraband...continued from page 11**

submit to such, and they will, on trial, tell you they believed a sick negro in preference to a white man. It's a thousand wonders, they don't do a great deal worse, knowing the privileges they have. Mrs. Robb has suffered much. They encamped near here.

Springfield has a negro regiment also when George was reaping his wheat, a squad of negros sent out there, ordered the boys to stop work and go with them, cursed George, he left them, went to a house and every one of his followed him.

My negro man left me 18 months ago, he is loafing [sic] about town....Such insolence I have to take from him I cant [sic] well stand, at the time I did not know how I could possibly get along without his services, but I have considerably this far. Medora and myself have been alone night and day, ever since her Brother joined the Army, not even a neighbor. All the houses around me is [sic] filled with contrabands, we have never been disturbed in the least, there are five thousand refugees to be quartered here this winter, all spare rooms and vacant houses will be taken....<sup>17</sup>

The number of contraband camps is unknown, although recent research puts their number in Tennessee above 100.<sup>18</sup> Regardless of the conditions in them Negroes were anxious to participate in the political process, especially in urban areas. For example a notice appeared in the Memphis Bulletin in October 1, 1864, about a Negro political meeting for purpose of advancing the political ambitions of the race:

A large and enthusiastic meeting of colored men, and colored men only, [emphasis added] was held in Collins' Chapel, Washington street, on Thursday [Sept. 29], for the purpose of electing a delegate to the National Convention of colored men to be held in Syracuse on the

4th proximo. Speeches were made by Messrs. Rankin, Foster, and Motley, and resolutions were passed expressive of their intention to cooperate with any measures that may be adopted by the Convention for the advancement of the interests of their race. Horatio M. Ranking was closed delegate by an almost unanimous vote. This was an able, earnest meeting of colored men exclusively, not white men having any connection with its management, and no women or children present. The object of the Convention is to take measures in relation to the disposition that shall be made of the freedmen who are expected to be liberated by the war. A report of their meeting will be transmitted to the heads of the departments at Washington the members of both branches of Congress and the governors of all loyal States.

Mr. Rankin [sic] started on his mission Northward today.<sup>19</sup>

In early August, 1864 a notice appeared in the Nashville which promoted a mass meeting of all Negroes in the city. The advertisement, a column long, gave a clear indication that Negroes, including contraband, were demanding their rights as "citizens" and read in part:

#### GREAT MASS MEETING OF COLORED CITIZENS.<sup>20</sup>

By invitation of the citizens of Nashville, John M. Lanston, Esq. the patriot and eloquent orator, of Oberlin, Ohio, will address them on the leading questions of the day, at "Fort Gillem," on Monday, August 15th, 1864, at 11 A. M

The citizens and public generally are invited to attend. Let every man, woman, and child come and spend one day in the cause of HUMAN FREEDOM [sic] and POLITICAL EQUALITY. Let every one [sic] who values the glorious future of OUR COUNTRY-and the future freedom of our race-turn out and honor the

distinguished orator. Come one, come all. Let us have a grand rally for our country, for the enfranchisement of our race, and FOR LIBERTY.<sup>21</sup>

## End Part II



### END NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Powers, *Pencilings*, pp. 61-63.

<sup>2</sup> In *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Topsy is a mischievous, clever little girl who hasn't been raised with any moral or intellectual instruction. In fact, was raised in complete subjugation, beaten and whipped with any instrument that comes to hand by her heartless masters.

<sup>3</sup> Powers, *Pencilings*, pp. 61-63.

<sup>4</sup> "Walk a straight line."

<sup>5</sup> Alice William Diary, entries for May 1-5, 1864. See also *Ibid.*, entries for April 26, 1864, May 9, 1864, and August 15, 1864.

<sup>6</sup> *New York Times*, August 21, 1863.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *New York Times*, February 15, 1863.

<sup>9</sup> *Papers of Andrew Johnson*, Vol. 6, p. 684. [Hereinafter cited as: PAJ].

<sup>10</sup> PAJ, Vol. 6, "Appendix," pp. 762-763; also, Vol. 7, pp. 242-244.

<sup>11</sup> *New York Times*, February 22, 1864.

<sup>12</sup> A bale of cotton weighs about 500 pounds. At thirty cents a pound times seven bales they could profit \$1,050. Quite a hefty sum in 1862. See: <https://www.cotton.org/edu/faq/>.

<sup>13</sup> *Chicago Times*, August 19, 1862. As cited in: <http://www.uttyl.edu/vbetts>.

<sup>14</sup> Fort Pickering.

<sup>15</sup> OR, Ser. I, Vol. 17, pt. II, pp. 200-202; OR, Ser. III, Vol. 4, pp. 763-772.

<sup>16</sup> That is, to hit them with a riding crop as they commonly did before the war.

<sup>17</sup> David C. Allen, ed., *Winds of Change: Robertson County, Tennessee in the Civil War*, (Nashville: Land Yacht Press, 2000), pp. 84-85. [Hereinafter: *Winds of Change*.]

<sup>18</sup> I am indebted to Steve Rogers, of the Tennessee Historical Commission/State Historic Preservation staff, and Dr. Wayne Moore, Assistant Archivists, Tennessee State Archives, for this information.

<sup>19</sup> *Memphis Bulletin*, October 1, 1864.

<sup>20</sup> The free and contraband Negroes were not yet legally citizens. Yet their use of the term gave their meeting a sense of dignity and showed they were well aware of the future they could help create through participation in the political system, even though had no claims to any protection of their persons and property. This would remain true until the passage of the 14th Amendment in 1866.

<sup>21</sup> *Nashville Daily Press & Times*, August 16, 1864.