



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

Notes from the President 3/2018

BCWRT Community:

Welcome to spring and to Daylight Saving Time (DST). Hopefully, we'll soon have weather suitable for gallivanting around Civil War sites. By the way, DST was not around in the 1860's. (Ben Franklin wrote about the idea of 'saving daylight'; however, his proposal was geared toward changing sleep times and not moving clocks.) DST wasn't adopted until World War I.

Ward Hill Lamon was a Virginia born lawyer and Abraham Lincoln's personal friend and self-appointed bodyguard. Author, historian, civil war podcast host and historic interpreter Bob O'Connor will have a "first person" presentation on Ward Hill Lamon at our meeting on Tuesday, March 27 at 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, April 24, is the date of the BCWRT Annual Banquet. National Park Service Historian Emeritus, Ed Bearss will continue his presentation on Reconstruction begun at last year's event. Our new venue for the banquet is Columbus Gardens, 4301 Klosterman Ave., Baltimore, MD. 21236. Klosterman Ave. intersects US Route 1 (Belair Rd) about a mile north of Rossville Blvd. The cocktail hour begins at 6 p.m. with dinner being served at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$35.00. Please see the flyer located on the website. Please urge your friends to attend and don't forget to purchase your own tickets.

On May 22, author Scott L. Mingus, Sr. will speak on his book, *The Second Battle of Winchester: The Confederate Victory That Opened the Door to Gettysburg June 13-15, 1863*.

History Interpreter Darlene Colon will appear as the important, but, not well known Civil War figure Lydia Hamilton Smith. This will be our June 26 meeting.

Founded by free blacks from Maryland and located six miles above the Mason/Dixon Line, the small village of Hinsonville, Pennsylvania sent 18 men to serve the Union forces. On July 24, Dr. Cheryl Renee Gooch will introduce you to the *Hinsonville's Heroes* whose impact on the United States is still being felt.

BALTIMORE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

Thanks to Jenny Bowlus for providing newsletter pictures of last month's speaker Dr. Anita Henderson. Thanks also for the positive feedback received from last month's presentation.

IMPORTANT REMINDER: *Remember, it's time to renew your membership for 2018.* Yearly dues are \$25.00 for an individual membership, \$35.00 for a family membership. If you have already paid, Ray Atkins will have your membership card at our next meeting. *We are always looking for new members. Invite a friend to our meetings. The BCWRT has many good things happening. Please spread the word.*

Robert L. Ford,

President

Sewanee seeks untold story of university's ties to slavery, segregation in reconciliation project

By David Paulsen

Posted Mar 6, 2018



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER



The University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee, hosts a dedication ceremony May 16, 1940, for a memorial to Confederate Gen. Edmund Kirby-Smith, who also taught math at Sewanee after the Civil War. Photo courtesy of University Archives and Special Collections: The University of the South

[Episcopal News Service] [Sewanee: The University of the South](#) in Tennessee sits atop a plateau, and students interested in viewing the expanse of valley to the west are invited to hike some of the more than 50 miles of trails across the campus, known as the Domain.

Seeing those landscapes is enough to know their beauty. “The stretch of Perimeter Trail from Morgan’s Steep to Armfield Bluff affords wonderful views to the valley and into deep coves,” one professor recommended in a 2008 [Sewanee Magazine article profiling the best day hikes](#) on Sewanee’s 13,000 acres.



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

The names given these places, however, reflect a time when Sewanee's early leaders openly embraced a belief in white racial superiority. Oliver Morgan was a member of one of the most prominent slaveholding families in Louisiana, and John Armfield was part owner in a leading U.S. slave-trading operation.

Both men contributed to the original founding of the university by dioceses of the Episcopal Church in 1857. Church leaders across the South who supported the new university saw it as their Christian duty to help maintain the slaveholding order, according to Woody Register, a Sewanee history professor who is leading a six-year research project on Sewanee's early ties to slavery and segregation.

"The University of the South was founded to be the slavers' university, to represent the interests of a slaveholding society," Register said, and that mission was clearly seen through a Christian lens that saw slavery as morally defensible. "You can't separate its church purposes, its religious purposes, from the social purposes of the university."

That vision never materialized. By the time Sewanee opened its doors in 1868, the Civil War was over and slavery had been abolished. How the University of the South recalibrated its mission in that new order is one focus of the university-sponsored [Project on Slavery, Race, and Reconciliation](#).

"I like to think of this as there being two foundings," Vice Chancellor John McCardell Jr. told Episcopal News Service. "One, the founding that failed, and one that succeeded." The founding that succeeded, he added, was not driven by a desire to maintain slavery.

Even 150 years after that second founding, those who fought to maintain slavery are still honored at Sewanee, and such public honors, especially those bestowed on Confederate army leaders, have faced increased scrutiny at Sewanee and institutions around the United States in the aftermath of [deadly violence at a white supremacist, neo-Confederate rally](#) in Charlottesville, Virginia last summer.

Those events in August sparked a [national debate over Confederate imagery in public spaces](#). Register's team at Sewanee, barely a month into its research, was asked to provide information



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

supporting university administrators' decision to [relocate a prominent memorial honoring Confederate Gen. Edmund Kirby-Smith](#), who taught at Sewanee after the Civil War.

Re-examining Confederate symbols, though numerous on campus, is not the sole focus of Sewanee's project. The Project on Slavery, Race, and Reconciliation, part of a coalition of three dozen universities known as the [Universities Studying Slavery](#), aims to expand the narrative of the university's founding and its first century beyond what can be told through Sewanee's own archival documents.

Register's team is "casting our net much more broadly" for new details of that untold story by examining records kept across the South in places where the university received its early financial support – including in some of the 28 Episcopal dioceses that [still own and govern the university today](#).

The project's work also is integrated into Sewanee's academic life, with [several students serving on the project working group](#).

"If we can acknowledge the past, then we can progress, so I think this is a huge step," said Jonathan Brown, a senior who is on the project's group.

Brown, an American studies major, is black and grew up in Silver Spring, Maryland. He chose to attend Sewanee after receiving a scholarship, and he didn't know much about the university's history at first. In his four years there, he fell in love with Sewanee and its close-knit community while having the opportunity to learn more about its past.

With the Project on Slavery, Brown has helped organize some of its public events while preparing the younger students on the team for the work they will do in years ahead.

"I've loved every moment of it," he said of his work on the project. "I'm really excited to see where it takes off."

Silver Spring is a suburb of Washington, D.C., and Brown recalls conversations with his parents about the research Georgetown University was conducting on its historical complicity with slavery, including its [sale in 1838 of 272 slaves to keep the university running](#).

BALTIMORE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

The Episcopal Church has taken similar steps to confront its past. Presiding Bishop Michael Curry has made racial reconciliation one of his top priorities, most notably through the ["Becoming Beloved Community"](#) initiative. And General Convention has passed [numerous resolutions on the subject](#), including a 2006 resolution about slavery.

"The Episcopal Church acknowledges its history of participation in this sin and the deep and lasting injury which the institution of slavery and its aftermath have inflicted on society and on the Church," [the resolution said](#), and it called on each diocese to compile evidence of that complicity.

Racial reconciliation also is a goal of Sewanee's project, as it reaches beyond the campus to foster discussion in the community about these issues. One recent example was the Feb. 19 forum titled "Reading and Rereading History" featuring two Sewanee professors discussing symbols of racial injustice on campus. The event was held off campus to encourage a mix of students and residents to participate.

"I certainly think the what we're doing here is consistent with what the church is seeking to do," said McCardell, the vice chancellor, who is an Episcopalian.

Research on roots in slavery gains in urgency

Sewanee has grappled for years with how to balance an appreciation for its history with a desire to confront and move beyond its past ties to racial oppression.

A [2005 New York Times story](#) detailed changes Sewanee was making at that time to appeal to a more geographically and racially diverse pool of potential students – changes dismissed as destructive or unnecessary by some alumni. Despite the removal of some overtly racist symbols, administrators told the Times they had no intention of getting rid of certain other landmarks that had been fixtures on the campus for decades, such as the Kirby-Smith memorial.

The [university's 2012 strategic plan](#) also emphasized a commitment to fostering a diverse campus community, and in the 2015-2016 academic year, Sewanee [created several task forces of students and faculty](#) to study ways of fulfilling that commitment.



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

That effort came just as the national conversation around Confederate symbols had deepened after a June 2015 shooting in Charleston, South Carolina, in which a gunman with Confederate sympathies murdered nine people at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church.

In fall 2015, Sewanee [removed a portrait of Leonidas Polk from public display](#). Polk was the Episcopal bishop who led the drive to create the University of the South before joining the Confederate army as a general during the Civil War. (He was killed in battle.) A portrait known as “Sword Over the Gown” shows Polk vested as a bishop but with his Confederate uniform draped over a chair and his military sword beside him.

The portrait, said to be a copy of the original, was moved from Convocation Hall to Sewanee’s archives, sparking a mix of support and criticism.

The following year, Sewanee joined the Universities Studying Slavery. McCardell and other top administrators asked Register in August 2016 to lead the Sewanee Project on Slavery, and over the winter, [Register and a graduate student, Tanner Potts, drafted a plan](#) for the six-year project that launched in July 2017.

Register expected to spend two or three years researching the history of the campus’s tributes to Kirby-Smith and other Confederate and slaveholding figures, inviting input from all sides before recommending any changes.

By fall 2017, however, the work had grown in urgency.

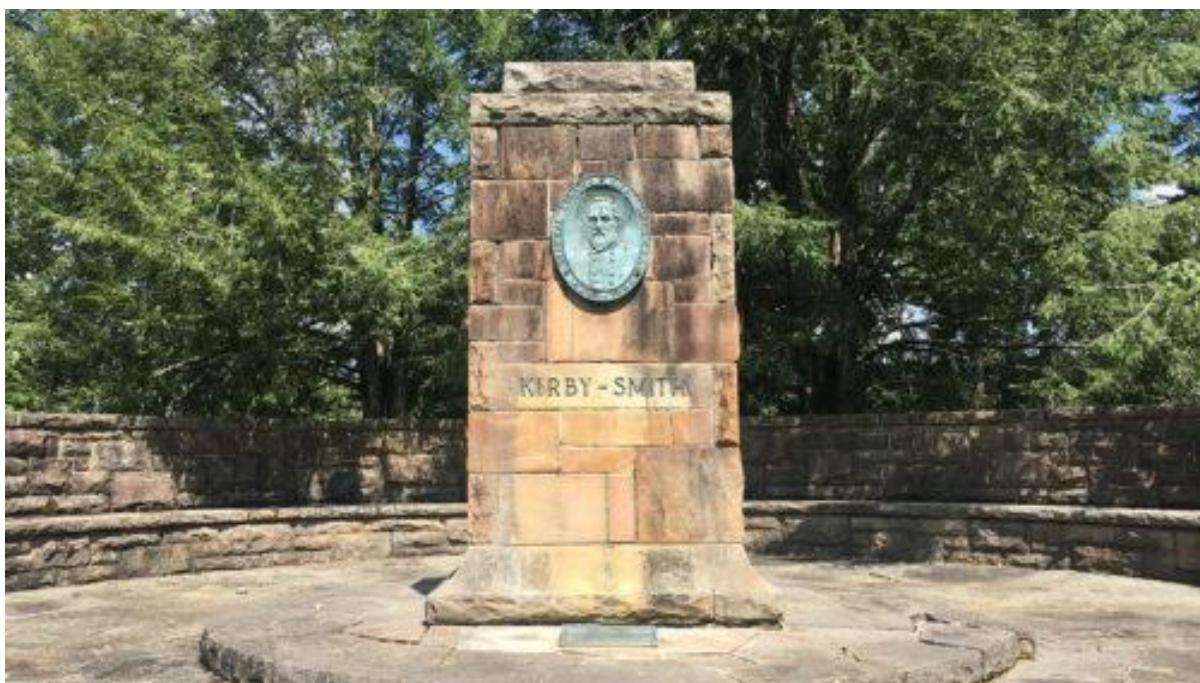
“We did not anticipate the way in which events would develop over the summer, and part of our mission all along was to evaluate and figure out what to do with the many, many memorials and monuments to the antebellum slaveholding order and the Confederacy on our campus,” Register said. “The events of Charlottesville accelerated the schedule for doing that.”

Other Episcopal institutions, too, have fought to keep pace with current events while assessing what to do about Confederate symbols. Washington National Cathedral had embarked on what it thought would be a two-year process of discerning whether to keep or remove images of the Confederate flag in its stained-glass windows. After the violence in Charlottesville, the dean announced abruptly last fall that [no further deliberation was needed, and the flags were removed](#).



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

The clashes between hate groups and counterprotesters in Charlottesville centered around the city's decision to take down a statue of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee. Soon after those clashes, McCardell said he was contacted by [a descendant of Kirby-Smith asking that the memorial at Sewanee be moved](#) to the campus cemetery, where it would be less likely to become a flashpoint for controversy.



Edmund Kirby-Smith was a Confederate general who later taught mathematics at the University of the South at Sewanee, Tennessee, where this monument to the general is located. It was moved last year from this location to the university cemetery. Photo: Caroline Carson

McCardell moved forward with that plan in the fall, after consulting with Register's team about the history of the memorial. It had been proposed in the 1920s by the Daughters of the Confederacy, but because fundraising was difficult during the Great Depression, it wasn't installed until 1940, Register said.



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

His team confirmed the memorial was on campus property, dispelling rumors that the land had been given away long ago. And research into the memorial's dedication ceremony, which bore a military motif and featured display of the Confederate battle flag, indicated that Kirby-Smith was honored more for his Civil War record than for his later career as a math professor.

The university moved the memorial to the cemetery with little fanfare.

"The idea is to understand things as best we can before we act," Register said.

Studying the past to shape Sewanee's future

Register, a native of Alabama, graduated from Sewanee in 1980 and has taught history at the university for 26 years. (He received his doctorate from Brown University, [an early trailblazer](#) among the Universities Studying Slavery.)

As Register expanded his understanding of Sewanee's ties to slavery and segregation, he gradually worked some of those details into his teaching and scholarly articles. About three years ago, he helped produce an exhibition on Sewanee manhood called "[Founded to Make Men](#)" that foreshadowed his present work with the Project on Slavery.

"It changed how I thought about the history of the university," Register said.

His research suggested that Sewanee originally was conceived as a place where Southern men would be taught to be leaders of the slaveholding order in the antebellum South. He disputes criticisms that learning more about that history and its representation in present-day landmarks is a step toward "destroying the past."

"It's quite the opposite," he said. "We're trying to better understand the past, and there's a lot here that we need to know more about."

As examples, Register noted that some dormitories are named for Confederate military figures, such as Charles Todd Quintard, a Confederate chaplain who later became the Diocese of Tennessee's first post-war bishop and served as Sewanee's vice chancellor. (Quintard is



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

[celebrated by the Episcopal Church every Feb. 16.](#)) Another dormitory is named for Josiah Gorgas, a Confederate general who later served as president of the University of Alabama.

"I think Woody's approach to this has been quite sound and in the best tradition of academia," McCardell said. "Let's study the issue from all angles. ... The perspective of time ought never to be underestimated. The decisions made in the heat of the moment are not necessarily the wisest decisions."

The work of the Project on Slavery has revealed how many connections to Sewanee's antebellum roots are found scattered around the campus, sometimes in subtle ways, as with the various place names taken from the men who gave money for the university's founding.

"The Kirby-Smith memorial is an easy one to address, in a way," Register said. "There are others. Our campus is paved with monuments and memorials."

Will changing the names of places on campus help achieve that goal? Register's team is not yet ready to make recommendations, though there is a broad spectrum of options available, from changing names and moving monuments to creating digital resources that provide deeper historical context for landmarks that evoke an earlier era.

"The most important thing first is that we make this history known and not make the argument that, that was long ago and it doesn't matter," Register said. "It does matter, and it should matter to us today."

"And to be honest and forthright about it is critical, especially critical if you're going to understand what having this history does for your thinking about the mission and the goals of the university."

— David Paulsen is an editor and reporter for the Episcopal News Service. He can be reached at dpaulsen@episcopalchurch.org.

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BALTIMORE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

Gettysburg National Military Park plans prescribed fires in the southern portion of the battlefield in late March or April

BALTIMORE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE





THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

Burn area for prescribed fire.

NPS



News Release Date: March 8, 2018

Contact: [Katie Lawhon](#), 717-338-4402

Gettysburg National Military Park fire managers are preparing for a prescribed fire on two days from late March to late April, weather permitting. The plans call for burning portions of a 215 acre burn unit between Devil's Den and South Confederate Avenue. Fuel and weather conditions must be within certain parameters and that will determine the exact date for each of the one-day operations.

Prescribed fires allow fire managers to conduct a safe burn under optimal conditions with sufficient resources available to meet specific objectives for the management of battlefield resources. Gettysburg's overall objectives are to maintain the conditions of the battlefield as experienced by the soldiers who fought here; perpetuate the open space character of the landscape; maintain wildlife habitat; control exotic invasive species; reduce shrub and woody species components; and reduce fuels in wooded areas to reduce fire hazard.

Temporary Road Closures Planned: During the prescribed fire, multiple roads will likely be closed for portions of the day including South Confederate Avenue, and Sickles Avenue at Devil's Den. Closures may last two or three days. Pedestrian and equestrian trails located within the burn area will also be closed.

Additional roads, trails and areas may be closed temporarily if smoke conditions reduce visibility to a level that would cause visibility problems and public and firefighter safety concerns. Up-to-date information on this and any other closures and fire activity will be posted on the park's website, www.nps.gov/gett, and social media sites, using the hashtag, #GettysburgNPS.



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

The timing of the prescribed fire is dependent on conditions being within required weather parameters such as wind, temperature, and relative humidity. The prescribed fire will be conducted from approximately late morning through the afternoon, followed by patrol and monitoring to ensure the fire is completely out.

A combination of lawn-sprinklers, hoses, mowed lines, and fire engines will be used to create a buffer and fire break to protect monuments and other cultural resources in the burn area. National Park Service staff will monitor air quality and smoke impacts as well as visibility on nearby roads.

Gettysburg National Military Park preserves, protects and interprets for this and future generations the resources associated with the 1863 Battle of Gettysburg, during the American Civil War, the Soldiers' National Cemetery, and their commemorations.

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Civil War Trust News

Now in its 22nd year, Park Day is a family-friendly preservation event to clean up and restore America's hallowed battlefields and historic sites

By: Clint Schemmer, Courtney Wilke,

February 23, 2018

(Washington, D.C.) – Volunteers of all ages and abilities can give back to their country, get out of the house, and honor people of the past by aiding the Civil War Trust on Saturday, April 7, for Park Day 2018. Park Day is an annual, nationwide, hands-on preservation event to help maintain America's battlefields and historic sites. And with 160 sites in 32 states and the District of Columbia signed up to participate so far, this year's Park Day will be by far the largest ever.

2018's diverse group of Park Day sites gives volunteers many options for locations, specific projects and historical background. In recent years, the Civil War Trust has expanded Park Day

BALTIMORE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

to include Revolutionary War and War of 1812 sites. Now, participants from Gettysburg, Pa., to Modesto, Calif. – and Perryville, Ky., to Princeton, N.J. – will have the opportunity to help keep America's hallowed grounds and outdoor classrooms looking their best. Across the country, all historic parks, homes, museums, forts, and cemeteries, etc., are invited to participate.

"Park Day volunteers are critically important to historic sites that must balance basic maintenance needs with limited budgets and small staffs," Civil War Trust President James Lighthizer said. "Visitors really do notice the difference after our legions of volunteers pitch in and clean up!"

Since 1996, thousands of community-minded citizens – including Boy and Girl Scouts, Rotarians, Lions Club members, church groups, ROTC units, youth groups and many others – have taken part in Park Day. Activities can include building trails, raking leaves, painting signs, putting up fences and contributing to site interpretation. In addition to the satisfaction that volunteer work brings, participants receive official Park Day T-shirts, and may have the chance to hear a local historian describe people and events of the past at their site.

Venues can hold their event on an alternate date; in 2018, about a dozen sites will do so, starting on March 10 and ending on May 12. Read the [FAQ](#) for more information.

In 2017, 138 sites throughout the country held Park Day events, with the help of nearly 6,000 volunteers who donated more than 24,000 man-hours of effort. Every freshly painted fence, cannon or newly planted tree makes each place better prepared for the visitors who will come this year to learn more about their nation's history.

The Civil War Trust is a national nonprofit land preservation organization devoted to the protection of America's hallowed battlegrounds. It saves the battlefields of the Civil War, the Revolutionary War and War of 1812, and educates the public about their importance in forging the nation we are today. To date, the Trust has preserved over 48,000 acres of battlefield land in 24 states.

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The War In Their Words: I Was Rapidly Bleeding to Death

BALTIMORE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

By Keith S. Bohannon
June 2018 Civil War Times Magazine

Mississippi Colonel recounts the 1864 Tennessee Campaign

Somehow, Colonel M.D.L. Stephens had remained unscathed as he led his 31st Mississippi Infantry toward the death-dealing Union earthworks at the November 30, 1864, Battle of Franklin. Stephens had made himself even a bigger target when he scooped up his regiment's flag after its color-bearer fell shot. Then a Yankee bullet found him and put him down.

Marcus De Lafayette Stephens was a prosperous, 31-year-old doctor in Calhoun County, Miss., at the time of Abraham Lincoln's election in November 1860. After Stephens represented Calhoun County at the Mississippi Secession Convention, he became a lieutenant in the 17th Mississippi Infantry, serving in Virginia until February 1862. Stephens returned home at that point to raise a company of the 31st Mississippi, and was elected lieutenant colonel of the regiment shortly after its organization. The men of the 31st spent the following two years marching, camping, and fighting in their home state and Alabama before joining the Army of Tennessee during the Battle of Resaca, Ga., the first major engagement of the 1864 Atlanta Campaign.

Stephens led his regiment through that campaign, during which he received a promotion to colonel. Due to illness, he missed one of the 31st's bloodiest days of the Civil War at the Battle of Peachtree Creek. Following the evacuation of Atlanta and several weeks of rest in September 1864, the 31st marched with the Army of Tennessee into northern Georgia in an offensive movement led by Lt. Gen. John B. Hood. The Confederates eventually advanced into northern Alabama, Hood planning to cross the Tennessee River and liberate middle Tennessee.

On October 26, 1864, Hood ordered a portion of his army to surround the fortified Union garrison occupying the town of Decatur, Ala., on the Tennessee River. Hood hoped to seize the town and use the pontoon bridge constructed there by the Federals to get his army over the river. The 31st, part of a brigade of Mississippians commanded by Brig. Gen. Winfield S. Featherston, occupied the far right of the Confederate line around Decatur, supporting a number of Southern artillery batteries adjacent to the Tennessee River. Unfortunately for the Confederates, the earthworks protecting these cannon had been poorly prepared.



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

Following a day of relative inactivity on October 27, the Federal commander in Decatur decided to attack the Southern batteries located on the Tennessee River because they threatened the Union's pontoon bridge. The unit chosen for the assault was the untried 14th U.S. Colored Troops. This regiment, numbering 363 enlisted men and officers, charged across open ground for several hundred yards before going over the "slight works" protecting the Confederate artillery and capturing four pieces. Before the Federals could move the guns, Confederate infantry, including the 31st Mississippi, advanced to retake the cannon and the 14th quickly retired to the Union earthworks with a loss of 55 men killed and wounded. This action is described by Colonel Stephens in the following memoir excerpt.

Stephens, like many Confederates, expressed contempt for the fighting ability and bravery of African-American troops. The Union commander at Decatur, Brig. Gen. Robert Granger, however, expressed a positive opinion about the 14th U.S.C.T.'s action on October 28, 1864. Granger claimed that the performance of the African Americans "was everything that could be expected or desired of soldiers. They were cool, grave, and determined, and under the heavy fire of the enemy exhibited no signs of confusion." The day after the action at Decatur involving the 14th and the Mississippians, Hood decided to march his army farther west to find a different crossing of the Tennessee.

In the weeks following the engagement at Decatur, Hood's Army eventually crossed the Tennessee River at Florence, Ala., and moved into Tennessee. On November 30, 1864, the Confederates faced an entrenched Union Army at Franklin. In the frontal attacks launched by Hood that day, Featherston's Brigade occupied a position on the far Confederate right. As the Mississippians advanced through the cut of the Nashville and Decatur Railroad, they found themselves under artillery fire from Union cannon on the other side of the Harpeth River in Fort Granger. Once the Southerners had passed through the cut, they faced lines of abatis and obstructions placed in front of the Federal lines. Advancing on both sides of the Lewisburg Pike, Featherston's men faced a hailstorm of canister fire from Union cannon as well as volleys of musketry. Incredibly, some Confederates made it to the Union parapet, including Colonel Stephens, although most quickly became casualties. When the fighting ended, the 31st Mississippi had lost approximately 145 men killed and wounded out of 250 taken into the battle.

Stephens survived, and in 1899, he penned a memoir of his Confederate service, which included the sections below of fighting at Decatur and Franklin. Stephens' unpub-lished memoir is in the



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

Mississippi Department of Archives and History. Some paragraph breaks have been added to enhance readability.

BALTIMORE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER



BALTIMORE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

Front Yard, Front Line: Union troops pose along a breastwork constructed during their 1864 defense of Decatur, Ala. Confederate Lt. Gen. John Bell Hood failed in his effort to seize the town in order to use a Union-built pontoon bridge to transport his army across the Tennessee River. (Courtesy Morgan County Archives, Decatur, Alabama)

Engagement at Decatur

We rested a day and marched to Decatur, Ala. where we attacked and drove the enemy back within their entrenchments [on October 26, 1864]. We formed line of battle all around Decatur but on the river side, the enemy came down the river with Gunboats and shelled our position several hours. I was now in command of my Regiment[,] Gen'l [Winfield S.] Featherston in command of Brig[ade]. My Regt was on our extreme right near the river.

We had thrown up temporary breastworks and had a battery of 4 guns, in our line. The battery was ordered some 200 yards in front of the line of our entrenchments...and was shelling the enemies' line. When a Brigade of Negroes [actually only the 14th U.S.C.T.] moved under cover of the river bank and attacked and drove back our skirmish line & captured the 4 pieces of artillery. Then, my Regt. rose up from the trenches and poured a galling fire into the enemy, now surrounding the captured cannon.

...We gave them 3 or 4 volleys, and then charged them. It was about 300 yards to their line and we pressed them with our small arms and cannon as long as it could be used. We captured our 4 pieces and killed and wounded many of the negroe troops. They all seemed drunk & made but a feeble resistance. We killed many but did not attempt to capture any.

The reason they captured our battery was that we had two of our companies on skirmish line in front of the battery and the enemy pressed our skirmish line back, but the skirmishers held them in check as long as they could & then slowly retreated back...so the battery could not fire at the enemy without killing our men. Our men could not fire on the enemy until our men came back to us. Companies E & F were on the skirmish line and several of them were killed and many



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

wounded. As the Regiment drove back the brigade of Negroes the field was colored black with dead negroe soldiers. We took the line of entrenchments in our front and I sent Gen'l.

Featherston word that we had the enemies' line of entrenchments and could enter the city if he wished. He ordered [us] to hold our position for further orders. My soldiers all got a nice silver watch & \$30 from the pockets of the dead negroes as they had recently been paid off. We had a regiment full of watches & money for a while.

At midnight we were ordered back to our line of entrenchments and then ordered to move to the left and follow the moving column, which we did, and morning found us on the R.R. moving in the direction of Tuscumbia the rest of the army having already moved forward, we bringing up the rear. My Regiment had been continuously moving and fighting for three days and nights without rations or sleep....

Key Artery: The Federal pontoon bridge across the Tennessee River at Decatur. After the Confederates failed to capture the town, Hood moved his army to the south to bypass Union forces and work his way into Tennessee. (Courtesy Morgan County Archives, Decatur, Alabama)

Battle of Franklin

Our division early in the morning [on November 29, 1864] crossed Duck River some 8 or 10 miles above Columbia and moved in the direction of Spring Hill which place we reached at dark and formed line east of RR. We rested on our arms in battle line all night, while the enemy was rapidly retreating on the [Columbia] Turn Pike road not more than 200 yards from our line. The men were restless and wanted to charge & fire upon the retreating line, but we were restrained and let the enemy with artillery & baggage trains pass. Early in the morning we moved out on the Pike road and followed closely upon the retreating enemy. The road was blockaded with broken weapons & dead horses. We arrived in front of Franklin late in the evening and found the enemy well posted and fortified in a circle around the city from Harpeth River above to the river below. They appeared to have three strong lines of entrenchments posted in our front.

With a "solid rebel yell" we charged the works



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

We formed line of battle our Division was on the extreme right—all of the bands before going to our army were posted on a high ridge and commenced playing Dixie and our whole line was ordered to charge in 2 lines. Just as the cannonading opened and we moved to the onset, a shell bursted in front of Company A of my regiment & killed & wounded seven men, the killed and wounded were sent to the rear. The men took the line of advance and the line closed up into a scathing fire of shot and shell from our right across the river and in front. We crossed the [Nashville & Decatur] R.R. and moved on the enemy's line, just to the left of an old gin house. We found a spring abatis in our front of locust without timber about 60 yards in front of their breastworks....This main line was well built & stubbornly defended...with cannon well posted all along the line [and] troops...armed with 16 shooting Henry Rifles...behind strong breastworks with large heavy head logs assembled in the top of works with post holes.

We came in range of small arms as soon as we crossed the Rail Road and with a "solid rebel yell" we charged the works and soon reached the abatis which deranged our line, but we soon pressed through the obstructions and rapidly reformed in front of the last breastworks, when the order was given

to fix bayonets and charge. Color bearer after color bearer had been shot down until the colors were borne by the color Sergt. [G.A. Spencer] Neal, and as he fell, he handed me the flag, which I took rather reluctantly for [there] had already been killed & wounded 10 men bearing this flag in this battle, but I took it in my left hand and looked around for the command only a few scattering men were seen advancing. The rest were lying down.

With the flag in my hand & repeated the command charge...the few living men, rushed forward with me to the breastworks. Some went over the works, others were shot at the works. Just as I was in the act of planting our flag in the breastworks of the enemy, I was shot down wounded in my right thigh just below my hip—the thigh bone being shattered and a small artery severed. I fell down in the trenches of the enemy and Sergt. [Gregory T.] Hunter ran up to me. I handed him the flag, and as he took it, his right arm was shot & took the flag in his left hand and I told him to run back with it & save it, if possible, which he did, and the old flag is still preserved at Houston, Miss. The few men that were not killed or wounded fell back on the reserve and charged again with them but were again repulsed.

Gen'l [John] Adams with his Brig[ade] supported Featherston in this charge and the 15th Miss. Regt. Col. [Michael] Farrell was the support of my Regt. & as my men fell back he cried out



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

"Steady men, fix bayonets." Adams' Brig[ade] was soon repulsed and fell back. Gen'l Adams and Col. Farrell were both mortally wounded in this charge. I lay in the trenches, while the charge was being made and when Adams' Brig[ade] fell back and night came on, a Federal soldier came over their works and came to me. He saw I was rapidly bleeding to death and he cut off the tail of my coat and made [a] bandage and bound around my thigh—placed the knot in the wound—gave a stick & twisted the bandage tight around my leg & place[d] the stick in my hand, which stopped the bleeding. He went to his Colonel & reported my condition and the Col. sent a litter with four of his men, and they took me over the breastworks to. their Col. [Lt. Col. W. Scott Stewart, 65th Illinois Infantry].



Blood Fest: Brigadier Generals Winfield S. Featherston, left, John Adams, and Thomas M. Scott led William Loring's attack on the Union right flank at Franklin. Colonel Stephens, serving in Featherston's Brigade, was one of seven of Loring's 16 regimental commanders wounded during the attack. Six Confederate generals were slain in the battle, including Adams. (Courtesy of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History)



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

I found the Col. a nice man....When they laid me down...in rear of the enemy's lines, a heavy night assault was made by our forces and the bullets ate up the ground all around me when my men fell back Col. Stewart came to me and said you must be sent to the rear as your men may charge again and you will be killed. He sent me back on a litter to the hospital where I remained but a short time when they put me in an ambulance and sent me back across the river and placed [me] in an old field and threw me out on the frozen ground.

The battle was now over, it was late in the night, and the enemy began to fall back toward Nashville. The army was moving all night. It was very cold and I lay on my back on the rough frozen ground until I was almost dead. When along came a kind, generous...Federal soldier and gave me a pair of good heavy ground blankets and kindly folded them around me and soon along came another noble so[u]led Federal soldier and built a good fire at my feet out of boxes found nearby & placed boxes of crackers & meat all around me to protect me from the cold north wind....About sunrise Capt. [Thomas J.] Pulliam of Co. C of my Regt. and quite a number of the men of my regt found me. They asked where I had been. I told them that I had been out drawing rations for them.

The ambulance soon arrived and I was placed in it with coffee, canned food, meat, crackers &c and taken back across the river....As we crossed the river, Col McGavicks [John McGavock] handed me a canteen full of good brandy. I drank until I was ashamed & went on to the hospital at Col. McGavick[']s [home, Carnton], in good spirits. I was placed in a room with wounded officers. Capt. [Roland W.] Jones of 1st Miss. Battalion was in the room & the dead bodies of Genl. Adams & Col. Farrell. (Farrell died at Carnton on December 25, 1864.) That evening our army pressed the enemy on to Brentwood and on to Nashville and the battle of Nashville was fought in a short time. Dec. 2nd, my uncle, Miles R. Hanson, that lived 8 miles from Franklin, came with a 2 horse hack...and took me to his house where I lay in bed until our army fell back when I was placed on my horse & my leg tied to the horn of my saddle and I rode out with my negro boy Mervin walking in front of me and assisting me in every way he could.

The creeks & branches were all up from heavy rains. We often had to ford these streams with Mervin riding behind me. Sometimes we were with our army & sometimes in the rear. We finally reached Florence....Our army was crossing the [Tennessee] River at Bainbridge on a pontoon bridge some 7 miles above Florence. I sent my boy, Mervin, with my horse to cross the river with the army. Late in the evening Miss Kirkman had a small skiff going across the river



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

and she very kindly offered me a seat on her boat which [I] accepted and were soon out in the middle of the river. When a Gun Boat of the enemy came steaming up the river and commenced shelling the boats crossing the river.

I lay on my back on the rough frozen ground until I was almost dead

Miss Kirkman stood in the boat when the shells were bursting in the river and splashing the water all around us, as cool and restrained as an old soldier, brave noble woman. We landed in safety on the south side of the river, in South Florence. Miss Kirkman...insisted that I should go with her to her home, but my leg being broken & I on crutches had to decline her kind offer. She and her servants dashed up the hills in the direction of her home some mile or so away. I set out on my crutches to a house on the road side near by. The man of the house was not at home, [but] his daughter invited me in. The Gun Boats were still shelling at a fearful rate and everything was in confusion amongst the few settlers of South Florence. It was quite cold, but the young lady soon had a good fire in a small outhouse in the yard, and I lay down on a quilt on the floor before the fire.

After another week of travel, Stephens made it to his home in Sarepta, Miss., on New Year's Day 1865 with the assistance of his teenaged African-American slave named Mervin. Colonel Stephens' shattered thigh ended his Confederate military service, the wound confining him to bed for two months and then to crutches for a year. In the decades after the Civil War, Stephens was a merchant, den leader and Grand Cyclops in the Ku Klux Klan during Reconstruction, and holder of several local and state government offices in Mississippi. M.D.L. Stephens died April 15, 1911, and is buried next to his wife in Oak Hill Cemetery in Water Valley, Miss.

Keith Bohannon is a professor of history at the University of West Georgia in Carrollton, Ga. His essay on the destruction of Confederate Army records during the Appomattox Campaign will appear in the forthcoming 2018 University of North Carolina Press book, Petersburg to Appomattox: The End of the War in Virginia, edited by Caroline Janney.

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