

National Park Service Awards \$9.5 Million to Enhance Revolutionary War and Civil War Battlefield Preservation and Interpretation Projects

NewsMedia@nps.gov, September 19, 2024

WASHINGTON – The National Park Service (NPS) today awarded \$9.5 million in grants through the American Battlefield Protection Program to promote the locally led preservation and interpretation of historic battlefields and sites of armed conflict as powerful reminders of the America’s shared heritage.

“Today’s grants help to forge connections with the landscapes that tell America’s history,” said **National Park Service Director Chuck Sams**. “By supporting these local preservation and interpretation efforts, all Americans gain the opportunity to learn about our nation’s history and growth outside of books and computers.”

\$8,960,247.70 in Battlefield Land Acquisition Grants are being awarded to:

- Two awards totaling \$860,278.00 to the **Town of Ashland, New York** for acquisition and preservation of 322.09 acres at Newtown Battlefield in Chemung County, New York
- \$3,971,530.20 to the **Town of Murfreesboro, Tennessee** for preservation of 31.6 acres at Stones River Battlefield in Rutherford County, Tennessee
- \$4,128,439.50 to the **Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County, Tennessee** for preservation of 2.36 acres at

Nashville Battlefield in Davidson County, Tennessee.

\$502,866 in Battlefield Interpretation Grants are being awarded to:

- \$62,650 to the **Society of the Cincinnati** for their project titled “Voices of Revolution Exhibition” in Washington, District of Columbia
- \$200,000 to the **County of Saratoga** for their project titled “Interpretation of the Siege of Saratoga” in Saratoga County, New York
- \$158,654 to the **South Carolina State Park System** for their project titled “Battle of Musgrove Mill Exhibit” in Laurens County, South Carolina
- \$50,000 to the **Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation** for their project titled “Visualizing Fort Pillow’s Impact through Augmented Reality” in Lauderdale County, Tennessee
- \$31,562 to **Little Fork Episcopal Church** for their project titled “Little Fork Episcopal Church Interpretive Plan” in Culpeper County, Virginia

Funding for these grants is provided through the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which reinvests revenue from offshore oil and natural gas leasing to help strengthen conservation and recreation opportunities across the nation without spending taxpayer dollars.

Battlefield Land Acquisition Grants empower preservation partners nationwide to acquire and preserve threatened battlefields, while Battlefield

Interpretation Grants promote a broad and inclusive stewardship of battlefields and sites of armed conflict on American soil. The NPS also offers Preservation Planning Grants and Battlefield Restoration Grants under the American Battlefield Protection Program. This financial assistance generates community-driven stewardship of historic resources at state, Tribal and local levels.

About the National Park Service. More than 20,000 National Park Service employees care for America's 430+ national parks and work with communities across the nation to help preserve local history and create close-to-home recreational opportunities. Learn more at www.nps.gov, and on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube.

Town of Ashland, NY Newtown Battlefield (Chemung County, NY) \$628,318.00
With financial assistance from the NPS American Battlefield Protection Program, the Town of Ashland in partnership with American Battlefield Trust will acquire 267.2 acres of the battlefield. After acquisition by American Battlefield Trust a protective easement will be conveyed to New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.
Battlefield Land Acquisition Grant

Town of Ashland, NY Newtown Battlefield (Chemung County, NY) \$231,960.00
With financial assistance from the NPS American Battlefield Protection Program, the Town of Ashland in partnership with American Battlefield Trust will acquire 54.89 acres of the battlefield. After acquisition by American Battlefield

Trust a protective easement will be conveyed to New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

Battlefield Land Acquisition Grant

City of Murfreesboro, TN Stones River Battlefield (Rutherford County, TN)
\$3,971,530.20 With financial assistance from the NPS American Battlefield Protection Program, the City of Murfreesboro in partnership with American Battlefield Trust will acquire 31.6 acres of the battlefield. After acquisition by American Battlefield Trust, a protective easement will be conveyed to the Tennessee Historic Commission. Battlefield Land Acquisition Grant

Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County Nashville Battlefield (Davidson County, TN) \$4,128,439.50
With financial assistance from the NPS American Battlefield Protection Program, Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County in partnership with American Battlefield Trust will acquire 2.36 acres of the battlefield. After acquisition by American Battlefield Trust a protective easement will be conveyed to the Tennessee Historic Commission. Battlefield Land Acquisition Grant

Society of the Cincinnati Washington, DC \$62,650.00 The American Revolution Institute of the Society of the Cincinnati will produce an exhibit entitled Voices of the Revolution. The exhibit will be staged at Anderson House in Washington, DC with a complimentary online exhibit that features battlefields representative of the original 13 colonies to coincide with the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Lesson plans and a lecture

series that will be recorded and aired on YouTube will expand the project's reach globally. By highlighting the individual stories of people affected by the Revolutionary War in different roles and from different sides of the conflict, in-person and online audiences will benefit from differing perspectives of the war in context of different battles and location, and the complexity of making an individual decision to be revolutionary. Battlefield Interpretation Grant

County of Saratoga, NY Saratoga County, NY \$200,000.00 Building from a 2022 ABPP Battlefield Interpretation Grant award, Saratoga County will leverage their work with identifying lesser-known stories related to the Siege of Saratoga (NY226). Interpretation of two main stories at the Champlain Canal Gateway Visitor Center and the proposed Lady Acland Pocket Park at the Saratoga Boat Launch site on the Hudson River will include exterior exhibit panels and a flagpole installation. Interpretation of these stories will be aided by augmented reality, critical thinking prompts delivered to visitor cell phones, and an interactive map to enable visitors to follow individual storylines through the Saratoga Campaign. Utilizing interpretive media, visitors will connect with Saratoga-based stories through choice-driven interaction. Battlefield Interpretation Grant

South Carolina State Park System Laurens County, SC \$158,654.00 The Battle of Musgrove Mill State Historic Site (SC205) will incorporate new research into an exhibit that aims to deliver a more nuanced understanding of the Revolutionary War in the South by focusing on divided loyalties, and the impacts on non-

combatants and the region. Their exhibits will include interactive holograms that utilize Artificial Intelligence to engage guests in conversation while providing the context of the cultural and social backdrop of the times. A simulation of the day-of-battle activities, a searchable database to explore genealogical connections and other primary sources, composite figures will deliver the individual perspectives of a soldier, an officer and an enslaved person, and interpretive panels and screens of the aftermath of the battle are some of the features planned for the exhibit. These multiple ways of incorporating informational viewpoints will also be provided in closed captioning, ASL, and language interpretation to tell stories and move visitors from passive to active learning. This funding will assist the Park's ability to educate and engage visitors while providing a deeper understanding of the site's historical significance. Battlefield Interpretation Grant

Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation Lauderdale County, TN \$50,000.00 Fort Pillow State Historic Park will develop an augmented reality mobile application and interpretive waysides to provide an immersive experience of a controversial engagement of the Civil War: The Battle of Fort Pillow (TN030). At the battle, many soldiers and U.S. Colored Troops were killed after surrendering. The immersive experience will aid visitors in visualizing historical features and events over the current landscape, utilizing primary sources and a more in-depth experiences to help interpret the cultural context of the time and the evolution of modern race relations in the U.S. Battlefield Interpretation Grant

Little Fork Episcopal Church Culpeper County, VA \$31,562.00 The Little Fork Episcopal Church is located on 16 acres in Rixeyville, VA on the Brandy Station Battlefield study area (VA035). This battlefield interpretation will be situated on a trail that meanders through the grounds that will chronicle almost 300 years of Colonial and American history and will feature themes that include the Native American presence as well as the roles of enslaved people who may have built the church. The grant will provide funding to assist in planning the interpretive approach. Once established, the interpretive plan will focus on inclusivity and diversity as told through individual stories of under-represented viewpoints.

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Salisbury Steak: Civil War Health Food

After 30 years of research Dr. Salisbury finally published his ideas, setting off one of the earliest American fad diets

Lisa Bramen, Smithsonian, June 22, 2011



Salisbury steak TV dinner Image courtesy of Flickr user kewagi

I can picture it now: two oblong ground beef patties taking a gravy bath, neatly sequestered in their aluminum compartment to prevent the sauce from bleeding onto the tater tots, pea-and-carrot medley or, most

importantly, the apple dessert. A meal for a Hungry Man—or a child of the 1970s with an unsophisticated palate. (I considered TV dinners a treat when I was a kid, especially the ones with built-in dessert.)

The phrase “Salisbury steak” no longer sets off my salivary glands—quite the opposite—but it’s a lot more appetizing than how Dr. James Henry Salisbury described the dish before it was named after him: “muscle pulp of beef.”

And that may be the least nauseating bit in his scatologically dense 1888 book, *The Relation of Alimentation and Disease*. Dr. Salisbury, like many people before and since, believed that food was the key to health and that certain foods could cure illness, especially of the intestinal variety. He tested his theories during the Civil War, treating chronic diarrhea among Union soldiers with a diet of chopped-up meat and little else. After 30 years of research he finally published his ideas, setting off one of the earliest American fad diets.

“Healthy alimentation, or feeding upon such foods as the system can well digest and assimilate, is always promotive of good health. Unhealthy alimentation always acts as a cause of disease,” he wrote. Most modern physicians would agree with the sentiment to at least some degree, if not as to what constitutes healthy or unhealthy alimentation (more commonly known as “food” nowadays).

For Salisbury, minced beef patties were health food. The enemies, believe it or not, were fresh fruit and vegetables. When overconsumed “at the expense of more substantial aliments,” he wrote, these led to “summer complaints” in children.

As for the ill soldiers, the problem was an “amylaceous , army biscuit diet,” with not enough variety or nutrients. His prescription:

The first step is to wash out the sour stomach and bowels , and to change the food. The food selected should be such as is least liable to ferment with alcohol and acid yeasts. This is muscle pulp of beef, prepared as heretofore described, when it affords the maximum of nourishment with the minimum of effort to the digestive organs. *Nothing else* but this food, except an occasional change to broiled mutton.

In the preface, Salisbury described the research that led him to his conclusion:

In 1854 the idea came to me, in one of my solitary hours, to try the effects of living exclusively upon one food at a time. This experiment I began upon myself alone at first.... I opened this line of experiments with baked beans. I had not lived upon this food over three days before light began to break. I became very flatulent and constipated, head dizzy, ears ringing, limbs prickly, and was wholly unfitted for mental work. The microscopic examination of passages showed that the bean food did not digest.

Did the intrepid scientist stop there? Of course not! In 1858 he enlisted six other schlemiels to come live with him and eat nothing but baked beans. He did not mention whether he had a wife who had to put up with seven flatulent, dizzy mopes in her home; my guess is no. Later he and four other guys subsisted solely on oatmeal porridge for 30 days. Other single-food experiments followed, leading him to the conclusion that lean beef, minced to break down any connective tissue and fully cooked, was the best and most easily digested food.

By the time the Civil War started, in 1861, he was ready to test his theories on suffering soldiers.

When Salisbury’s book was published, two decades after the end of the war, his ideas caused a sensation. An Englishwoman named Elma Stuart extolled the healing virtues of the Salisbury diet in a book described by one observer as being “written in a popular and racy style,” helping to publicize the mincemeat regimen. For about two decades the diet—not that different, when you think of it, from extreme versions of the low-carb diets of recent years—was all the rage.

Not for another half-century would the Salisbury steak’s future TV dinner companions, tater tots, be invented. By then, Salisbury had been dead for almost 50 years, too late to object to such “unhealthy alimentation.”

Lisa Bramen was a frequent contributor to Smithsonian.com's Food and Think blog. She is based in northern New York and is also an associate editor at Adirondack Life magazine.

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This Female Civil War Soldier Participated in the Bloodiest Battle in American History and Spied on the South—or Did She?

Historians say that Sarah Emma Edmonds exaggerated many aspects of her wartime experiences. Still, she bravely served in the Union Army, becoming one of hundreds of women who fought in the conflict in secret



Sarah Emma Edmonds is often credited as one of the handful of hidden female fighters who participated in the Battle of Antietam. But her account doesn't match up with the historical record. Illustration by Meilan Solly / Images via Wikimedia Commons and Internet Archive under public domain

Kellie B. Gormly, Contributing Writer,
Smithsonian, 9/17/2024

On the evening of September 17, 1862, in the aftermath of the Battle of Antietam, Private Franklin Thompson of the Second Michigan Infantry Regiment walked among the wounded, the dying and the dead. According to Thompson's later recollections, a young soldier bleeding profusely from a neck wound caught his attention, and he knelt to ask if he could do anything to help.

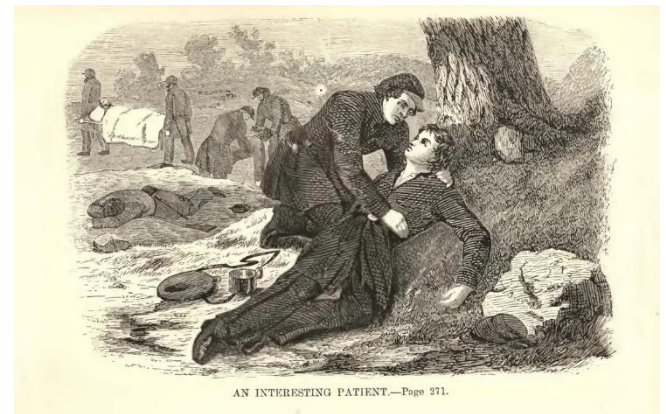
“Yes, yes; there is something to be done, and that quickly, for I am dying,” the soldier replied.

Something about the wounded man's tone and voice stood out to Thompson, who looked more closely at his face. Beckoning Thompson to come closer, the soldier made a deathbed confession:

I can trust you and will tell you a secret. I am not what I seem but am a female. I enlisted from the purest motives and have remained undiscovered and

unsuspected. ... I wish you to bury me with your own hands, that none may know after my death that I am other than my appearance indicates.

Thompson later claimed that he'd done as asked. In the closing hours of the bloodiest single day in American history, which saw more than 22,000 soldiers killed, wounded or captured in battle near Sharpsburg, Maryland, the private buried the woman under the shadow of a mulberry tree. After all, he had a secret of his own: Thompson, too, was a woman disguised as a man.



An illustration of Edmonds, as Franklin Thompson, meeting a dying female soldier after the Battle of Antietam Internet Archive

The private's real name was Sarah Emma Edmonds, and she'd enlisted in the Union Army in the spring of 1861. In her memoir, Edmonds wrote that she'd served as both a field nurse and a spy who went undercover behind enemy lines during the Civil War. Though historians have since argued that Edmonds [fictionalized aspects](#) of her experiences for [dramatic effect](#) (including, in all likelihood, her presence at Antietam), her bravery and contributions to the war effort remain undisputed.

Edmonds was born Sarah Emma Edmondson in New Brunswick, Canada, in December 1841. Her father, a farmer who

had been hoping for a son, treated her poorly. In 1857, she left home to escape his abuse and an arranged marriage he was forcing on her, changing her last name to Edmonds to distance herself from her family. Fearing that her father would find her, Edmonds left the Canadian town of Moncton after a year or so and immigrated to the United States.

Once in her new home, Edmonds started disguising herself as a man to find work. She assumed the Thompson alias and secured a position as a traveling Bible salesman based in Hartford, Connecticut.

While waiting for a train back to New England in the spring of 1861, Edmonds heard a voice in the street reading out President Abraham Lincoln's call for [75,000 volunteers](#) to fight for the Union. A few days earlier, on April 12, the Confederates had attacked Fort Sumter, beginning the Civil War.

“This announcement startled me, while my imagination portrayed the coming struggle in all its fearful magnitude,”

Edmonds [wrote](#) in her memoir. “War, civil war, with all its horrors seemed inevitable, and even then was ready to burst like a volcano upon the most happy and prosperous nation the sun ever shone upon. The contemplation of this sad picture filled my eyes with tears and my heart with sorrow.”



Edmonds in disguise as Thompson Public domain via Wikimedia Commons



Edmonds in women's clothing National Park Service

Military records indicate that Edmonds, in disguise as Thompson, [initially served](#) as a field nurse for the Second Michigan. “You often can’t really draw a delineation between ‘civilian workers’ and battle,

because these people had to be in battle, tending to soldiers,” [Bonnie Tsui](#), author of *She Went to the Field: Women Soldiers of the Civil War*, told *Smithsonian magazine* in 2011. “They were often on the field or nearby trying to get to the wounded, so you could argue that it was just as dangerous for them to work as nurses as to be actively shooting and emptying gunfire.”

After a few months, Edmonds was reassigned. She acted as the regiment’s postmaster and later its mail carrier, charged with transporting heavy bushels of correspondence across great distances. On August 29, 1862, Edmonds [broke her leg](#) and suffered internal injuries when the mule she was riding (her horse had died, leaving her with few alternatives) threw her into a ditch. The accident took place just two and a half weeks before the Battle of Antietam

Edmonds is often credited as one of the handful of hidden female fighters who participated in Antietam. But her moving account of meeting a fellow woman soldier after the battle doesn’t match up with the historical record. Per a list of troop movements, the Second Michigan was assigned to defend Washington, D.C. from September 3 to October 11, 1862. Curiously, Edmonds’ company muster roll and reports offer no record of her movements between the end of August and October 31, simply stating that she was “absent” on duty on a colonel’s orders. So, what was Edmonds doing at Antietam if she was, in fact, present?



A depiction of the Battle of Antietam Public domain via Wikimedia Commons

Sarah Kay Bierle, an education associate at the American Battlefield Trust, suggests Edmonds might have been carrying messages between generals or working as a nurse.

“She really doesn’t tell us a lot about what she was doing at Antietam; she tells us what she witnessed,” Bierle says. “It’s difficult to be able to say with certainty. ... According to what she wrote in her memoir, she is somehow there, and she is helping to care for the wounded afterward.”

But Tracey McIntire and Audrey Scanlan-Teller, historians who give joint presentations about women in the Civil War, are skeptical of Edmonds’ version of events. “Our theory is that she wasn’t really at Antietam at all,” says McIntire, director of communications at the National Museum of Civil War Medicine in Frederick, Maryland. “Her narrative of finding that woman soldier and giving her reasons why she enlisted is just [Edmonds’] way of voicing her [own] reasons for enlisting. It’s her version of a literary device. She has this other woman saying what she would say if she could.”

Scanlan-Teller points out that the language used by the dying female soldier is very similar to a publishers' notice at the beginning of the memoir, which attributes Edmonds' wartime service to "the purest motives and most praiseworthy patriotism." In a 2005 biography of Edmonds, author Laura Leedy Gansler further noted that the anecdote was "strangely, and suspiciously, similar in some respects to that of Clara Barton's experience." After Antietam, the American Red Cross founder encountered 16-year-old Mary Galloway, who'd disguised herself as a man to follow her beau into battle. Barton treated Galloway's wounds and helped the young woman reunite with her lover.



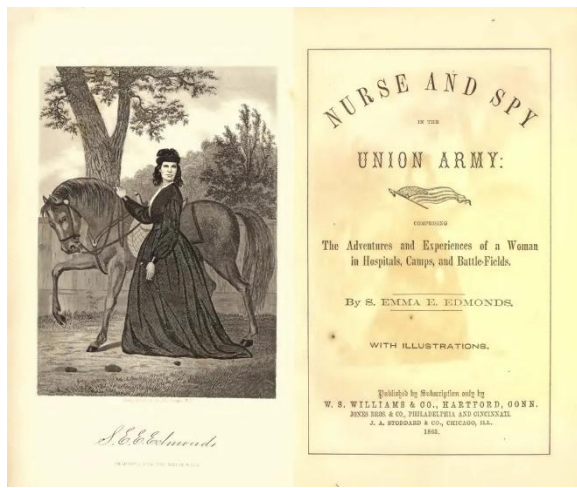
Edmonds' account of the Battle of Antietam is strikingly similar to Clara Barton's experience there. Public domain via Wikimedia Commons

Regardless of whether Edmonds was on the ground at Antietam, she exhibited courage throughout her wartime service. According to a congressional report based on testimony

from her fellow soldiers, Edmonds shared in all of her regiment's "toils and privations, marching and fighting in the various engagements in which it participated." She was "never absent from duty, obeying all orders with intelligence and alacrity."

In the spring of 1863, while in Kentucky with the Second Michigan, Edmonds fell ill with a relapse of malaria, which she'd contracted the previous year while participating in the Peninsula Campaign in southeastern Virginia. She requested a furlough but was denied. Scared that Army physicians treating her would discover her gender, Edmonds fled the regiment and never returned. "Thompson" was subsequently charged with desertion—a crime punishable by death.

When Edmonds recovered from her illness, she joined the United States Christian Commission as a female nurse, this time with no disguise, serving from June 1863 until the end of the war in April 1865. In her free time, she wrote her memoir, which was published as *Unsexed, or the Female Soldier*, in 1864. The provocative title failed to sell, and it was only in 1865, when the book was reissued as *Nurse and Spy in the Union Army*, that it became a best seller. Edmonds donated most of the proceeds from her memoir to soldiers' aid groups.



The opening pages of Edmonds' memoir *Internet Archive*

“Edmonds was meticulously vague about a lot of personal details in the book,” says Elizabeth D. Leonard, author of *All the Daring of the Soldier: Women of the Civil War Armies*. “Her primary goal was to use her variety of experiences to make some money by selling an engaging tale to an interested audience. Like many Hollywood renditions of Civil War history these days, she surely took a considerable amount of license for purposes that made sense to her.”

Edmonds claimed that she'd served as a spy for the Union, adopting [such personas](#) as Irish peddler Bridget O'Shea and a Black man named Cuff. To pass herself off as Black, she reportedly dyed her skin with silver nitrate and wore a wig. But no official records of Edmonds' espionage activities exist; as Leonard pointed out in *All the Daring*, Edmonds later confessed that her autobiography was “much fictionalized,” and in a sworn statement, she denied having participated in “any secret services.”

The artistic license taken by Edmonds might have come down to her desire to appeal to her audience. “She doesn't really come out and say, ‘I enlisted as a man in the Second Michigan,’” Scanlan-Teller says. Given

gender norms and expectations at the time, the historian adds, the public likely would have disapproved of such exploits.

The publishers' notice in her memoir seemingly anticipated such criticisms, suggesting that readers who “object to some of her disguises” should remember the patriotism that drove Edmonds to enlist in the first place. As the notice stated, “She laid aside, for a time, her own costume and assumed that of the opposite sex, enduring hardships, suffering untold privations and hazarding her life for her adopted country in its trying hour of need.”

Most women who covertly joined the military during the Civil War weren't motivated by a desire to fight.

“Researchers have found that usually, they were either enlisting and disguising themselves as men to escape an abusive family situation, or they were choosing that option so they could stay with a male family member,” Bierle says. Patriotism and financial concerns also drove enlistment.

Women who disguised themselves as male soldiers showed ingenuity in pulling off the charade. They would cut their hair short; bind their chests; and imitate male mannerisms when walking, speaking and tying their shoes, Bierle explains. Some women, like Edmonds, fought for years without being detected. Others, like Mary Scaberry, were discharged after just a few months, their identities exposed when they sought treatment for injuries or otherwise slipped up in their masquerade.



Frances Clayton (pictured in uniform) claimed she'd fought in the Civil War, but historians are skeptical of her story. Public domain via Wikimedia Commons



Frances Clayton in women's clothing Public domain via Wikimedia Commons

Since women served in secret, nobody knows for sure how many participated in the Civil War but estimates generally range between 400 and 750. McIntire says that at least four women participated in the Battle of Antietam, including Rebecca Peterman of the Seventh Wisconsin Infantry. At least one unidentified woman is buried in Antietam National Cemetery. According to a Union private's memoir, his unit discovered the body of an anonymous woman who'd fought on the Confederate side at Antietam; the soldiers buried her separately from her male comrades.

Edmonds, for her part, married a man named Linus Seelye in 1867. The couple had three children.

Over time, Edmonds gained the acceptance and respect of her fellow soldiers; in fact, in 1876, she attended a reunion of the Second Michigan as her female self. Her male comrades, while surely shocked at Thompson's true identity, welcomed her back. They supported her appeal of her revoked pension—a result of the desertion charges. The government finally awarded Edmonds her pension in 1884.

In 1897, Edmonds was admitted to the Grand Army of the Republic, a Civil War veteran association, becoming its only female member. The following September, she died at her home in La Porte, Texas, at age 56. In 1901, she was reburied with military honors in the Grand Army section of Houston's Washington Cemetery

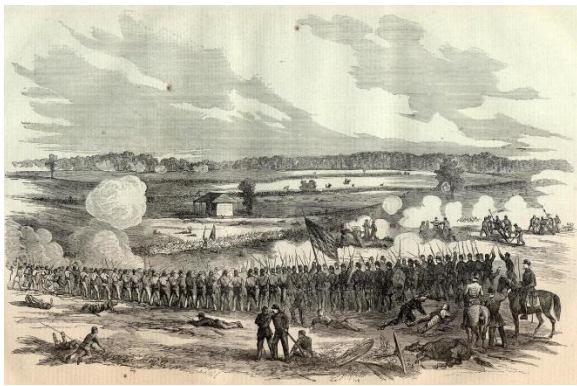
Kellie B. Gormly is an award-winning veteran journalist who freelances for national publications, including the Washington Post, History.com, Woman's

World and First for Women. She is a former staff writer for the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review, the Associated Press and the Fort Worth Star-Telegram.

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The Remarkable Story of a German Immigrant's Valor at the Battle of Perryfield

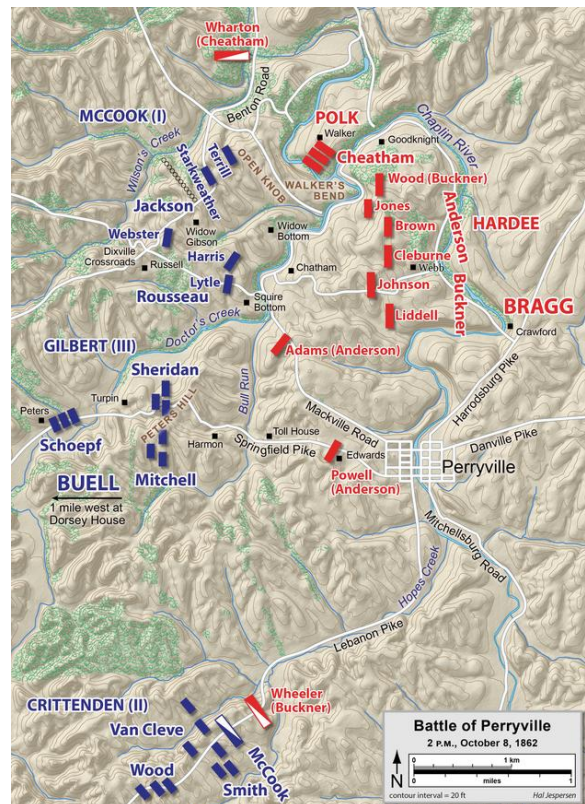
Bryan Bush, September 2, 2024,
blueandgrayeducation.org



Harper's Weekly image of the Battle of Perryville, from November 1, 1862 | public domain

Heinrich Wilhelm Carl Trauernicht Sr. was born on April 6, 1842, in Magdeburg, Stadtkeis Magdeburg, Saxony-Anhalt, Germany. He was the son of Heinrich and Johanne Knobbe Trauernicht. On February 16, 1861, Henry enlisted in the Asboth Rifles for a three-month term at the St. Louis Arsenal. His brother was a captain in the same regiment. When the term expired, Henry reenlisted in the 2nd Missouri Volunteer Infantry [US] for a three-year term, beginning September 10, 1861. He was promoted to corporal in Company E and fought at Booneville, Missouri, and Pea Ridge, Arkansas.

At the Battle of Perryville, fought on October 8, 1862, the 2nd Missouri Infantry was commanded by Capt. Walter Hoppe and was attached to the brigade under Lt. Col. Bernard Laiboldt in Phil Sheridan's division. Under orders from the commander of the III Corps, Col. Daniel McCook's brigade, also part of Sheridan's division, was ordered to occupy the heights in front of Doctor's Creek to secure one of the few remaining water sources in the area. The Union troops steadily advanced up the hill, pushing back the Confederates who fought every step of ground and eventually occupied the heights. McCook deployed four cannons, but the Confederates quickly reinforced and advanced to try to retake the hill. The Confederates fired for about 50 minutes until Gen. Phil Sheridan arrived on the scene.



Positions of the armies at 2 p.m., October 8, 1862 | CC

Trauernicht and the men of the 2nd Missouri Infantry were then ordered forward. At the double quick, the 2nd Missouri, along with the 86th Illinois, pushed back the Confederates. One private was killed, and eleven were wounded, including Private Henry Trauernicht. The Union troops managed to securely take possession of a wooded hill beyond the Bottom House along Doctor's Creek. Meanwhile, Sheridan ordered McCook's brigade to form a line of battle on the far edge of the woods. The Confederate batteries erupted, and their infantry advanced again, making two determined attacks to retake the Union position. McCook's and Laiboldt's men engaged the Confederate forces for 30 minutes, ultimately driving the Rebels off the field.

After the battle, General Sheridan praised the conduct of his brigade commanders, including Colonel Laiboldt, "who behaved with great gallantry, leading their troops at all times." Sheridan reported casualties for his division at 44 killed, 274 wounded, and 12 missing. The 2nd Missouri lost 18 killed, 51 wounded, and 1 missing. Trauernicht had his right leg amputated above the knee. He was honorably discharged from the Union army and retired to St. Louis, Missouri, where he remained until 1865, when he moved to Nashville, Tennessee, to publish *The Nashville Demokrat*.

Next, Henry became the editor and publisher of the German newspaper *The Tennessee Post* from 1873 until 1877. On April 17, 1882, he was appointed janitor and clerk of the customs house in Nashville. On February 10, 1888, he retired. He died at the age of 47 on May 2, 1889. He had 13 children. He was a member of the Grand Army of the Republic; General George

Thomas Post Number One, Nashville; and the Knights of Honor. He was buried in the Nashville National Cemetery.

Bryan Bush serves as park manager at the Perryville Battlefield State Historic Site in Perryville, Kentucky.

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What Happened When the Preacher's Son Met the Great Agnostic?

Dr. Michael Bradley, August 30, 2024,
blueandgrayeducation.org



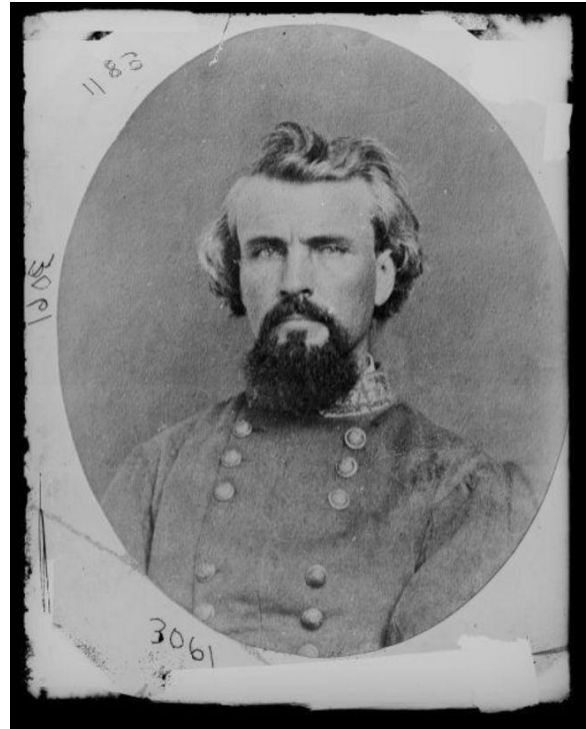
Robert G. Ingersol, aka the Great Agnostic | LOC

Preachers' kids are notorious for not always sharing the morals and manners of their minister fathers, and James Benjamin Cowan was no exception. J. B., as he usually was commonly known, was the son of Rev. Dr. Samuel Montgomery Cowan, who

served churches in north Alabama before being called to pastor the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in the thriving town of Fayetteville, just a few miles north of Huntsville, Alabama. It was there J. B. was born in 1831 and where he grew up.

In 1831, Reverend Cowan moved to Hernando, Mississippi, a boomtown fueled by the demand for more land to grow more cotton. Elizabeth Cowan Montgomery, a recently widowed relative, and her family also relocated to Hernando. Reverend Cowan became the legal guardian of the minor children in Elizabeth's family. In 1845, one of these now-adult children, Mary Ann Montgomery, married Nathan Bedford Forrest, making Reverend Cowan a surrogate father-in-law to Forrest.

In 1850, the younger Cowan set off for medical school. Within a few months, he completed his studies at Aylett's Institute and the University Medical College of New York City. At that time, many doctors only studied as apprentices under other physicians, so J. B., as a medical school graduate, was considered highly qualified.



Lt. Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest, Confederate States Army | LOC

When the Civil War broke out in 1861, J. B. was newly married with a wife and infant son, but he volunteered his services to the Confederacy. Unsurprisingly, when Bedford Forrest began raising a cavalry battalion, J. B. was assigned as the unit's surgeon, a position he would hold throughout the war. As the medical director of Forrest's cavalry, J. B. treated every wound Forrest suffered.

In mid-December 1862, Forrest embarked on an expedition that would further solidify his reputation as a daring commander. With a force of about 1,800 men, he was sent into western Tennessee to destroy the Mobile & Ohio Railroad, the main supply line feeding Ulysses Grant's advancing army in Vicksburg.

On December 18, 1862, Forrest attacked the U.S. garrison holding Lexington, Tennessee. The Union troops there, including a regiment of Tennessee Unionists, were

commanded by Col. Robert Ingersol. Before the war, Ingersol had gained fame as the Great Agnostic, a traveling lecturer advocating agnosticism—the belief that there is no knowledge (a "gnosis") to convince him of God's existence.

John Morton, The Artillery of Nathan Bedford Forrest's Cavalry: "The Wizard of the Saddle" (Publishing House of the M.E. Church, South Smith & Lamar, 1909)

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Forrest reached the outskirts of Lexington just after dark on the 17th and ordered an attack by elements of the 4th Alabama cavalry at dawn on the 18th. The attack shattered Ingersol's defense line, allowing the rest of Forrest's command to flood into the town. The Tennessee Unionists did not wait for the attack; they retreated hastily. Ingersol and about 300 men were captured, including J. B. Cowan.

During his captivity, J. B. made a believer of the Great Agnostic—not in the Christian faith, but in J. B.'s ability to fill an inside straight. J. B. had a reputation as the best poker player in Forrest's command, and he cleaned out Ingersol's wallet. When Ingersol was paroled, J. B. loaned him a hundred dollars to cover his travel expenses. This proved to be a very good investment.

In 1887, Ingersol was in Nashville on a lecture tour, and J. B. traveled from his home in Tullahoma, where he was practicing medicine, to hear his old adversary speak. When Ingersol took the stage, he saw J. B. and waved to him. At the conclusion of the lecture, Ingersol went into the audience, shook hands with J. B., and handed him a check for a hundred dollars ... Confederate.

J. B. Cowan died at the town drugstore in Tullahoma in 1909 while waiting for a prescription to be filled.

Sources

Michael Bradley, Nathan Bedford Forrest's Escort and Staff (Arcadia Publishing, 2006)