BATTLE OF NASHVILLE BATTLE OF NASHVILLE

"So thoroughly was the destruction of Hood's army accomplished that it was deemed unnecessary longer to retain a large force in Tennessee, or indeed anywhere in that section."

Henry Stone, Asst. Adi. Gen.(US)



Onlookers watch the battle from the slopes of Capitol Hill









Introduction The Battle of Nashville is considered the last major engagement in the Western Theater during the Civil War. Fought over two days. December 15 and 16, 1864, Federal Major General George H. Thomas engaged the Confederate Army of Tennessee, commanded by General John Bell Hood, in the hills just south of town. In all, Thomas suffered over 2,600 casualties, Hood more than 2,300 killed and wounded, along with 4.500 captured. The overwhelming Union victory sealed the fate of Confederate hopes in the west.

This driving tour includes sites associated with the Federal defenses of Nashville and the first and second days of the battle. All the stops can be reached using public streets. It is easy, especially in the suburban surroundings, to forget the horrors of war. To get the most from this tour, try to imagine the area the way it was in December, 1864—a barren landscape with few trees, ruined farms and plantations, and the bitter cold of winter. The war and Federal occupation by tens of thousands of soldiers left deep scars in the landscape



When the Confederate Army of Tennessee arrived in Nashville the troops were exhausted. They had been on the march from Atlanta since September, fighting all along the way, including the devastating battle at Franklin on November 30th. Food and firewood were scarce, and Hood's men were poorly outfitted. While the Federal soldiers were better fed and clothed, life in occupied Nashville was not especially pleasant either. With the influx of occupation soldiers and slaves from the countryside, the small town had grown almost overnight into a grossly overcrowded city, now waiting out the dreary years of war. Combat was fierce and personal — often hand-to-hand — and medical care was crude at best. The tour map is accompanied by written directions about the significance of the site. There are also a number of historical markers along the route or nearby. Stopping to read them will enhance the tour.

Federal soldiers below Ft. Morton

Occupied Nashville

In mid-February of 1862, Ft. Donelson, located ninety miles northwest of Nashville on the Cumberland River, was captured by the Federal army. The fall of Donelson led directly to the surrender of Nashville on February 25th. Occupation by Federal troops lasted until 1867. During that time, the city was fortified by a series of defensive installations, making Nashville a major supply base of Federal operations in the West. Both men and materials were transported into and through the city to supply the various campaigns to capture the Deep South, including Stones River, Tullahoma, Chattanooga, Atlanta, and Sherman's "March to the Sea." Federal troops also requisitioned numerous churches and hotels to use as hospitals – over twenty in all. With tens of thousands of soldiers garrisoned in Nashville during the war, the areas natural and agricultural resources were depleted, leaving a ravaged landscape for decades after the fighting ended

Projude to the Rattle

Following a two-month campaign from north Georgia into middle Tennessee and the bloody Battle of Franklin on November 30, 1864, Confederate commander John Bell Hood finally moved his battered Army of Tennessee to the outskirts of Nashville on December 2nd. Hood took up headquarters at Travellers Rest, the home of Col. John Overton. As part of his overall plan, he deployed cavalry units to the west and three infantry corps under Major General Benjamin F. Cheatham, Major General A. P. Stewart, and Lieut. Gen. Stephen D. Lee in a four mile arc that ran from the Nashville & Chattanooga railroad on the right to a series of redoubts along the Hillsboro Pike on the left.

Hood also ordered two cavalry divisions under Maj. Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest and Lieut. Gen. William Bate's infantry division thirty miles southeast to destroy parts of the Nasiville & Chattanooga railroad and ensure Thomas could not be reinforced by the 8000-man Federal garrison at Fortress Rosecrans in nearby Murfreesboro.

From behind the massive Federal fortifications that ringed the outer limits of the city, including Ft. Negley, the largest inland masonry fort built during the war, Major Gen. Thomas devised a battle plan to make a demonstration against the Confederate right with Maj. Gen. James Steedman's Provisional Division before unleashing a full flank attack against the Confederate left using Maj. Gen. James Wilson's Cavalry Corps, Maj. Gen. A. J. Smith's XVI Infantry Corps, and Brig. Gen. Thomas Wood's IV Infantry Corps. In all, Thomas would send over half of his 58,000-man army crashing against the Confederate redoubts in an attempt to collapse Hood's entire line.

For two weeks, from December 2nd to December 14th, the armies peered at one another across the area between their lines commonly called "no-man's land". At the end of the first week a winter storm produced frigid temperatures near 10 degrees and dropped freezing rain that remained for several days. The weather was so intense that Wilson's 12,000-man cavalry corps was stranded on the east side of the Cumberland River unable to cross the suspension due to ice.



Mai. Cen. George H. Thomas

George H. Thomas, nicknamed the "Rock of Chicakmauga," was ordered to Nashville from Atlanta in mid-October of 1864 to of mis October of 1864 to defend the city from a possible Confederate campaign to recapture the capitol. One of the Union Army's best field communders, he was nstrumental in Union victories at Shiloh, Stones River, Tullahoma, Chattanooga, and Atlanta. A Virgnian, Thomas was disowred by his sisters for not nining the Confederate cause They even asked him to change his name.



General John Rell Hood

John Bell Hood, a Kentuckian was a brigade and division commander in the Army of Northern Virginia till he was wounded at Gettysburg and lost the use of his left arm. After recovering he went west when James Longstreet's Corps was detached and sent to Georgia. At Chickwansa he lost his right lea Chickamauga he lost his right leg when he was shot just below the when he was shot just below the hip. He returned to service in mid-1864 with the Army of Tennessee to defend against Sherman's march on Atlanta. President Jefferson Davis replaced Army of Tennessee commander Joseph E. Johnston with Hood in mid-July of 1864.



Federal troops on the Nashville battlefield

The Battle

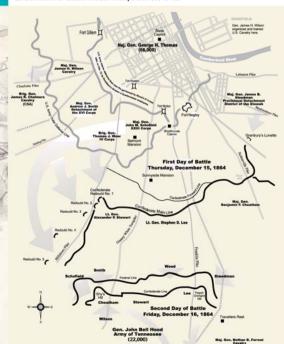
With the ice quickly melting, Thomas finalized his plan and issued orders to his commanders to attack at first light. As the sun rose on the 15th, the city and the battlefield was covered by a dense fog produced by the melting snow. At 8 a.m., Steedman's Division, using four United States Colored Infantry brigades, made several unsuccessful attacks against a lunette defended by Granbury's Frigade of Cheatham's Corp on the Confederate right. The regiments took hundreds of casualties.

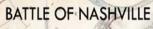
At 10 a.m. Wilson's Cavalry and Smith's 12,500-man XVI Infantry Corps began their sweep across the Harding Pike west, south, and then east to engage Stewart's Corps entrenched behind the five redoubts along and near the Hillsboro Pike. They were followed just ofter noon by Wood's I/ Unfantry Corps. Smith and Wilson's men captured the heavily outnumbered Redoubt #4, then Redoubt #5. By early afternoon Redoubt #3 fell. Division commanders in Stewart's Corps, realizing they were being flanked, ordered their men to retreat, abandoning Redoubt #2 and #1. Hood moved his entire army back two miles as the sun set on the first day of battle.

On the morning of the 16th, fog again covered the battlefield as the Confederates took up a two mile defensive position; anchored on the left by Cheatham's Corps at Compton's Hill (renamed after the war as Shy's Hill in honor of Col. William Shy), and on the right by Lee's Corps at Peach Orchard Hill. In the middle behind a stone wall was Stewart's Corps. Thomas initiated a battle plan that mirrored the first day. With a light rain falling, units from Steedman's Division and Wood's IV Corps began assaulting the Confederate right, taking heavy casualties in the process. One United States Colored Regiment lost five color bearers.

After a delay of several hours due to confusion on the part of Federal commanders, Lt. Gen, John MacArthur of Smith's XVI Corps began an attack from the Federal right against Compton's Hill (Shy's Hill). His Minnesota regiments stormed up the incline around 4 in the afternoon. The Confederates at the top were overwhelmed and began to fall back. Seeing the confusion of troops retreating, Stewart's Corps withdrew hastily in a panic that quickly befell the rest of the army. From atop Peach Orchard Hill, Lieut. Gen. Stephen D. Lee witnessed the debacle and he ordered his men to retreat, acting as the rear guard as the Army of Tennessee moved hastily down the Franklin Pike. As darkness covered the battlefield, Thomas wired Washington on his victory.

Wilson's Cavalry followed the Confederates into northern Alabama. On the day after Christmas, Hood re-crossed the Tennessee River. The Federal victory at Nashville and Sherman's capture of Savannah, Georgia, solidified the Federal hold on the West. The Army of Tennessee arrived in Tupelo, Mississippi with barely 15,000 men, less than half of the number they entered Tennessee with in November. As Asst. Adj. General Henry Stone of Thomas's staff noted, "By the time of Lee's surrender at Appomatiox (April 1865) there remained in Tennessee only the post garrisons and railroad guards needed to protect the property of the United States."





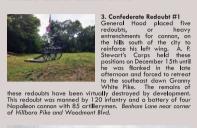


A Driving Tour of the 1864 Battlefield



1. Brookmeade Park at Kelley's Point
For two weeks prior to the battle, six artillery pieces under the
command of Confederate It. Col. D.C. Kelley effectively
blockaded the Cumberland River against seven heavily armed
U.S. Navy gunboats. The Confederate cavalry and Federal
gunboats dashed in six separate engagements. Brookmeade Park

2. Granbury's Lunette
This small infantry and artillery fortification was the anchor of the
Confederate right flank on December 15th. Named for General
Hiram Granbury, who was killed at Franklin, the lunete was the
first position assouthed in a diversionary attack just after 8 a.m. by
several regiments of United States Colored Troops under
Steedmar The USCIs panicked in the attempt and were cought in
the rallorated and just below the lunette. The regiments took
hundred of casvalites. Localed on Polk Ave.





4. Shy's Hill This hill, known at the time of the battle as Compton's Hill, was the main point of attack on the left by the Federal Army on the afternoon of December 16th. Throughout the day, the entrenched position was pounded by Federal artillers. Finally, Minnesota regiments under Division Commander John McArthur charged up the steep slope of the hill just after four in the afternoon. This assault began the route of the Army of Jennessee, sending the toward Franklin Hill. The hill was rearned offer my White Rivoward Franklin Pike. The hill was rearned offer my the for of Confederate Colonel William Shy, killed defending the hill on the 16th. At Battery Lane & Benton Smith Road.

5. Bradford House
Though the house has gone through two reconstructions due to fire since the 1860s, the home's occupant, Mary Bradford, was one of two women (Selene Hardring) who tried to rally retreating Confederate troops on December 16th. The house sat between the battle lines. Today, the stone springhouse remains as a testament to the battle. Lipscomb Dr.

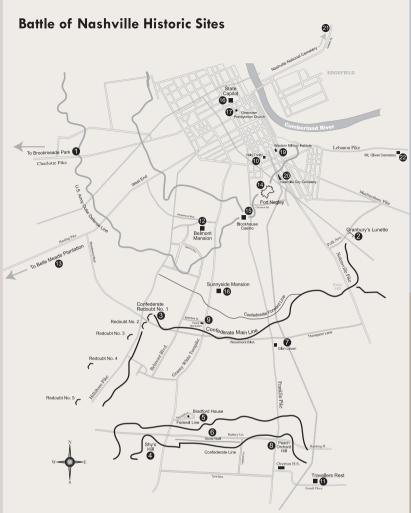


6. Stewart's Stone Wall
This stone fence originally served as the northern and western boundaries of the 1200-acre Lea plantation. On December 16th, the stacked stone was used as a fortification by Lt. General A.P. Stewart's Corps to hold back the Federal advance. To the taunts of "Remember Franklin" by Stewart's men, elements of Woods IV Corps were held in check throughout most of the day. On Lealand Lane just south of Battery Lane.



on the Thompson plantation, and later removed to the National Cemetery east of town. Today, the home is owned by the Land Trust for Tennessee. 4000 Franklin Road.

8. Peach Orchard Hill
Entrenched on this hill, It. Gen. S.D. Lee's Corps was the far right
flank of Hood's Confederate Army. All day on the 1 oth, Lee's men
held this position against attacks by Steedman's Division and
Wood's Corps. Six regiments of United States Colored Troops
made the attack, the largest use of Black troops at any battle
during the war. During the afternoon, USCTs repeatedly
attempted to dislodge Lee. One regiment took over 800
casualties in less than an how. Lee was finally forced to pull back
late in the afternoon where he protected the Confederate rear as
they retreated toward Franklin. Corner of Franklin Road &
Harding Place.



Map by Battle of Nashville Preservation Society (www.bonps.org)

Sites may be visited in any order. Please be aware of any sites on private property and obey all property owner warnings.

Monuments and Magazines —



9. Battle of Nashville Peace Monument Originally dedicated in 1927 b honor men who tought in the Civil War and World War I, the mountent was moved in 1999 to this park along the Confederate forward line. This is the only mountent we be betterfield that recognizes both Northern and Southern soldiers.

At corner of Granny White Pike & Battlefield Drive.



10. Holy Trinity Episcapal Church
This Gothic Revival church, built in
1852, was used by the Federal army
during occupation as a powder
magazine. Reportedly, solders
chapped meat on the alter and used
the baptismal fort as a wosh basin.
After the war, the Federal government
compensated the congregation for the
damages. 615 6th Ave. South.

Images courtesy of Tara Mielnik, Metro Historical Commission, David Currey

Headquarters

11. Travellers Rest
Built in 1799 by Judge John Overton, the antebellum plantation
home was Confederate General John Bell Hood's army
headquarters for the two weeks leading up to the battle. Hood
retired from the house and moved across Franklin Pike to Lealand
to be closer to the front on December 15th. During the battle on the
second day the family hid in the cellar. The Overtons were
Confederate supporters, but Federal officers were allowed to stay
in the house following the battle to protect the family. 636 Farrell
Parkyay.



12. Belmont Mansion Home of Adelicia Acklen, one of

the South's wealthiest women, the 1853 Italianate structure was used by Union Brig. General T. J. Wood as his command post during the battle. From here, Wood's men moved south over Montgomery Hill

moved south over Montgomery Hill before turning southeast to engage Confederate redoubt No. 1 along Hillsboro Pike. Family art treasures were removed before fighting broke out, and were taken downtown to the home of former President James K. Polk's widow for safe-keeping. The water tower just south of the mansion was used as an observation post. 1900 Belmont Blvd.

13. Belle Meade Plantation
Built in 1853 by wealthy planter William Giles Harding, the mansion
served as headquarters for Confederate Brig. General James
Chalmers, a commander in Nathan Bedford Forrest's cavalry, for
two weeks prior to the battle. On the morning of December 15th, a
skirnish took place between Federal and Confederate troops in the
front yard. Selene Harding, the 19-year-old daughter of Colonel Harding, ran out of the house during the fighting in an attempt to rally the retreating Confederates. 5025 Harding Road.

Fortifications



14. Fort Negley Anchoring the Union line, the fort was the largest inland masonry fortification constructed during the

fortification constructed during the war, and one of a series of fort installations that surrounded the city. Supporting forts an the hills to the southwest, Casino and Morton, made Nasytille an impregnable city. All were constructed by impressed Black refugees and slaves from surrounding plantations. The entire field of fire in front of the fort was cleared of trees leaving the landscape bare. On December 15, the guns from these fortifications signaled the Federal assault with an opening salvo. Taday, Negley is an historical park with a state-of-the-art Visitor's Center. Ft Negley Blvd. off 8th Ave. South.

15. Blockhouse CasinoBlockhouse Casino was built in 1862 as part of the fortification system surrounding the city to the south and the west of town.

Made of wood, the blockhouse guarded the Franklin Turnpike.

Today, the hill is the site of the city reservoir, built between 1887 and 1889. 8th Ave. South at the city reservoir.



16. Tennessee State Capitol
Occupied after February 1862 by
Federal forces, Nashville was the
main supply and transportation hub
for the Union armies in the vest. The
capitol building was completed just
prior to the war (1859) and artillery
emplacements and cotton bale

emplacements and cotton balle breastworks surrounded the structure. It was known as Fort Andrew Johnson, after the state's military governor during occupation. Johnson eventually became Lincoln's running mate in 1864 and then president after his assassination several months later. Johnson was present in Nashville during the battle. The building is a National Historic Landmark. Located on Capital Hill.

Hospitals -



17. Downtown Presbyterian Church 17. Downtown Presbytenian Church Designed by Philadelphia architect William Strickland, the Egyptian Revival church was completed in 1855. The building served on occasion as a Federal hospital throughout Nashville's occupation. In the country of the control of the country of



18. Sunnyside
During the first day of the battle,
Sunnyside (Sevier House) was in the
direct line of fire from both armies.
When restoration work was
conducted during the 1940s, cannon conducted during the 1940s, cannon balls, canisters, and Minie Balls were found embedded in the building. Today, the house serves as the office for the Metro Nashville Historical Commission. In Sevier Park at Granny White Pike and Kirkwood Ave.



19. Western Military Institute

19. Western Military Institute
In the 1850s, this building was the
central hall for the University of
Nashville, and was later used to
house the school's military institute.
Such notable Confederate
generals as Bushrod Johnson
(buried in the Nashville City
Cemetery), Kirby Smith, and A.P.
Stewart taught there before the war. Regiments in Steedman's
Provisional Division, including two United States Colored Troop
brigades, began their march down the Murfreesboro Pike at 6:30
a.m. to make a diversionary attack against the Confederate right
at Granbury's Linette. Today, the structure houses several of the
city's government agencies. 800 2nd Ave South.

Cemeteries



20. Nashville City Cemetery
Opened in 1822, the cemetery is
the city's oldest public buried
ground. Originally four acres, the
site grew to 27 acres in the decade
before the war. During the
occupation, the Federal army used
the cemetery to bury Federal
Confederates were buried there as well. Among the officers who
rest in the cemetery are Confederate Generals Richard Ewell,
Felix ZolliaCoffer, the first Confederate Generals killed in the western
theatre, and "Bushrod" Johnson. Corner of 4th Ave South and Oak
Street.

21. Nashville National Cemetery

21. Nashville National Cemetry
Ire Nashville National Cemetry was established in 1867 by order of Fuder Romentand George H. Thomas as a final resting place for Union soldiers killed in and around Nashville during the war. Over 16,000 Civil War soldiers are interred in the cemetry, including 3,000 unknown and members of the United States Colored Regiments who were killed at the Battle of Nashville. 1420 Gallotin Rd.



22. Mt. Olivet Cemetery
Established in 1855, Mt. Olivet Cemetery
become the final resting place for almost
1,500 Confederate soldiers who were
reinterred from various bettlefield locations
in middle Tennessee. Veterans who survived in middle Tennessee. Veterans who survived the war were also buried in Mt. Divet at an area designated as Confederate Cirde. Seven Southern generals are interred at the cemetery: William B. Bate, William N. R. Beall, Benjamin F. Cheatham, William H. Jackson, George Maney, James E. Rains, and Thomas Benton Smith. Located at 1101 Lebanon Rd.