



# Tennessee Wars Commission Annual Report, December 2021



TENNESSEE WARS COMMISSION



The Tennessee General Assembly enacted legislation in April 1994, creating the Tennessee Wars Commission (TWC), as a part of the Tennessee Historical Commission (THC). Since its establishment 27 years ago—and with only one staff position--the TWC has helped acquire and permanently protect almost 8,000 acres of historic properties, including Davis Bridge Battlefield in Hardeman County and Parkers Crossroads in Henderson County. To date, our grant funding has supported over one hundred different projects that preserve, protect, and interpret Tennessee’s military heritage. These projects have included funding archaeological excavations that pinpointed the location of Union fortifications in Franklin, publishing *A Survey of Sites Related to the American Revolution and War of 1812 in Tennessee*, and the creation of *A Path Divided: Tennessee’s Civil War Heritage Trail*, long-recognized as the most-requested brochure at Tennessee Welcome Centers.

The Tennessee Wars Commission helps coordinate planning efforts, preservation, and promotion of structures, buildings, sites, and battlefields of Tennessee from the era of the French and Indian War (1754-1763), American Revolutionary War (1775-1783), War of 1812 (1812-1815), Mexican-American War (1846-1848) through the Civil War (1861-1865). The Tennessee Wars Commission is also charged with acquiring or providing funds for the acquisition of battlefields, cemeteries, Underground Railroad sites, and other properties associated with these conflicts.

The business of the Tennessee Wars Commission is conducted at the regular meetings of the Tennessee Historical Commission. One staff member, Nina Scall, works on behalf of the Wars Commission as Director of Programs, THC Executive Director, Patrick McIntyre, Jr., serves as the Executive Director of the TWC.

## **Grant Funding**

The Wars Commission’s mission is realized in part by funding grants for a variety of projects, through civic and governmental engagement, as well as interpretation and education efforts. The administration of two grant funds, the Wars Commission Grant Fund (WCGF) and the Civil War Sites Preservation Grant Fund (CWSPF), support this preservation initiative, and help to preserve and promote the structures, buildings, sites, and battlefields of Tennessee.

### **The Wars Commission Grant Fund:**

This fund is available for various projects within Tennessee’s diverse communities relating to the above wars. Any individual, museum, educational institution, private organization, or local government body can apply. No matching funds are required but any additional contributions are favorable. This year’s grant funds totaling \$58,600.00 were awarded to the following four applicants and their projects are as follows:

#### **1. The Battle of Nashville Trust, Inc., (BoNT), Nashville, Davidson County:**

The Battle of Nashville Trust was awarded \$5,600.00 to collaborate with the Civil War Trails (CWT) staff to create and install two Civil War Trails historical markers highlighting the valor of African Americans at the Battle of Nashville, on December 15 and 16, 1864. The Civil War Trails interpretative signage will be erected in Nashville, exact locations are still being negotiated with property owners. These markers will be the first publicly available interpretation solely dedicated to the story of the U.S. Colored Troops (USCT) in Nashville.

## 2. The Heritage Foundation of Williamson County, Franklin, Williamson County:

The Heritage Foundation of Williamson County was awarded \$30,000.00 and contributed a match share of \$15,000.00 to perform a comprehensive archaeological survey of the 5.2-acre Franklin Grove Estate and Gardens site. This survey will include a ground penetrating radar (GPR) strategy, a walking survey including shovel test pits (STPs) in areas with high archaeological potential, and excavations depending on survey results. This site features two historic houses ca. 1855 and 1862, and the grounds are tied to two Civil War battles in April 1863, and November 1864, and features potential earthworks. The Franklin Grove Estate and Gardens site has strong ties to the Antebellum Period, occupation, and the homefront story during the Civil War and the Reconstruction Eras. Historical research has revealed an African American refugee camp, a Federal field hospital, and the first Freedman's Bureau school in Franklin, having occupied the property.



Precursory Archaeology Performed by Heritage Foundation Staff at Franklin Grove Estate and Garden. Artifact: 19<sup>th</sup> Century Tableware.

and domestic worker

- Circa 1843 maternity clothing
- Circa 1840 clothing of an enslaved cook
- Clothing of a child born into slavery.

## 3. Historic Castalian Springs, Castalian Springs, Sumner County:

Historic Castalian Springs, Inc., formally Historic Cragfont, was awarded \$12,000.00 to disseminate the civilian story during the War of 1812, the Mexican-American War, and the Civil War at Cragfont and Wynnewood State Historic Sites through the material culture and the interpretation of historic clothing worn by enslaved African Americans and the men and women who enslaved them. Clothing connects individuals and is deeply tied to memory, making reproduction clothing an effective tool to engage the public with the past as it allows us to connect with bygone eras. Often the history of war has been told through the lens of military uniforms however, that lens often leaves out the civilian component which is a focus of this project.

Skilled artisans who specialize in historic reproduction clothing have been contracted to construct the following historically accurate clothing items:

- War of 1812 General's uniform
- Susan Winchester's cap and ruff
- Circa 1812 clothing of an enslaved cook



Historic Cragfont:  
 Shirt Completed for General Winchester’s Uniform;  
 Patterns Drafted and Purchased for Uniform, Ruff,  
 and Cap; Fabric and Other Supplies Purchased for  
 Ruff and Cap.

These museum-quality pieces will be on display with an expanded historical narrative at the opening of the new exhibit in April 2022.

**4. Tennessee Civil War Preservation Association (TCWPA), Nashville, Davidson County:**

In 1993, the Congressionally authorized Civil War Sites Advisory Commission's "Report on the Nation's Civil War Battlefields" identified 38 high-priority Civil War battle sites in Tennessee, for preservation. Additionally, the Commission identified 122 conflict sites in Tennessee as sites recommended for further study by the State, localities, and other interested parties. In keeping with its mission, TCWPA launched an effort to study the 122 battlefields, characterize their current condition, and identify opportunities for their preservation and interpretation. TCWPA has been

awarded \$11,000.00 and contributed a match share of \$11,000.00 to address Phase I of their project which includes constructing battlefield assessments, the creation of a preliminary database, and the formation of a “Findings and Summary Report.”

The application process for the 2021-2022 Wars Commission grant cycle concluded on November 17, 2021. Projects will be scored in the new year and will be presented to the Tennessee Historical Commission board for final approval during the upcoming February 2022 meeting. In keeping with last year, the Wars Commission Grant Fund continues to be increasingly competitive, with eleven applicants, exceeding last year’s applicant numbers. The anticipated budget for this grant cycle is \$114,220.00.

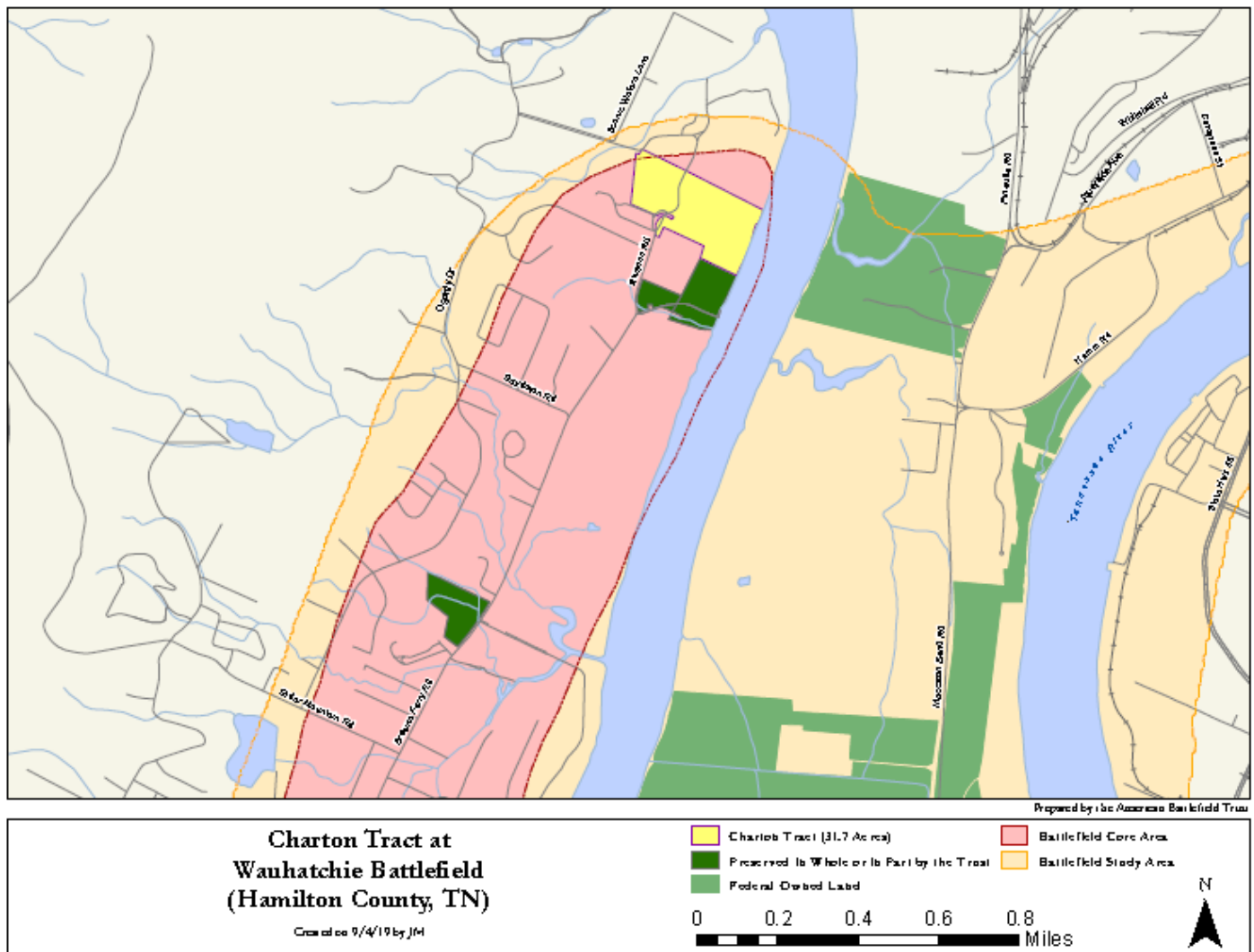
**Civil War Sites Preservation Fund:**

The Civil War Sites Preservation Fund provides matching funds for the acquisition and preservation of Civil War battlefields. Properties must be associated with the 38 most significant Civil War sites in Tennessee, as defined by the National Park Service (NPS). Funds can also assist in the acquisition and protection of Underground Railroad sites eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, or eligible for designation as a National Historic Landmark. Applicants must be a 501(c)(3) and this grant fund does require a one-to-one match of nonstate funds. Since its conception in 2013, this grant fund has preserved over 900 acres of battlefield land. In the fiscal year 2021, this grant fund awarded \$564,750.00 for the acquisition of the following three tracts of land:

**1. The Charton Tract at the Chattanooga and Wauhatchie Battlefields, Chattanooga, Hamilton County,** will be preserved with the help of the American Battlefield Trust (ABT) and the American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP). Located along Burgess Road, the approximately 30.7-acre tract lies in the core and study area of the Chattanooga and Wauhatchie Battlefields. This parcel is adjacent to acreage preserved in 2016, known as the Veal Tract, and is located on the western bank of

the Tennessee River, associated with the Brown's Ferry landing. The Charton Tract features a portion of the position that union troops took upon the ridgeline north of the ferry landing after successfully seizing the area in an amphibious assault on October 27, 1863. A portion of earthworks that originate on the Veal Tract extend into the Charton Tract.

The seizure of Brown's Ferry and the subsequent construction of a pontoon bridge helped to re-establish the supply line known as the "Cracker Line" and provided an avenue for reinforcements, specifically a portion of William T. Sherman's Army of the Tennessee. The movement of Sherman's troops was a major component of Ulysses S. Grant's plan for the Battle of Chattanooga, November 23-25, 1863. The Wars Commission granted \$344,250.00 toward the acquisition of this parcel for a project total of \$688,500.00.

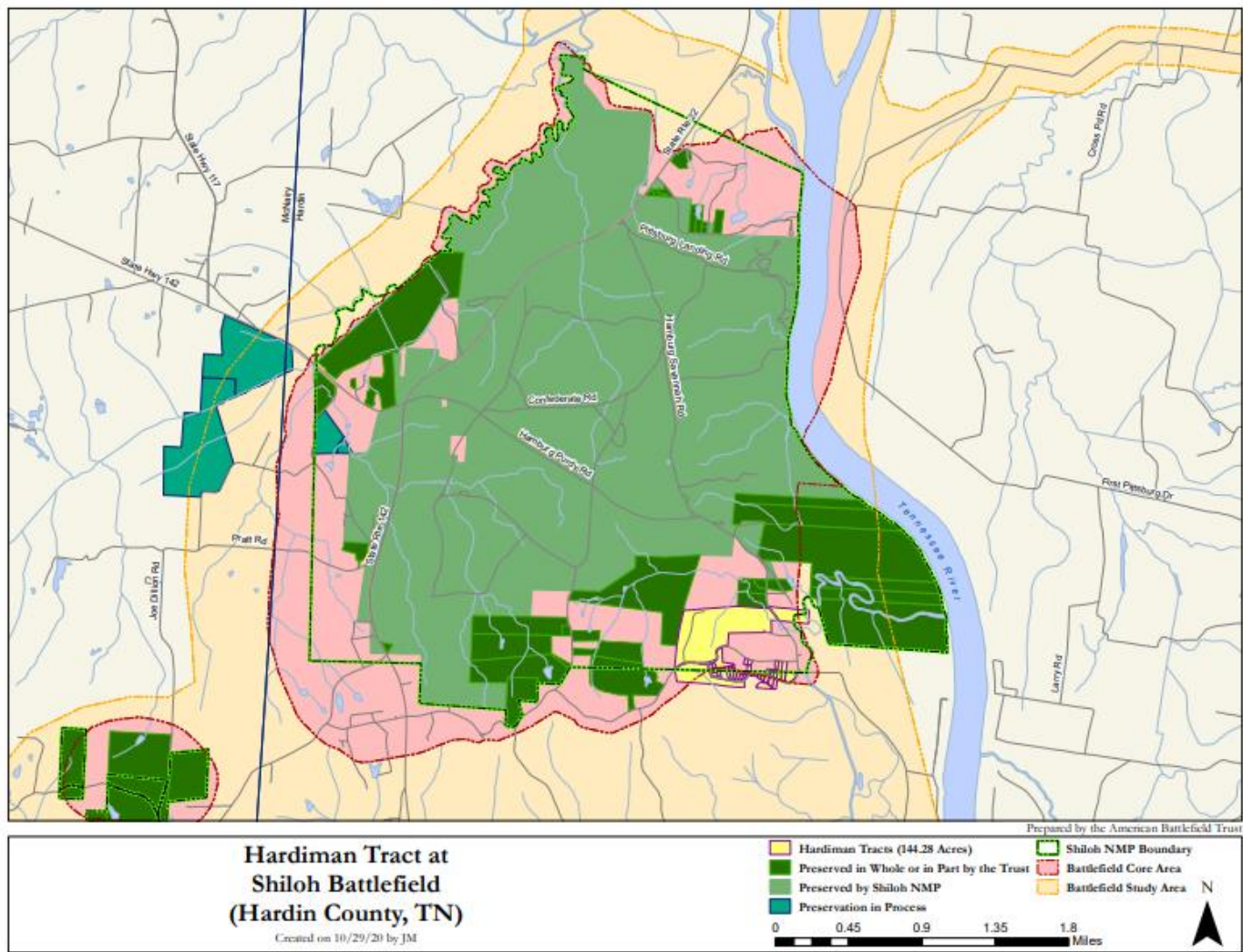


**2. The Hardiman Tract at the Shiloh Battlefield, Shiloh, Hardin County,** will be preserved with the help of the American Battlefield Trust and the American Battlefield Protection Program. The Hardiman Tract consists of approximately 144.28 acres located along Fraley Drive and Federal Roads. Much of this tract lies within the core of the battlefield and all the acreage is within the 1894 legislated boundary of Shiloh National Military Park. This parcel is adjacent to land previously



preserved by ABT, and the preservation of this tract will finally permit public access to this portion of the battlefield.

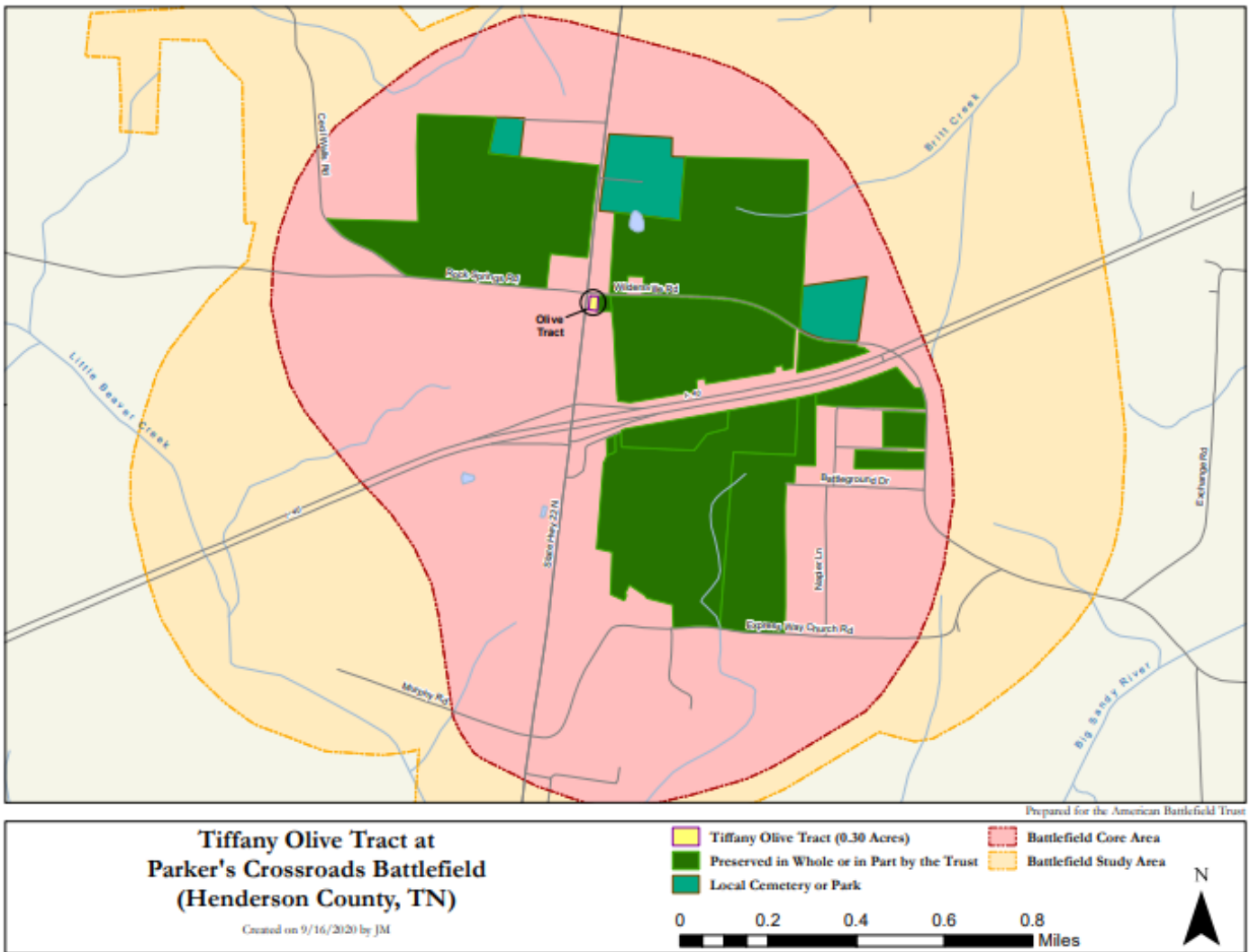
On the morning of April 6, 1862, following two hours of bitter fighting, confederate forces successfully overran Brig. Gen. Benjamin M. Prentiss' division camps. Confederate Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston, alerted to the presence of additional union forces lying in wait to flank his right, deployed two brigades to outflank Maj. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's Army of the Tennessee. Confederate forces deployed, forming battle lines along the Hardiman Tract, approximately 800 yards south of union camps, and unleashed a long-range bombardment on union troops leading to a full-on firefight. Defeated confederate troops retreated across the Hardiman Tract on April 7, 1862. The Wars Commission granted \$133,000.00 toward the acquisition of this parcel for a project total of \$419,614.00.



**3. The T. Olive Tract at the Parkers Crossroads Battlefield, City of Parkers Crossroads, Henderson County,** has been preserved with the help of the American Battlefield Trust and the American Battlefield Protection Program. The T. Olive Tract consists of one parcel, approximately one-third an acre, located along Wildersville Road. This tract is adjacent to land previously preserved in the 2019-2020 grant cycle, known as the Olive Tract, and is located just west of the namesake

crossroads. This tract is located within the core area of the battlefield. The long-term preservation plan is to donate the parcel to the State of Tennessee to be incorporated into Parkers Crossroads Battlefield Park.

Hoping to disrupt Ulysses S. Grant’s logistics supporting the Vicksburg Campaign, Gen. Braxton Bragg deployed Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest’s cavalry division into West Tennessee. On the morning of December 31, 1862, Col. Cyrus Dunham’s forces advanced over the T. Olive Tract to engage with confederate skirmishers. Forrest deployed artillery, forcing Dunham to take a new position south of the crossroads. Federal reinforcements led by Col. John Fuller arrived, surprising confederate troops and allowing for a union attack on two fronts. Forrest and his troops attacked both Dunham and Fuller then withdrew across the Tennessee River. The Wars Commission granted \$87,500.00 toward the acquisition of this parcel for a project total of \$238,975.00.



## **Civic and Government Engagement**

In addition to grants, the Wars Commission's mission is in part realized through civic and government engagement. The Wars Commission's Program Director has been serving as a historic preservation advocate to city, county, and local governments as well as to various nonprofit historical associations and historic sites throughout Tennessee. Additionally, she serves as a board member and a consultant in an advisory capacity to several boards and organizations.

Through education and preservation support, the Wars Commission has expanded historic interests and preservation participation by formulating new and strengthening existing relationships with historic sites and battlefield parks, historical societies, and heritage groups throughout Tennessee and neighboring states. Although Covid-19 has impacted many of these efforts, recent examples of this type of engagement and collaboration are as follows:



Matt Gardner Freedman's Homestead, Elkton,  
Tennessee

- In April, the Wars Commission conducted its first site visit post-Covid-19 to the Gardner Homestead, a late 19<sup>th</sup>-century freedman's farmstead in Elkton, Tennessee. There, the Wars Commission met with The Land Trust for Tennessee and a descendant of the enslaved Matt Gardner to assess additional preservation opportunities for the site.
- The Wars Commission provides ongoing consultation with the Friends of Salem Cemetery Historic Site, Madison County Parks and Recreation (MCPR), the American Battlefield Trust, and the State of Tennessee to facilitate the creation of a battlefield park featuring historical interpretation and recreational walking trails.
- Director Scall serves on the Fort Negley Technical Advisory Committee and through ongoing consultation with Fort Negley stakeholders, Nashville Metro Parks and Recreation, and the Adventure Science Center she helps to provide direction on best archaeological and preservation practices.
- In August, Director Scall collaborated with the Civil War Trails staff to conduct archaeology at Rippavilla Plantation in Spring Hill and the Carter House State Historic Site in Franklin prior to the installation of Civil War Trails interpretative markers.





Director Scall Conducting Archaeology at the Carter House State Historic Site with Civil War Trails Executive Director Drew Gruber and Assistant Director Chris Brown.

## **Interpretation and Education**

Interpretation and education efforts help to further advance the Wars Commission's mission throughout Tennessee. Director Scall's recent work has included the development of a conservation easement monitoring strategy however, Covid-19 has derailed much of her site visits. She is currently working to meet easement monitoring needs virtually through the anticipated application of LENS software which is designed to harness satellite technology and by applying Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology. The use of GIS technology is the result of a recent collaboration between the Wars Commission and TDEC GIS staff. Through the creation of a series of map layers identifying state-owned war-related properties and properties held under easement, the Wars Commission can monitor those sites more closely. Site visits and property inspections ensure that the preservation clauses and conditions of these conservation easements are being met by the property owners, as well as by providing an opportunity to photograph baseline conditions at some of the more recently acquired easement tracts.

Additionally, this collaboration with TDEC GIS staff will result in a project that creates new research and educational opportunities both for the public and the Wars Commission by connecting researchers and students to a plethora of war-related information. Through the creation of various map layers, applications, and detailed information fields, these information tiers will identify battle campaigns, troop movements, veteran cemeteries, and relevant archaeological sites; they will identify collections information for war-related artifacts and can help to identify battlefields and war-related sites in need of preservation and acquisition, furthering the mission of the Wars Commission. The potential for this database is huge and it will be an ever-evolving project that will begin focusing on the Civil War and the Underground Railroad but will expand to encompass the additional wars included in the purview of the Wars Commission.

The Wars Commission continues to advocate for the preservation and protection of Fort Negley. The Program Director serves on the Fort Negley Technical Advisory Committee to consult on preservation plans including archaeology and the stabilization and interpretation of both the 1860s fort and the later work done by the WPA in the 1930s. She also advises on the proposed changes suggested by the Adventure Science Center to their leased 11-acre Fort Negley property that contains intact archaeological foundations and in situ material culture related to the contraband camp, an 1860s encampment of self-emancipated slaves who helped to construct the fort.

Educational opportunities have been tempered since the pandemic, but the Wars Commission hosted a booth in conjunction with the Tennessee Historical Commission at the Bicentennial Mall's 25th Anniversary celebration on Statehood Day in June 2021, where staff educated the public on the Wars Commission's mission, preservation efforts, and THC's various programs.



Director Scall Manning the Wars Commission Booth at the Bicentennial Capitol Mall's Statehood Day Celebrations.

The Historical Commission and a Wars Commission representative were present at Camp Blount's Volunteer Day in October 2021. This day was dedicated to students and allowed for an invaluable educational opportunity to discuss the preservation of Camp Blount, the War of 1812 muster site. Volunteer day also created an opportunity to educate students about historic preservation.

### Conservation Efforts

Conservation efforts have also been tempered due to the global pandemic however, easement signs have been fabricated,

designating the properties as protected under easement by the State and the Tennessee Historical and Wars Commissions. The Wars Commission is working with the sign manufacturer to complete the extensive process of installation throughout Tennessee. Easement signs have been installed at sites in Maury and Williamson Counties with plans to expand installation into neighboring counties after the new year.

Currently, the Historical Commission holds conservation easements on approximately 2000 acres of battlefield property in nine counties throughout Tennessee.

Although Covid-19 continues to create many challenges, much has been accomplished over the last year, yet our work as preservation professionals is never done. Even though the virus remains prevalent, Director Scall is optimistic about preservation efforts in FY-2022; by continuing to think out of the box, the Wars Commission will carry on working to meet our mission of preserving Tennessee's military heritage.



Conservation Easement Sign Installation at Rippavilla Plantation, Spring Hill, Tennessee.

