



*Protect the invaluable: The CVBT has saved nearly 10 acres of the May 19, 1864, Harris Farm battlefield at the 1st Massachusetts Heavy Artillery monument near Spotsylvania.*

## **Interview With Thomas Van Winkle: Caretakers of the Core**

**By Sarah Richardson**

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MAGAZINE

**Thomas Van Winkle**, president of the board of directors for the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust ([cvbt.org](http://cvbt.org)), has been working for battlefield preservation since 1996. Shortly after he moved from New Jersey that year to a home on the Wilderness Battlefield, he served for five years as president of the Friends of Wilderness Battlefield, joined CVBT in 2007, and became president of the board of directors in 2016. Over the course of his 11-year service, the organization has preserved significant acreage and tackled the challenges of maintaining their mission in the face of shifting donor bases and increases in traffic and building density.



*Thomas Van Winkle is the president of the board of directors for the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust.*

**CWT:** What is the mission of Central Virginia Battlefields Trust?

**TVW:** We started in September 1996, almost 24 years ago. We saw that the National Park Service was having issues with purchasing land by their boundaries or that battlefield land was being sold that they legally couldn't pay enough to buy, so we decided to try and help out. We have saved a little more than 1,300 acres. Our mission statement focuses on the core function of preserving sites on the battlefields of Fredericksburg, Spotsylvania, Wilderness, and Chancellorsville. We try not to hold onto the land forever, but to get it purchased by the NPS or get an easement from the county. We pay taxes on everything we have. We're charged like anybody else.

**CWT:** Explain your "preserving dirt and grass" motto.

**TVW:** It means that we are a grass roots organization. Our overhead is very minimal. We're a small group—board of directors and volunteers. The only paid staff is one executive director and a part-time assistant. We work on a shoestring and try to do what

we can do. When you give to us, you're buying the dirt and grass.

**CWT:** How many members does the CVBT have?

**TVW:** We are around 600, nationally and internationally. It's pretty even between local and nonlocal because there were four battlefields and over 100,000 casualties. Regiments and units from many states were involved in that fighting, so we draw from a large area.

**CWT:** What is your primary challenge?

**TVW:** When I tell the story of the area's change, it sounds like I've been here a hundred years. Traffic on the Route 3 corridor, which includes quite a bit of the Chancellorsville Battlefield, required a couple of traffic lights 23 years ago. Now you can't go 10 feet without a traffic light and the building growth is unbelievable. That's the main issue: encroachment of buildings.

**CWT:** How do you decide which property to protect?

**TVW:** We've always had well-known historians on board. We laid down a battle plan of the core areas that were really important to save, and we try to follow that. For instance, on Route 3 West is the area of the famous Stonewall Jackson Flank Attack at Chancellorsville. We're literally stitching together parcels in the flank attack area as best we can. We've helped save about 230 acres of that. You have to sometimes change your ideas, too, because you can save a very important piece of historic ground, but others might want to build houses on land around it. Should we buy that property to protect the property we just purchased? So you have to change a little bit from the mission statement to protect what you've got.

**CWT:** Does your organization compete with the American Battlefield Trust, formerly the Civil War Trust?

**TVW:** No, they are one of our best partners. They are national, looking on a landscape so much larger that they may not have time or want to be able to deal with smaller parcels. We deal with parcels anywhere from a couple of 100 acres down to an acre. We work together very well.

**CWT:** Is donor interest strong?

**TVW:** We used to benefit from what we called the "Ken Burns effect" after his Civil War series came out. Back then we would get checks for \$50,000, a half million dollars. Today, major and corporate donors have shied away somewhat from the Civil War because of potential public backlash. Part of the funding we rely on comes from the federal government's American Battlefield Protection Program. Congress signed that into law in 1996. The funding from ABPP is administered through the NPS. If a grant is accepted, they give us half of whatever the cost is of our purchase, and we have to come up with the rest. Even that has become tougher; everyone is going after the same pot of money. One thing the Park Service cannot do is pay more than the assessed value of the property. Many times what an organization will do is purchase for a negotiated price and sell it back to the Park Service for what they allow and then absorb the difference.

We have saved a little more than 1,300 acres

**CWT:** How do you make battlefield preservation appealing to young people and a more diverse audience?

**TVW:** We have an annual youth day, and local kids and students help us work on battlefields. We are trying to do outreach via Web and Facebook that is more suited for that demographic. One big change we just

made regards memberships. Starting in 2019 we won't have members; we are calling them partners. As long as you donate something in a 12-month period, you are a partner and have all the membership benefits. We're also starting up a new small magazine; we've got more to tell than can fit in a newsletter.

**CWT:** Tell me about your most recent purchase.

**TVW:** Myer's Hill on the Spotsylvania Court House battlefield. We did that because it is often forgotten. Usually, people think the battle ended on May 12—the fight in the Muleshoe. But Myer's Hill is an area where both armies fought back and forth on May 14th. It was important high ground from which to view the viewshed of the roads and where the armies were going. At one point General Meade was reconnoitering and he was almost grabbed and captured by a Confederate. Myer's Hill was named after the owner of the house, a Mr. Myer of Fredericksburg, who was down the road fighting at the Muleshoe when the Union set fire to his house. We have 73 acres of it, and the owner is excited to have it preserved. It is a forested area, literally untouched since the Civil War. Just a few months before that, we did the Union 5th Corps tract, 14 acres on the Spotsylvania battlefield. That will more than likely be transferred to the park. The Myer's Hill property is outside the park boundary, so we will probably have that for some time.

**CWT:** Will there ever be enough acreage preserved?

**TVW:** I've always said as far as Virginia goes you could put a fence around it, and you wouldn't go wrong preserving the whole state. But you can't save everything, nor should you save everything. But you'll probably never run out of things you should try to save. ★

*Interview conducted by Senior Editor Sarah Richardson*

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(many events below have occurred)

## **Experience Black History Month at Engaging Commemorative Events Nationwide**

American Battlefield Trust by Jim Campi & Nicole Ryan. January 30, 2019

**(Washington, D.C.)** — February provides an unparalleled opportunity to recognize the culture, history and accomplishments of African Americans past and present for Black History Month. Throughout this important month, the Trust will proudly highlight the commitment and contributions of African American citizen soldiers, including the approximately 180,000 men who volunteered to fight in the Union army and navy during the Civil War as the U.S. Colored Troops (USCT). The Trust is dedicated to preserving the hallowed ground where these troops fought and recommends the following commemorative events — in addition to countless local celebrations — as meaningful ways to salute the sacrifice of these storied American soldiers.



*More than 160,000 African American soldiers served in the Union Army.  
Library of Congress*

**February 1-28: “To Catch A Thief: Constellation Fights the Slave Trade” Tour, Baltimore, Md.**

Learn about the history of *Constellation*, flagship of the navy’s African Squadron and the vessel that led our nation’s fight against the trans-Atlantic trafficking of slaves. This little-known, but critically important, service occurred in the years leading up to the Civil War and was an important part of the fight against slavery. In honor of Black History Month, this special tour, supplemented with hands-on activities, will be held at 1:00 p.m. every Saturday and Sunday in February and will be open to all visitors.

**February 9: Lift Every Voice: African Americans in Civil War Navies, Columbus, Ga.**

To tell stories rarely told, the National Civil War Naval Museum will hold a special interactive tour with first-person living history interpretations. The program will explore the African-American experience in the U.S. Navy during the Civil War and highlight the Navy experience through the lens of African-American nurses, pilots, sailors and engineers.

**February 9: Lecture — “Why the Underground Railroad Matters Today,” Kennett Square, Pa.**

Join a storytelling conversation that explores how faith and the rule of law played heavily into the actions and reasoning of Freedom Seekers and their allies, presented by the Kennett Underground Railroad Center. The talk will center on the ways in which the actions of Freedom Seekers align with the logic found in the Declaration of Independence and will feature a question-and-answer session.



*This recruiting poster was published by the Philadelphia Supervisory Committee. The Committee organized and trained 11 infantry regiments at Camp William Penn, west of Philadelphia.*  
*African American Civil War Museum*

**February 10: “Selective Service: Soldiers of Color in the Atlantic World,”**

*Ticonderoga, N.Y.*

Visit Fort Ticonderoga to learn about the complex, and often contradictory, history of soldiers of color on both sides of the Atlantic in the 18th century. This event will explore how the armies of the early modern Atlantic World policed the boundaries of race and military service during an era of global imperial conflict.

**February 11-16: Emancipation Proclamation Family Activities, Washington, D.C.**

Join the National Archives Foundation and stop by the ReSource Room with your family before or after viewing the Emancipation Proclamation, which is on display from February 15-17, and learn more about this important document through hands-on discovery. Activities will be held



10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. daily from February 11 through February 16.

**February 22: Lecture — “Emancipation Proclamation – Perceptions and the Passage of Time,” Pasadena, Calif.**

Join Civil War historian Dr. Gary W. Gallagher as he explores the Battle of Antietam, its aftermath and how it played into President Abraham Lincoln issuing the Emancipation Proclamation. Dr. Gallagher will share his thoughts on how Americans, including Confederates, responded to Lincoln’s move, and if the battle was seen as a turning point in the war. The event is free and open to the public..

**February 26: Special Black History Month Sunday Story Time: *Art from Her Heart*, New York, N.Y.**

In honor of Black History Month, the New York Historical Society will dedicate Sunday Story Time to folk artist Clementine Hunter, a plantation maid by day and artist by night. Faced with a lifetime of adversity and racism, Hunter is now celebrated as an icon of American art..



Library of Congress

For more ideas and ways to commemorate Black History Month, see the American Battlefield Trust’s event page; check the National Park Service events calendar at [findyourpark.com](http://findyourpark.com); visit your local state park’s website; or search for museums and historic sites near you.

The American Battlefield Trust is dedicated to preserving America’s hallowed battlegrounds and educating the public about what happened there and why it matters today. The nonprofit, nonpartisan organization has protected more than 50,000 acres associated with the Revolutionary War, War of 1812 and Civil War. Learn more at [www.battlefields.org](http://www.battlefields.org).

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**From the Crossroads: No Remorse**



*Into the Cauldron: William Robbins took the reins of the 4th Alabama when its commander was wounded and led it through the desperate, bloody fighting in Antietam’s East Woods.*

By D. Scott Hartwig  
MARCH 2019 • AMERICA’S CIVIL WAR  
MAGAZINE

**An ‘earnest’ rebel from Alabama helped save Antietam and Gettysburg for future generations**

The soldiers of Maj. Gen. John B. Hood’s Division waited in the West Woods on September 17, 1862. Union shrapnel, shell, and solid shot rained down upon the woods,

at times sending tree limbs crashing down upon the soldiers below. Captain William McKendree Robbins, acting major of the 4th Alabama, was standing beside a friend talking when a shell or shell fragment struck the young man—the “noble and handsome” Lieutenant David B. King—in the head, spattering Robbins with blood and brains and hurling a piece of King’s skull into the ranks of the 11th Mississippi. No human can witness such an event and not be traumatized, yet Robbins had no time to dwell on the horror. Minutes later, a “to arms” order was sounded and Hood’s Division poured out of the woods to launch a devastating counterattack.

The 4th proceeded double-quick up the Smoketown Road in column as the rest of the division deployed in the fields to their left. “The bullets began to zip about us, very lively,” recalled Robbins, who was disturbed that Captain Lawrence H. Scruggs, the acting lieutenant colonel and regimental commander, had not deployed the 4th Alabama. The problem soon resolved itself when a bullet struck Scruggs in the foot and command fell to Robbins. He deployed the regiment at once. As it advanced toward the East Woods, elements of the 21st Georgia of Colonel James A. Walker’s Brigade joined on its right.

Under the pressure of Hood’s counterattack, the Federal troops firing on Robbins and his regiment fell back and the Alabamians and Georgians pushed up into the East Woods. Robbins halted his advance about midway in the woods and had his men take advantage of the abundant cover. They were soon joined by the 5th Texas, which moved to the right of the line. All told, about 500 Confederates now occupied the woods.

Hood’s counterattack roared up to the northern edge of the Miller cornfield, where

Union resistance inflicted devastating casualties and drove it back. But Robbins and his small force held on, repulsing all efforts to dislodge them. Because of their cover, Robbins’ losses were not heavy, but one of his casualties was personally devastating. His younger brother, Madison, serving as an enlisted man, was shot through the throat and killed.

Needing men and ammunition, Robbins sent back repeatedly for both. Colonel Evander M. Law, Robbins’ brigade commander, encouraged the captain to “hold your position, Hill is moving to your support,” meaning troops of Maj. Gen. D.H. Hill’s Division. As for ammunition, Robbins remembered, “somehow we in the wood were overlooked & no supply came,” so his men scrounged from the dead and wounded. Garland’s Brigade, of Hill’s Division, commanded by Colonel Duncan K. McRae, soon entered the woods behind Robbins. About this time, a new Union advance approached the woods from the north. After a brief resistance, McRae’s Brigade fled to the rear. Without ammunition, his numbers dwindling, and the enemy threatening to envelop his right flank, Robbins had no choice but to retreat.



*Basking Robbins: In 1891, Robbins struck up a friendship with former East Woods foe John Gould of the 10th Maine. (Alabama Department of Archives)*

It was a perilous withdrawal. The enemy fire was so heavy that Robbins concluded he could not survive. Determined not to be shot in the back, he kept his face toward the Federals while his men were “dropping all about me.” When he arrived at the edge of the woods unscathed, he recalled, “Thinks I to myself I believe I shall escape after all,” and he made “a little better time” to the West Woods. His small mixed command had held the East Woods for more than 90 minutes, yet no ranking officer on the Confederate side seemed to understand what he had done. He received no acknowledgment in either Law’s or Hood’s after-action reports. Robbins was sick after the battle—a common occurrence for those exposed to severe trauma and great stress—and did not write a report, which may account for his lack of recognition.

Robbins served through the rest of the war, fighting at Little Round Top at Gettysburg and suffering a severe wound in the Wilderness in May 1864. But he returned to duty and surrendered with his regiment at Appomattox. Although he served in an Alabama regiment, Robbins was a North Carolinian. He had moved to Alabama with his wife in 1855 to open a female college, but soon made a career change from education to the law. His wife died three years later, leaving Robbins a widower with two young children. He left his Selma law practice, volunteering immediately when war came.

After the war, he returned to North Carolina. He had married his wife’s sister during the conflict and they settled in Salisbury, where Robbins resumed a legal career. In 1868 and 1870, he was elected to North Carolina’s Senate, then served 1872-1876 as a Democrat in the U.S. House of Representatives. Robbins was a staunch conservative who opposed Reconstruction,

including African-American suffrage, and supported prohibition. While he took great pride in his service as a soldier, he did not cling to the cause of the Confederacy or lament its defeat. “There was not a more sincere or thoroughly earnest ‘rebel,’ I suppose, in the Southern armies,” he wrote in 1891, “but it’s all over and nobody is sorry for that.” He now embraced our “great common country which will soon be the center and acknowledged greatest of the powers of the world.”

In 1891, 10th Maine Infantry veteran John Gould, who was attempting to track down what regiment he had fought in the East Woods and which Rebel unit mortally wounded Maj. Gen. Joseph Mansfield, contacted Robbins. Gould’s inquiry opened memories Robbins had locked away for years. They flowed out in an 18-page letter to the *New Englander*. He teasingly admonished Gould “for having tempted me to ‘fight’ my battle again which I have never done before.” Through their correspondence, it became clear to Robbins that Gould’s regiment might have been the one responsible for killing his brother. Yet instead of being angry, Robbins warmly embraced Gould as a friend, signing his many letters, “With best wishes, Your friend.”

Four years later, in 1895, President Grover Cleveland selected Robbins to serve on the park commission for the newly created Gettysburg National Military Park. Thirty-two years after trying to fight his way up Little Round Top, Robbins would return to Gettysburg, this time to help develop a park for all Americans. In our next *Crossroads* we will take up what he did there in the final years of his life.

*Scott Hartwig writes from the crossroads of Gettysburg.*

## National Park Service Awards \$613,930 to Protect 280 Acres at a West Virginia Battlefield

**News Release Date:** February 4, 2019

WASHINGTON – The National Park Service today announced \$613,930 in a grant from the American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP) to help protect 280 acres of America’s battlefields in West Virginia threatened with damage or destruction by urban and suburban development. This grant will be used to acquire a portion of the Summit Point Battlefield, a significant Civil War battlefield.

“Some of the most defining moments in our nation’s history were decided by conflicts that played out on hallowed grounds like this battlefield,” National Park Service Deputy Director P. Daniel Smith said. “In partnership with local communities and the Public Land Trust of the Eastern Panhandle, this grant will help preserve this battlefield for future generations.”

The Battle of Summit Point occurred on August 21, 1864, between Union forces under Major General Philip Sheridan and Confederate forces under Lieutenant General Jubal A. Early and Major General Richard Anderson. As Union forces gathered near Charles Town, W.V., early in Sheridan’s Shenandoah Valley Campaign, Early and Anderson attacked with two converging columns moving north and east, but Sheridan’s troops successfully withdrew to Halltown.

The Battlefield Land Acquisition Grant Program is administered by the ABPP, one of more than a dozen programs operated by the National Park Service that provide states and local communities technical assistance,

recognition, and funding to help preserve their own history and create close-to-home recreation opportunities. Consideration for the battlefield land acquisition grants is given to battlefields listed in the National Park Service’s Civil War Sites Advisory Commission’s 1993 “Report on the Nation’s Civil War Battlefields” and the ABPP’s 2007 “Report to Congress on the Historic Preservation of Revolutionary War and War of 1812 Sites in the United States”.

Grants are awarded to units of state and local governments for the fee simple acquisition of land, or for the non-federal acquisition of permanent, protective interests in land easements. Private non-profit groups may apply in partnership with state or local government sponsors.

The grants are funded from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), which uses revenue from federal oil and gas leases on the Outer Continental Shelf to purchase land, water and wetlands for the benefit of all Americans. Since its establishment in 1964, LWCF has conserved land in every state and supported tens of thousands of state and local projects, including the protection of important water sources, expansion of access for hunting and fishing, preservation of historic battlefields, and creation of ball fields and recreational areas.

For more information about ABPP, including these grants, please visit: <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/2287/index.htm>.

State	Grantee	Amount
West Virginia	Jefferson County Farmland Protection Board Summit Point Battlefield, 280 acres Project Partner: Public Land Trust of the	\$613,930



	Eastern Panhandle	
<b>Total Funds</b>		<b>\$613,930</b>

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**National Park Service Awards \$166,360 to Protect 51 Acres at Two Civil War Battlefields in North Carolina**



*unset over Stones River National Battlefield in Murfreesboro, TN.*

*NPS Photo*

**News Release Date:** February 4, 2019

WASHINGTON – The National Park Service today announced \$166,360 in grants from the American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP) to help protect 51 acres of Civil War battlefields in North Carolina threatened with damage or destruction by urban and suburban development. The grant will be used to acquire portions of the Averasborough and Bentonville Battlefields, which are both significant Civil War Battlefields.

“Some of the most defining moments in our nation’s history were decided by conflicts that played out on hallowed grounds like these battlefields,” National Park Service Deputy Director P. Daniel Smith said. “In

partnership with local communities and the American Battlefield Trust, these grants will help preserve these battlefields for future generations.”

The Battle of Averasborough occurred on March 16, 1865 and was the prelude to the climactic Battle of Bentonville, the other North Carolina recipient of a Battlefield Land Acquisition Grant. At the Battle of Averasborough, Confederate forces under General Hardee slowed the advance of a portion of Union Major General William T. Sherman’s army north from Fayetteville. This action enabled Confederate General Joseph E. Johnston to amass a larger force at Bentonville.

The Battle of Bentonville, the last battle between the armies of Sherman and Johnston, occurred from March 19-21, 1865 and resulted in Johnston’s surrender almost a month later on April 26 at Bennett Place near present day Durham, N.C.

The Battlefield Land Acquisition Grant Program is administered by the ABPP, one of more than a dozen programs operated by the National Park Service that provide states and local communities technical assistance, recognition, and funding to help preserve their own history and create close-to-home recreation opportunities. Consideration for the battlefield land acquisition grants is given to battlefields listed in the National Park Service’s Civil War Sites Advisory Commission’s 1993 “Report on the Nation’s Civil War Battlefields” and the ABPP’s 2007 “Report to Congress on the Historic Preservation of Revolutionary War and War of 1812 Sites in the United States”.

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North Carolina	North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources Bentonville Battlefield, Lynch Tract, 2.8 acres (Fee Simple) Project Partner: American Battlefield Trust	\$43,411
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$166,360</b>

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***The following is an excerpt from The Civil War Letters of Tillman Valentine, Third US Colored Troops Author(s): Jonathan W. White, Katie Fisher and Elizabeth Wall Source: The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. 139, No. 2 (April 2015), pp. 171-188 Published by: The Historical Society of Pennsylvania Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5215/pennmaghistbio.139.2.0171> Accessed: 08-02-2017 17:04 UTC***

(TILLMAN VALENTINE WAS TWENTY-SEVEN years old when he enlisted with the Third US Colored Infantry on June 30, 1863. Standing five feet four inches tall, with black hair, gray eyes, and a yellow complexion, the mulatto laborer from Chester County, Pennsylvania, bade farewell to his wife of seven years, Annie, and his children, Elijah (born February 13, 1858), Clara (born February 4, 1860), and Ida (born August 11, 1861). Tillman gave Annie “an affectionate good bye” that morning, as one longtime family friend remembered. The

State	Grantee	Amount
North Carolina	North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources Averasborough Battlefield, Ellis Tract, 30.18 acres (Fee Simple) Project Partner: American Battlefield Trust	\$75,500
North Carolina	North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources Averasborough Battlefield, Ray Tract, 18.6 acres (Fee Simple) Project Partner: American Battlefield Trust	\$47,449

couple did not know it yet, but Annie was pregnant with their fourth child, Samuel, who would be born on March 3, 1864.)

.Letters from Tillman Valentine to Annie Elizabeth Valentine  
Morises island south Carolina  
3 us col ard trupes Co B\  
December the 26 1863

My dear wife

i am very glad and thankful to god that i enjoy this oportunity of wrighting to you to let you know that i am very well and and i hope these few lians [lines] may fi nd you the same i hope clara is better by this time you must not let her go out of dorse untill she is purfectly well i received your letter and it give me joy to think you are in good sparets [spirits] and more over that you have plenty to eate for sum times when i am away out on picket the furthest post out and the rebels is not far frum me i look up at the stars and ask god to bless you and take care of you i do not walk a poste but i am sirgent of the gard and have to go at the hed of my men or be called a coward so i will not give them a chance to call me that for in the grates [greatest] of danger i walk bold ly [boldly] at the hed of my men knowing that god is able and willen to to ancer [answer] my prayers which is for him to spear [spare] me to see my famly agane so my dear wife you must keepe in good sparets for the war will be over soon i think for the rebes is disurting every day and a coming over to our people yester day christmus morning there was a raped [rapid] fi ring aboute 10 miles from us and it is reported that the rebels was after four hundred prisners that got away frum them that morning and come to us but we cante tell how true it is yet but we hope it is so i want to see you and the little ones so bad that i donte know to wate little [illegible word] o may must kiss oh ho kiss & kiss

little girl<sup>25</sup> well you must give my love to father and mother and mary ann and joseph and tell them that nelson<sup>26</sup> is well and is big as vince anderson<sup>27</sup> and he wears a greate tall hat that sum of the soldiers give him and is hard and hearty as a stone and a good soldier he never was in the gard house but once and that was for going to fi ght with a fellow that throwed a bay net [bayonet] at him he run and nelce [nelson] after him and i lafed [laughed] at nelce for his eyes was so big the fellow run in to the captins tent and nelce in after him the lieutenant cot [caught] them and put them in the garde house for a little time and took nelson out and kept the other one in a good while john barnes<sup>28</sup> is funey as ever his legs is [illegible word] as thick as ides [?]<sup>29</sup> and he wears 3 shirts and 2 coats with out his overcote well lizy<sup>30</sup> would you like to see me i am as purty [pretty] as ever and way [weigh] just as much as i ever did i would like to see you and kiss you tell saley ritchson that hir [her] brother<sup>31</sup> is here and well and i will tell him to wright to hir we canot tell how soon we will get payed off but we think it will come on next month our ful pay and then i will sende you sum money are you a going to sende me that potry [poetry] soon i want to see it i would like to see elijah does he talk about me and laff as much as ever well the lord knowes what is best but i think i will get saftely back they say ann mareah Elbert<sup>32</sup> has a little one and tanson johnson<sup>33</sup> to is it so dear wife i must close i think mebey [maybe] i will [get] to [come] home on furlow sum time next sumer if i live the wether is very colde here know [now] we had all Christmust for a holaw day [holiday] we played ball and run races and whealed wheal barows blinde folded and had a heepe of fun to it is a quear [queer] place here the water is all a round us and we can see the .rebs at work i think misses taylor is very clever to you and she is a good friend tell john that he shant loose nothing

by what he does for you father does not  
seem to be much of a friend to you does he  
have you got that watch or the meet tell  
joseph that i think a little harde of him not  
wrighting to me for he can wright and i  
think he might have you herde any thing of  
milt litley [lately?] how is moth [mother?]  
give my love to all the people and all of it  
but a thimble full for yourself kiss the  
children for me no more god bless you all

your loving husband

Sirgen Tillman Valentine

keep your sparets up i think we will be hapy  
sum day learn the children to read.

*JONATHAN W. WHITE, KATIE FISHER,  
AND ELIZABETH WALL* 182 April 27  
Probably Vincent Anderson, listed in the  
1870 census as a sixty-fi ve-year-old mulatto  
in West Chester, Pennsylvania, who had  
been born in Virginia and worked at a  
quarry.<sup>28</sup> John Barnes of Company B  
mustered in on June 30, 1863, and was  
absent as a result of illness when the  
regiment mustered out. According to papers  
in Barnes’s pension record, he had married  
Tillman’s sister, Esther, in 1852.<sup>29</sup> The  
word we have rendered here as “ides” looks  
similar to the word we interpreted as “ide”  
in the following letter. It may be that this  
word is the possessive form of the same  
name that appears in that later letter.<sup>30</sup>  
Annie’s middle name was Elizabeth.<sup>31</sup>  
Probably the sister of John Richson  
(sometimes Richardson), who enlisted as a  
private in Company B on June 30, 1863, and  
mustered out on Oct. 31, 1865.<sup>32</sup> This is  
possibly Anna M. Elbert, who, according to  
the 1860 census, was fi teen years old and  
lived in Kennett Township, Chester County.  
According to the 1870 census mortality

*schedule, she died of infl ammation of the  
bowels in July 1869 at the age of twenty-  
four.<sup>33</sup> The 1870 census lists a Tamsan  
Johnson, wife of Louis Johnson, living in  
Philadelphia with four children, including a  
seven-year-old boy named Benjamin—  
probably the child alluded to here. An 1875  
Philadelphia city directory spells her name  
Tanson. Valentine appears to have  
originally written “tamson” but then  
crossed out part of the “m” to make it an  
“n.” Louis and Tamsan Johnson were white.*

*These two lines were written  
perpendicularly at the top of the first page of  
the letter but were clearly a postscript.<sup>35</sup>  
Probably Henry James, who enlisted as a  
private on June 30, 1863, and was promoted  
to sergeant major on July 12, 1863. James  
mustered out with the regiment on Oct. 31,  
1865*

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## **Sevierville to open exhibit on Civil War battle that claimed 265 lives on 155th anniversary**

By Andrew Capps, Knoxville News Sentinel  
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*A new exhibit on the 1864 Battle of Fair Garden is set to open at the Sevierville Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center at 3 p.m. Monday, Jan. 28, just a day after the battle's 155 year anniversary. (Photo11: Courtesy of Chad Branton, Sevierville Chamber of Commerce)*

A new historical exhibit detailing a Civil War battle in Sevierville is set to open on Monday, Jan. 28 — a full 155 years after the battle was fought.

The new exhibit, called "Furious Flash of Cavalry: The Battle of Fair Garden," will open at the Sevierville Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center at 3099 Winfield Dunn Parkway at 3 p.m. Monday.

The exhibit details the Battle of Fair Garden, which was fought on Jan. 27, 1864, and claimed the lives of 265 people. The battle was the most significant engagement in Sevier County during the Civil War.



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Sevierville Chamber of Commerce CEO Brenda McCroskey said the chamber is excited to see the event open and share the area's Civil War-era history with the public.

“We began producing historical exhibits for the Sevierville Visitor Center in 2017,” McCroskey said in a release. “Not only has the program helped increase visitation to the center, it has also enhanced overall guest experience while they are here. We are proud to share Sevierville’s history with our guests and are proud to showcase 'Furious Clash of Cavalry: The Battle of Fair Garden' here in 2019.”



*(Photo11: Courtesy of Chad Branton, Sevierville Chamber of Commerce)*

The battle took place across an 8-mile stretch of land spanning from the French Broad River to the Middle Prong of the Little Pigeon River. Visitors to the exhibit can expect to spend between 15 and 20 minutes learning about different aspects and prominent figures in the battle, which was considered a strategic victory for Union forces.

Following Monday's opening ceremony at 3 p.m., the exhibit will be open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.



*(Photo11: Courtesy of Chad Branton,  
Sevierville Chamber of Commerce)*

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