

The Bugle

THE BUGLE, NAMED FOR THE FIRST NEWSPAPER IN BRENTWOOD

A publication of the Brentwood Historical Society



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SPECIAL PROGRAM PLANNED AT HISTORIC CARNTON PLANTATION



Once each year, the Brentwood Historic Society ventures forth to important historic sites in surrounding communities. This spring please plan to join us on Saturday, April 12th for an exciting historic program at Carnton Plantation in Franklin. The plantation will be reserved for the Brentwood Historic Society for a special after-hours presentation.

As many of you know, Carnton has a most distinguished history. Randal McGavock, a former mayor of Nashville, established this large plantation in 1826.

Carnton then served as the home for several generations of the McGavock family and the African-American families that served as slaves on the farm.

Near the end of the Civil War, the pivotal Battle of Franklin took place near the plantation. Carnton would serve as a major field hospital after the battle. With the end of the war, the McGavocks exhibited their concern for the many fallen Confederates, and designated two acres of their land to provide a final resting place for close to 1,500 soldiers. Carnton remained

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Archaeological survey of Turner property details Civil War era military camps.
- Historic Brentwood Toll Roads Engineered by Scottish Inventor, John Loudon McAdam

SPECIAL PROGRAM PLANNED AT HISTORIC CARNTON PLANTATION (CONTINUED)

in the possession of the McGavock family until 1911. By 1978, the plantation had fallen into severe disrepair, but was rescued in that year by the Carnton Association, Inc. During succeeding years, the organization



expertly restored this important site which is now a key historic asset in the State of Tennessee.

On the evening of April 12th at 6pm, the Brentwood Historic Society will present candlelight tours of Historic Carnton, including the restored

McGavock home and the two cemeteries on the grounds (military and family). A special presentation will be staged in the cemeteries where costumed reenactors will present a special live interpretation of several historic personalities. You may have enjoyed similar performances at Mt. Olivet Cemetery in Nashville. Civil War military reenactors portraying the Maury Grays of the 1st Tennessee Infantry Regiment will also be on hand to offer an interpretation of military camp life during this time period. At one point in the program, refreshments will be served on the back porch of the Carnton mansion.

Though there will be no fee for this event for the membership reservations are needed for proper event planning. Please email Suzanne Burns at sburns8@bellsouth.net or phone her at 373-1614 to arrange your admission. To help defray our costs, any contributions that you may be able to provide will be accepted during the program.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF TURNER PROPERTY - VERIFIES CIVIL WAR ERA OCCUPATION

BY JOE LASSUS

The recent tussle over the fate of the Turner property pales greatly by comparison with the events of one hundred and forty years ago this month. In March of 1863, Confederate General Nathan B. Forrest stormed down upon the Union stockade on this property that had been charged with guarding the railroad crossing at the Little Harpeth River. After a single cannon shot, the Union leader feared the worst, and surrendered his garrison of three hundred infantrymen. This action mirrored the previous surrender that morning of some five hundred plus northern soldiers near the Brentwood railroad station, two miles to the north.

Some years ago the State of Tennessee Division of Archaeology came into possession of a field survey that was completed on the Turner property by Republic Restoration Conservation & Anthropology. This report provides fascinating archaeological findings on the site. The fortification was a principal target of the sur-

vey effort which used EDM (electronic distance measuring) as a tool in projecting its actual location based on the soldier's drawing. A small backhoe was brought in to dig a series of trenches with a varying depth of 1 to 3 meters. In a ninth trench, the research uncovered military camp debris at 40 to 103 cm below the surface (deeper than the effective range of metal detectors). Various personnel, camp fuel, and food/forage remains were found, including a large quantity of bones from swine, cattle, and wild game. The majority of the larger bones have saw and knife marks in abundance. Even though the Union Army was well supplied with packaged foodstuffs, the majority of meat subsistence came from the surrounding countryside. Period glass and ceramic shards were found in large quantities here, as it was common for fruits and vegetables to be preserved in such containers.

Another find cited in the report relates to a heavy

HISTORIC SURVEY OF TURNER PROPERTY (CONTINUED)

charcoal deposit with numerous burnt nails, calcified bones, and spalled lead (gunpowder from bullet cartridges often were used to start fires, leaving the melted lead in the firepit). The author goes on to cite, "Among the artifacts retrieved from this deposit are a large number of square box nails. Note, it was standard military procedure, as well as common sense, to break up provisions boxes for fire wood, thus explaining the large number of burnt and corroded square nails....In all there were (5) specific rifle bullet types discovered including the common and predictable three ring Minne' Ball, which was the most common round employed in the war as the mainstay of infantry gunners. As a companion to the three ring bullet, we found a William's Cleaner bullet that was designed to combat-clean a rifle to prevent the musket from having an excess of fouling during an engagement.." The report goes on to identify two types of Sharps bullet cartridges, and an unusual Smith Carbine cartridge.

Several other "digs" are also described in detail by the archaeologist. He goes on to identify military records that locate Union troops on both east and west sides of the railroad trestle. Finally, the report concludes with the statement that, "With the evi-

dence...we have determined, with little doubt or question, that Fort Brentwood, the Little Harpeth River Encampment is located in the lower southwestern part of the meadow very close to the Little Harpeth River rather than higher up on the high ground straddling the south fence line of the original Green Pasture property as originally believed....We cannot say, on the basis of the work done thus far, exactly where the limits of the earthen structure are located. However, we feel that with additional research and excavation, we could locate the exact location and the complete outline of the historic earthen structure. Additionally, we could excavate other peripheral encampments retrieving more artifacts and learning more about the individuals and the regiments that were stationed at the Little Harpeth Encampment site."

The author concludes with two suggestions to permanently note this important historic site. The first proposal would erect permanent informational historical markers on the site. If funds permit, the report suggests preserving one of the existing outbuildings for use as a small museum to display artifacts with interpretive exhibits centered on garrison and camp life of the military during the Civil War period.

Drawing (right): Anson Smith, Union soldier of the 104th Illinois Regiment, sketched this fortification constructed in the spring of 1863 on the current Turner property. The railroad and Little Harpeth River are in the lower left corner of the drawing. An enhanced copy is available for study at the Brentwood Library.



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Society

A citizen organization of the City of
Brentwood, Brentwood Historic Commission,
dedicated to the study and preservation of the
city's history and culture.

For information or membership, contact:
Brentwood Municipal Center
370-0060 (www.brentwood-tn.org)
Linda Lynch
Community Relations Director
T. Vance Little, City Historian



Executive Council of the Brentwood Historical Society

Suzanne Burns, Secretary, 6042 Wellesley Way,
Brentwood, 373-1614, email: sburns8@bellsouth.net

Wendell Edison, Treasurer, 6551 Cloverbrook Drive,
Brentwood, 377-1083, email: wendelldedison@cs.com.

Jim Hackett, Membership, 1735 Charity Drive,
Brentwood, 376-2233, email: jshackett@comcast.net.

Joe Lassus, Newsletter Editor, 2609 Palomino Ct, Thompson Sta-
tion, 595-1623, email: lassusj@brentwood-tn.org

Sue Ross, Membership, 5101 Cornwall Drive,
Brentwood, 221-0026, email: susan_ross@uhc.com

Bob Dennison, Honorary Society Historian

SCOTTISH INVENTOR PROVIDES ENGINEERING FOR EARLY BRENTWOOD TOLL ROADS BY JOE LASSUS

Overland transport was a seasonal experience for our forefathers prior to the invention of the all-weather "macadamized" road in the early 1800's. Two such roads were built through Brentwood in the 1830's and 1840's, specifically Franklin Road and Wilson Pike (then known as the Harpeth Turnpike). Neither road was publicly funded but were instead built by corporations that operated the roads for profit. Toll stations were placed along each route to collect a fee from the users. One such toll house remains in Brentwood (see photo below by Dick Dougall, Brentwood Camera Club) at the intersection of Franklin Road and Concord Road.

The road type was named for its Scottish inventor, John McAdam, who engineered a raised roadbed using a system of properly drained foundations to carry away rainfall. McAdam started his career in America but his British loyalties forced his return to Scotland after the Revolutionary War. His design included a multi-layered surface of crushed stone: the largest stones, about the size of an adult head, at the bottom, then another layer about the size of an adult fist, then a top layer of stones no larger than can go into an adult mouth. A macadamized road drained well on rainy days and never turned to mud, and the steel wagon wheels and steel shoes of the horses compacted the top layer of small stones into a hard surface. The design was further perfected in the succeeding decades and eventually led to the first tar-based (tarmacadam) roads in Europe.



Franklin Pike Toll House