

## Civil War Archaeology

### **Introduction**

The Civil War is the single most important historical event in 19th century America (Smith 1994a). Thus, in order to understand the 19<sup>th</sup> century experience one must have a sound understanding of the cause, impact and aftermath of the Civil War. The war marked a critical transition in American politics, economy, technology, and social order (Geier and Potter 2000). Slavery ended and as a result 3.5 million blacks were emancipated establishing a newly defined ethnic group: freed persons of color (Geier and Potter 2000; Robertson Jr. 1988). Three million men fought in the war, there were one million casualties, and 618,000 died (Faust 1986; Robertson Jr. 1988). The South began Reconstruction and even today has never fully recovered (Geier and Potter 2000). Tennessee, on the other hand, was least affected by Reconstruction (Seymour 1982).

All this being said, the significance of the Civil War in American history should demand urgency on behalf of archaeologists. Military, industrial, cemetery, domestic and other Civil War sites must be investigated scrupulously, if not for the sake of American history, then for the sake of the thousands that died. Archaeological inquiry is crucial in defining the Civil War. It not only corroborates or refutes the historical record but it also provides the material, relevant facts upon which to build the discipline of Civil War archaeology (Smith 1994a). Such facts provide historians, as well as members of other disciplines, with new pertinent information concerning the war. They stand alone *and* go beyond written history (Smith 1994a). This is vital in defining history because historical records are often confusing, disorganized, contradictory, incomplete, and biased (Smith 1994a; Potter, Sonderman, Creveling, Dean 2000).

However, Civil War archaeology, as stated earlier, does not stand alone in defining the Civil War. By drawing on both the historical record and archaeological evidence a more informed account of the past is established. Civil War archaeologists are therefore historical archaeologists, defined by Smith (1994a:9) “as scientists using and integrating the information provided by both documents and archaeology.” Historical documents aren’t all that Civil War archaeologists should draw from, they should also take advantage of the many theories and methods applied by other disciplines to the war (Smith 1994a). An interdisciplinary approach using historical, archaeological, architectural, and public interpretation to the study of the Civil War is necessary in order to generate new data, methods and theoretical perspectives assuring a historically accurate and holistic account of the war (Geier and Potter 2000). Collaboration with other disciplines permits a checks and balance system. It also helps fill in gaps in the record where voices have been ignored or silenced. The interactions between army and civilian populations were substantial and in many circumstances traumatic, yet they have rarely been investigated in Tennessee (Potter, Sonderman, Creveling and Dean 2000). Military actions and the shortage of supplies among Union and Confederate armies left many towns ravaged, farm houses damaged, fields burned, crops plundered, and household goods and livestock stolen (Geier 1994b; Orser, Jr. 1994; Potter, Sonderman, Creveling and Dean 2000; Manning-Sterling 2000). Animal remains have been examined and correlated with claims filed by civilians concerning stolen livestock by Potter, Sonderman, Creveling, and Dean (2000). Such endeavors should also be undertaken in Tennessee.

There also is a need for archaeological inquiry into camp life of both white and black soldiers from Union and Confederate armies (Bearss 2000). Military hospitals and

prison sites deserve more attention as research endeavors. Only a few sites, none in Tennessee, have received adequate attention (Whitehorne, Geier, and Hofstra 2000; Prentice and Prentice 2000). What were the roles of women during the war, many of whom became the head of household as their husbands volunteered to fight? “The respect for this time and the people who lived it can be obtained only by a comprehensive, informed, and sincere effort to understand the real social and historical context in which they existed and acted” (Geier and Potter 2000:xxviii).

With this in mind, no adequate understanding of Civil War archaeology can be accomplished without an understanding of the historical events that climaxed with the Civil War. The total cultural context of the war must be understood (Geier and Potter 2000). Accordingly a brief road map of the historical events that led to and ended the Civil War in Tennessee is provided. The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to Civil War archaeology as it is represented by military, industrial and cemetery sites in the state of Tennessee. A summation of Civil War archaeology and future endeavors are explored at the end of this chapter.

### **A Brief Historical Account of the Civil War in Tennessee**

The nomination of Abraham Lincoln as President of the United States triggered the secession of seven Deep South states due to his opposition to slavery spreading to the newly gained western territories. His view on slavery posed a threat to many of the Deep South states whose representatives feared that he, along with his supporters, would eventually attempt to abolish slavery in all states. In spite of protest by the newly established Confederacy, Lincoln continued to maintain Union troops at Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina. Tension at Fort Sumter between Union and Confederate

troops climaxed on April 12, 1861 when South Carolina Confederate forces opened fire on Union troops. On April 14, "Lincoln called on the states of the Union to furnish troops to put down the rebellion, in effect declaring war on the Confederacy" (Bergerson et al. 1999: 135). The North stood for nationalism or union and the South stood for state's rights above national allegiance (Burns 1982).

The state of Tennessee remained divided during the Civil War. Approximately forty-two thousand white Tennesseans, mostly from East Tennessee, fought for the Union during the war (Bergeron et al. 1999). Most were Scots-Irish who hated the plantation aristocracy and were impartial to blacks (Seymour 1982). Tennessee gave 136,000 troops to the Confederacy hence the nickname "volunteer state" (Seymour 1982). This led to bitter internal conflicts between Union East Tennessee and Confederate West and Middle Tennessee (Corlew 1993; Smith and Nance 2003). Yet despite protest by Union sympathizers Tennessee seceded on May 7, 1861, becoming the last state to leave the union (Nance and Smith 2005 reword).

In Tennessee, at least 1,700 battles and skirmishes were fought, more than any other state with the exception of Virginia (Jones: Tennessee Civil War Sourcebook; Seymour 1982). Confederate armies won great Tennessee victories at Shiloh, Stones River, and Chickamauga (Seymour 1982). Federal troops won Stone's River, Lookout Mountain, and Missionary Ridge, the latter of which broke the Confederate hold on Chattanooga and gave the Union a direct path into Atlanta and Knoxville (Lepa 2007). Taking and holding Tennessee was critical for the Union. Tennessee possessed several important resources. Confederates had to keep East Tennessee for its metal tools for war, produce, and railroads (Seymour 1982). East Tennessee had the only blast furnace outside of Virginia, a copper

rolling mill, caves with an unlimited supply of niter, lead, and saltpeter (Seymour 1982). The railroads from Virginia to Georgia were also vital for the Confederate war strategy (Bergeron et al. 1999; Smith and Nance 2003). These railroads were crucial for the movement of troops and supplies (Lepa 2007). Union *and* Confederate forces *and* Southern civilian populations also coveted East Tennessee's wheat production and rich supply of hogs (Seymour 1982). Middle Tennessee was coveted for its iron furnaces and rich supplies of corn, hogs, cattle, horses, and mules (Bergeron et al. 1999). "Moreover, Nashville was the leading military manufacturing center and storage depot in the western Confederacy, with Memphis a close second" (Bergeron et al. 1999:142).

Another factor that made taking Tennessee essential for winning the war was its strategic location as a gateway into the Lower South through Chattanooga and the Tennessee and Mississippi rivers. In order for the Union to take Atlanta, Chattanooga had to be taken. The Tennessee and Mississippi rivers were gateways into the heart of the South and taking them was essential for the Union if they were going to win the war. By the spring of 1864 the Union army had complete control of Tennessee and consequently access into Atlanta and beyond (Bergeron et al. 1999). Other important rivers included the Ohio and Cumberland which enable access into Middle Tennessee (Lepa 2007).

### **Introduction to Civil War Military Sites**

Before proceeding to discuss Civil War military sites it must be noted that sites and actions are two different things. The sites represented by the Smith and Nance (2003) survey are only a small sample of actual Civil War sites in Tennessee. Undoubtedly not all combat incidents show up in the archaeological record. If this were the case and archaeologist were able to document all Civil War combat incidents there would be at least

3,245 sites recorded for Tennessee (Jones: Tennessee Civil War Sourcebook).

Unfortunately however, most of these sites have succumb to urban development.

Surveys of military sites in West, Middle and East Tennessee were carried out by the Tennessee Division of Archaeology over a period of eleven years. These surveys were conducted to record all locations of possible Civil War activities so that they might be protected through cultural resource management under state laws. All sites (and information pertaining to them) were entered into the statewide archaeological site file at the Tennessee Division of Archaeology. The site survey of Middle Tennessee produced 143 Civil War era military sites (Smith, Prouty, and Nance 1990), 89 in West Tennessee (Prouty and Barker 1996) and 188 sites in East Tennessee (Smith and Nance 2003). A total of 443 Civil War military sites were documented during the course of these surveys (Smith and Nance 2003). These sites range from battlefields to blockhouses and hospitals many of which have seen little to no scientific excavation but lots of relic hunting by collectors.

In order to do military archaeology, archaeologists must have a sound understanding of military unit formations and military activities on and off the field (Geier and Potter 2000). A better understanding of patterns of military actions can be gained by examining the distribution and association of military artifacts by type and frequency (i.e., artifact pattern) (Smith 1994b; Potter, Sonderman, Creveling and Dean 2000). Investigations into military engineering tactics and armaments should also be undertaken in order to determine their influence on the position, construction, and occupation of fortifications (Fryman 2000). Geographical analysis, drawings, and photographs are very useful in determining military tactics and armament placements during the war because they generally give a layout of the topography as well as planned and completed

fortifications (Fryman 2000).

“The actions of military units on a battlefield are based on the tactics of the prevailing military wisdom of the day; *they are not random*. Therefore, one should not expect the debris of battle to be distributed randomly over a battlefield. The tactics employed on a battlefield do leave their traces in the archaeological record. Subsequently, if natural forces or human activities do not significantly disturb, mix, or mask all or parts of the battlefield, it should be possible to identify and define artifact patterns created by the tactical positions and movements of individual military units” (Potter, Sonderman, Creveling, and Dean 2000:13).

### **Fortifications**

Many of the recorded military sites related to the Civil War are either battlefields or large military complexes like fortifications (Smith and Nance 2003:73). Fortifications in Tennessee were driven by the need for defense of waterways and transportation hubs as well as staging areas for offensive maneuvers between both North and South. This military component of Tennessee Civil War sites will be the main focus of this section.

A fortification can be defined as military structure built for defense in warfare. This consists of various forms of earthworks or structures and can range from small cannon emplacements to large forts. Fortifications were routine in Union and Confederate armies by 1864 (Fryman 2000). A list of these different types of defenses will be discussed in more detail below in order to understand the remaining cultural resources of the Civil War.

The most prolific type of fortification in Tennessee consists of entrenchments such as breastworks or rifle pits (Smith and Nance 2003:36). These are relatively simple defensive works and usually consist of nothing more than a ditch and parapet. These also could be connected between forts or redoubts to form larger fortifications. One example of this type of feature is present at Island No. 10 along the shores of the Mississippi in Lake County and is composed of a parapet and associated outer ditch. The battle of Shiloh also saw extensive construction of entrenchments and is possibly the most extensive grouping

anywhere in the western theater (Hagerman 1988:173).

Redoubts are another form of defensive work present in Tennessee during the Civil War. These can be defined as an earthwork enclosed on all sides in a square or polygonal shape usually with an opening on one side (Smith and Nance 2003:105).

These can often be strung together by entrenchments to create a long defensive line.

Excavations at Roper's Knob in Williamson County best exemplifies the archaeology conducted at this type of site.

Redans also occur as a type of fortification. These are defenses that take the shaped of a V. Like redoubts these can also be portions of larger works. They are relatively few that survive today, but the best preserved examples come from Loudon County and were constructed for defense of the rail system (Smith and Nance 2003:114).

The lunette is one more form of defensive structure seen in Tennessee. Lunettes are similar to redans in shape, but are distinguished by having two inward turned flanks (Smith and Nance 2003:116). These were also parts of larger defenses sometimes intermixed with previously mentioned types. Fortress Rosecrans located within the Stones River National Military Battlefield in Murfreesboro consists of a number of these features.

A priest cap is another type of fortification in Tennessee. A priest cap is a defensive work in the shape of a W and is also called a swallow tail due to this form. One example of a priest cap exists near Shelbyville and is a portion of works that was used as an artillery position as part of the defensive line along the Duck River (Smith and Nance 2003:119). This feature has received no archaeological investigation though is listed in the state site files.

The final type of defensive structure located in Tennessee is the fort. Forts are

sometimes described as small as well as large enclosed defensive works (Smith and Nance 2003:123). In this section, the focus will however be on large forts. These come in a variety of forms like the corner bastion or star fort and make up a melding of all forms of fortification as well as other defenses like stockades or blockhouses not previously mentioned. A number of fort sites are located in Tennessee. Most have received considerable archaeological investigation which resulted in at least fourteen site reports concerning large Civil War fortification complexes (Smith 2000:151).

The most complete and thorough examination into this topic has been taken up by the Division of Archaeology in a survey of Civil War Military sites in Tennessee (Smith and Nance 2003). This consisted of a description of existing sites as well as the recording of new Civil War sites for the states site file database. With the recording of only 27 sites in the beginning of the project to a total of 443 by its completion, this serves as a means for documenting and preservation of Tennessee's Civil War history (Smith and Nance 2003:211). Comprised of previous work in conjunction with the state historic preservation office, this final report is the most complete analysis of Civil War sites in Tennessee and provides a basis for this discussion.

After Tennessee joined the Confederacy a series of fortifications were commissioned to be constructed in the defense of the state. These included Fort Pillow, Wright, Donelson, and Henry. Most of these were to be captured by the Union forces and occupied. Other fortifications were then also constructed by the Union army to keep control of certain defensible areas like Nashville and Memphis. A majority of these are associated with major rivers and most are located in Middle Tennessee.

Of the site reports mentioned earlier one of the most extensive and complete

analysis of a Civil War fortification was conducted at Fort Pillow. Located at the confluence of Coal Creek and the Mississippi River on the first Chickasaw Bluff, Fort Pillow was a Confederate fortification built to defend against Union assault on Memphis. Under the direction of General Gideon Pillow, the fort began construction in the summer of 1861 (Mainfort 1980:2). This mainly consisted of water batteries and entrenchments that encircled an area of about 30 acres.

During the war, the fort never saw much action. It was abandoned after the defeat at Shiloh and reoccupied by Union troops. Once there, they constructed more earthworks to defend against a land-based attack. This would occur in April 1864 when Nathan Bedford Forest assaulted and captured the fort. There was never a formal surrender of the fort and an alleged massacre was committed by Forest and his troops (Mainfort 1980:4). After this incident, the fort was completely abandoned by both sides and never reused.

Archaeological investigations at Fort Pillow were conducted for three seasons in the late 1970s by the Tennessee Division of Archaeology under the direction of James Mainfort (Mainfort 1980:1). Due to a restoration project, it was deemed necessary to excavate the site for interpretive purposes as well as mitigate any areas of proposed construction. Specifically, testing would take place at the field embrasures, the banquette, and ramparts as well as interior structures of the fort (Mainfort 1980:12). The location of a reported mass grave was also investigated as well as Union barracks. A metal detector survey was also employed to discover any activity areas outside of the fort proper. Numerous artifacts and features related to the fort were discovered. This included gun embankments, sections of the Union fort, and numerous embrasures. Some burials were also encountered that related to an 1866 memorial cemetery. While not all goals were

achieved during the project it did lead to a better understanding of the fort and its construction. Today, the fort is well-preserved and protected as a Tennessee state park.

Fort Pickering is another major fortification located along the Mississippi River in West Tennessee. This was a federally constructed fort that was built on top of an earlier 19<sup>th</sup> century fort which was used to garrison up to 10,000 Union troops for the defense of Memphis (Smith and Nance 2003:124). Built in 1862 after the naval battle that resulted in Union occupation of the city, this fort saw little action during the war. It did house commanders like General Ulysses S. Grant and William T. Sherman and served as a staging ground for the eventual conquering of the Mississippi by Union forces. After the war, soldiers from the fort were involved in the Memphis Race Riots of 1866 in which 46 blacks and 2 white residents died due to the racist attitudes of whites towards blacks in Memphis. Most of the fortifications as they exist today have succumbed to the ravages of urban development. A portion of the fort is however protected as a city park.

The fort is situated with the Mississippi on the west with a central fortification consisting of a bastioned fort with two lunettes connected by a curtain wall extending to the rivers edge. Outside of the main structure a large indented line runs the length of the fort with lunettes on the northern and southern extremities. Barracks for troops, artillery emplacements, and headquarters are present within these defensive works. At the present no archaeological work has been conducted on the site though a portion of what remains will be preserved as a cultural resource.

Another Civil War fort located on the Mississippi River is Fort Wright in Tipton County. This was a Confederate construction built in 1861 after Tennessee's entrance into the Confederacy. It was the first large fortification to be built in Tennessee during the war

for the training and building of armies as well as defense of the Mississippi (Finley 2002).

It was constructed by slave labor and consisted of four redoubts with a large earthen enclosure encompassing about 30 acres located atop a bluff overlooking the river (Smith and Nance 2003:128). The site saw no action in the war and was evacuated by Confederate troops by 1862. Some naval and cavalry troops would intermittently occupy the fort, but no substantial force would be garrisoned there. Though some of this fortification is still preserved such as a brick-lined powder magazine, no archaeological investigations have been conducted at the site.

Fort Henry is another fortification commissioned by state after its entrance into the Confederacy. This fort was positioned on the eastern shore of the Tennessee River just south of the Kentucky border and was strategically placed for its location parallel to the Cumberland River and Fort Donelson towards the east. This earthen fort was constructed on low ground adjacent to the river and was surrounded by swampy terrain. It was comprised of an essentially star-shaped defensive earthwork at its center with five bastions connected by curtain walls. It was also enclosed by rifle pits and troop encampments that surrounded the extreme perimeter.

In his first incursion into the south, General Ulysses S. Grant captured Fort Henry after flooding immersed a majority of the fort. Confederate General Tilghman was charged with its defense and after realizing the futility of continued aggression sent the majority of his force to reinforce Fort Donelson and continue the fight there. Once Union gunboats had gained the advantage, unconditional surrender was accepted and resulted in the first victory for the north in the western theater. This defeat also allowed complete access to western portion of the state and the Tennessee River as far south as Muscle

Shoals, Alabama.

Most of the site today is under Kentucky Lake though some portions do remain undisturbed in the Land between the Lakes (Cooling 2002a). No archaeological investigations have taken place at this site though it's preserved outer works harbor some promise for future archaeological work.

One of the most infamous fortifications in Tennessee is Fort Donelson. Located along the western shore of the Cumberland River near the town of Dover, it was erected to protect the water route to the city of Nashville. Constructed in 1861 with slave labor the fort was principally a water battery with adjacent fortified encampments. Once Fort Henry fell to the west its defenses were reinforced to protect from land assault (Cooling 2002a).

Soon after the defeat at Fort Henry in early February 1862, Grant turned his forces towards Fort Donelson. Unlike Fort Henry, the batteries at Fort Donelson effectively repelled Union attack by water. Grants troops were then delegated the task of taking the fort and succeeded routing a number of Confederates. Unconditional surrender was once again accepted by the remaining commanding general Simon Buckner along with the remaining soldiers. The Union army then occupied the fort throughout the remainder of the war. This was a decisive Union victory and gave Grant access to all of Middle Tennessee including its capital, which fell shortly after.

The fort was nominated as a National Military Park in 1928 and was later delegated as a National Battlefield in 1985 (Cooling 2002b). A majority of the fort and associated features are protected and its remains have received attention by archaeologists. In fact, the first reported historical archaeology project in Tennessee consisted of investigations at Fort Donelson (Smith 2000:151). These excavations have mainly focused on the water

batteries on site as well as other mitigation projects in compliance with its use as a federal park.

Fort Defiance is another Confederate fort that was built in late 1861 to defend Clarksville along the confluence of the Cumberland and Red Rivers. After the fall of Fort Donelson the fort was abandoned by Confederate forces and was then occupied by the Union who enlarged it. The fort did see action and was once again recaptured by Confederate soldiers in the summer of 1862. The fort change hands again with a force of troops sent from Fort Donelson who retook the site shortly thereafter. Colonel Bruce was made commander of the fort and the name was then changed to Fort Bruce. Today the site remains well-preserved and resides as a Clarksville city park.

Archaeological investigations conducted at Fort Defiance/Bruce in 2001 consisted of the excavation of a series of five meter auger tests to determine concentrations of cultural deposits and one by one meter units in apparent surface features within the fortification. Investigations at the site also attempted to isolate discrete Confederate and Federal construction episodes in the main defensive parapet by way of the examination of backhoe trench and hand excavated slot trench profiles (Ezell 2002).

After Middle Tennessee was opened to Union troops due to the decisive victories at Fort Henry and Donelson, the capital of Nashville was occupied in February 1862. The following month Andrew Johnson was appointed as military governor of the state and petitioned Washington for the construction of defensive works to protect Nashville from Confederate attack. With this petition came the construction of Fort Negley within the year.

Located two miles south of downtown Nashville on the highest prominence around

the city, Fort Negley was constructed in a European style fort based on the designs of French military strategist Sebastian LePrestre de Vaubaun. The architect behind its design was James St. Clair Morton and it is named after the post commander General James S. Negley. The majority of the work was completed by some 2,000 black laborers comprised of slaves and freeman some of whom had been impressed into service. There construction created the largest inland stone fortification built during the war in the most heavily fortified city next to Washington, D.C.

Fort Negley was a star-shaped fort with three tiers. It consisted of a center stockade surrounded by a rectangular redoubt connected by four curtain walls. V-shaped ravelins were then placed to the east and west and formed the main parapets. Outside of this outer parapets were constructed of inverted, V-shaped redans and four sharp salients or outer projections from the main fort (Law et al. 1997:1-3). This created a stronghold that could project fire towards any direction in the surrounding area.

Though Fort Negley was a formidable force, it saw no direct action during the war but probably did fire the first shots during the battle of Nashville in December 1864. Its grounds also served as a camp for the laborers and as a freedman's camp after construction. After the war the fort garrisoned troops for awhile during reconstruction, but was abandoned by 1867. It was then used as a meeting place for the Ku Klux Klan where the last public meeting of the Nashville chapter was held in 1869 (West 2002). It then fell into disrepair until the city of Nashville bought the site in 1928 and the WPA rebuilt the site in the 1930's. It was then opened as a park, though it was once again abandoned until only recently. With the renewed interest in preserving the site, the city once again proclaimed it as a metro park in 2004. This has also spurred some archaeological investigations as a

result of necessary mitigation. An archaeological assessment of the site was conducted in 1994 by Panamerican Consultants, Inc. in addition to some smaller projects related to construction and interpretation of the site since. Major archaeological questions have centered on identifying the original Civil War remains and distinguishing them from later WPA work.

Another large fortification in Middle Tennessee is that of Fortress Rosecrans located in Murfreesboro adjacent to Stones River. After the battle of the Stones River ended in January of 1863, Fortress Rosecrans was constructed in order to defend the vital railroad junction and supplies in Murfreesboro. This fortification was the largest of the war and though it saw no action it did serve as a staging area for the campaigns against Chattanooga and Atlanta.

Named after the commander General William S. Rosecrans and designed by General James St. Clair Morton, this Union fortification was constructed within a period of six months in order to prepare for an advance south. It consisted of four redoubts, ten lunettes, one redan, and two batteries all connected by curtain walls around a portion of the Stones River where the Nashville and Chattanooga railroads cross. The interior contained saw mills, a magazine, and depots for such things as ordinance and commissary supplies. The fort was abandoned in 1866 after the war.

Today, a portion of the fort still stands and is preserved as part of the Stones River National Battlefield. This includes Lunette Palmer and sections of the curtain wall adjacent to Lytle's Creek and Redoubt Brannan along the Stones River. Archaeological projects have been conducted on the site beginning in the late seventies and have focused on the sections that remain preserved.

Another defensive work that can be classified as a large fortification in Middle Tennessee is Fort Granger located in Franklin. Fort Granger was a Union earthwork fortification built by Federal forces shortly after Middle Tennessee was captured from the Confederacy in early 1862. The fort was constructed on a bluff overlooking the Harpeth River and the Nashville Pike between March and May on 1863. Named for General Gordon Granger, commander of Union forces in Franklin, this earthen fort was approximately 781 feet long and 346 feet wide, encompassing 12 acres and containing three bastions positioned along the northern and eastern sides with deep ramparts surrounding the site.

The fort did see action during the war on several occasions. It was never directly assaulted, but served as an artillery position during the Battle of Franklin. Nathan Bedford Forrest also assaulted the area during cavalry raids. After its use in the Battle of Franklin in 1863, the fort was abandoned and never used again. Today, a portion of the fort is maintained as a city park.

In East Tennessee all large fortifications can be found in the area surrounding Knoxville. These were constructed by the Union army along with slaves and free blacks for the defense of Knoxville from Confederate attack in 1863. Commanding Union General Burnside originally ordered his chief engineer Orlando Poe to construct defenses to protect against a small Confederate force (Bentz and Young 1993:12). These would be greatly expanded to defend against an army of some 20,000 and would prove impregnable during the Battle of Knoxville in late 1863.

The largest of these fortifications was Fort Sanders. The construction was begun by Confederates before the evacuation of the city and it was originally named Fort Loudon.

Federal forces occupied the city in September 1863 and in November renamed it Fort Sanders to honor the fallen Union general William P. Sanders. The fort was positioned on a high prominence northwest of Knoxville with two large bastions connected by a curtain wall facing towards the west. It was also surrounded by a high rampart.

A direct assault on the fort was attempted by Confederate General Longstreet during the siege of Knoxville in November 1863. The Confederates conducted a bayonet charge against the northwest bastion at dawn on November 29. Due to the deep ditch that surrounded the fort and the nearly unprecedented use of telegraph wire entanglements, the attack failed (Bentz and Young 1993:16). This along with the loss at Chattanooga effectively resulted in the end of Confederate aggressions in Knoxville. Today the site of Fort Sanders has been destroyed by modern development; little attempt has been made to memorialize its original location near the campus of The University of Tennessee.

A string of forts also resides on the heights of Knoxville on the south side of the Tennessee River. These forts were all interconnected and served to protect vital supply lines for the city and its defenders. Though none saw any type of action like that of Fort Sanders, they did participate in the siege of Knoxville. This series of fortifications includes Fort Dickerson, Fort Higley, and Fort Stanley. A portion of the remains of these forts still survive though Fort Higley and Fort Stanley will most likely succumb to urban development. Fort Dickerson, however, is one of the better preserved sites in the Knoxville area and is maintained by the city as a park.

A total of six other sites qualify as large forts in Tennessee. These include LaGrange Fort, Fort McDowell, Post Chewalla or Camp Sheldon, Fort Ammen, Fort Mizner, and Fort Smith. These features are of variable condition and are most notable in

the historical record. No archaeological projects to date have been conducted at these sites which still have the potential to lend to our insight into Civil War fortification.

### **Other Types of Military Sites**

#### **Headquarters**

Carter House is a unique site in that it represents a Union headquarter during the Battle of Franklin in 1864 and also an example of the effects of the war on families, the landscape and personal property. Salvage excavation at the Carter House was done by the Division of Archaeology in 1988 with the intent of showing “how the frequency and distribution of excavated items can provide a better understanding of what occurred” (Smith 1994b:63). Archaeological evidence showed a random distribution of artifacts around the house with Civil War artifacts comparably present on different sides of the house (Smith 1994b). These distributions of artifacts suggest that various activities were taking place at different times on all sides of the house during the battle (Smith 1994b). Among the Civil War artifacts recovered from the site, the distribution of William Cleaner (Type III) bullets is most striking (Smith 1994b). Of the 414 bullets recovered 227 were William Cleaner (Type III). Only 12 of the 227 were impacted or fired during the war supporting historical evidence suggesting that many Federal soldiers disliked and refused to use these bullets. Faunal remains and domestic artifacts were also recovered in great numbers but it is assumed that these remains had little to do with the battle. Nothing is said in regards to the effect of the Battle of Franklin on the Carter family. This undoubtedly deserves attention.

#### **Camp Sites**

The Sevierville Hill/Fort Hill (40KN142) site, excavated in 1991, represents a

Union long-term encampment site on the south side of Fort Loudon Lake in south Knoxville. It has the reputation of being the first Civil War period site in Knoxville excavated by professional archaeologists from the Transportation Center at the University of Tennessee. Archaeological evidence not only corroborated historical records in regards to dugout structures but also illuminate undocumented aspects of camp life and identity (Kim 1993). Faunal evidence from hearths in the dugout structures indicated that soldiers were consuming an array of fauna including cow, horse, pig, sheep, goat, deer, possum, raccoon, fish and birds (Young 1993). In contrast, there appeared to be no sound evidence for the consumption of plant foods (Crites 1993). Personal artifacts such as pencils, combs, tobacco pipes, and jewelry were also recovered; these items undoubtedly embody the personal identity of individual soldiers at Sevierville Hill during the war (Faulkner 1993).

Investigations into soldiers' camp life could also provide historians and archaeologists with information regarding segregation in depot shops, stores and eating houses (McBride, Andrews, and Coughlin 2000). Also soldiers' camps and material culture need to be compared to other camps in an effort to explore differences in supply, provisioning, armaments, and personal goods (Balicki 2000). "The relative abundance or absence, as well as the types, of non-issue objects are important indicators of nonmilitary identity" (Balicki 2000:145).

### **Signal Station: Roper's Knob**

Roper's Knob, located in Franklin, (Middle) Tennessee represents a Union fortified signal station. Investigations at Roper's Knob were prompted by growing interest in opening the "site to the public as a park with passive interpretation of the historical features" (Nance and Smith 2005:5). The Tennessee Division of Archaeology under the

auspices of Benjamin Nance and Samuel Smith took on the project in September of 2000 (Nance and Smith 2005). The purpose of this undertaking was to improve long-term preservation and interpretation of Roper's Knob by providing a general assessment of the archaeological remains present at the site. William Merrill, Chief Engineer of Union army, designed the Knob "to hold four heavy pieces of artillery, a blockhouse for 60 men, a signal station, two cisterns, and a magazine" (Nance and Smith 2005:19). Although skirmishes only occurred in the vicinity of Franklin 332 troops from the 78<sup>th</sup> Illinois were placed on Roper's Knob for a short stint of time.

Archaeological evidence, a friction primer, suggests that artillery might have been placed on the Knob at one point. Also the blockhouse on Roper's Knob was unique in that it was not designed as a railroad defense like that of most blockhouses (Smith and Nance 2003). Instead the Knobs' primary function was that of a signal station from which troops could see everything within 6 miles.

Pre war and post war usage of Roper's Knob are evidenced by the range of modern to prehistoric artifacts. Artifactual evidence provided by ceramics suggests that domestic occupation of a house associated with the Knob occurred around 1848. Unfortunately there is no consensus on what Roper's Knob looked like, despite archaeological investigation. In order to ensure long term preservation and interpretation of Roper's Knob a comprehensive management plan taking into account funding, management, and the future of the site must be done (Nance and Smith 2005).

### **Civil War Industrial Archaeology**

Industrial and commercial development during the time of the Civil War appears to have decreased significantly from those seen in other time periods (Chapter Cahill and

Chapter Avery-Quinn) for two reasons. First, the time period allotted to discuss the Civil War is much shorter than in any other chapter, so coincidentally, fewer sites are available for discussion. Additionally, the political activity of the time was not conducive to much development as individuals were mobilized to fight for their side of the war. Unfortunately these political activities do manifest themselves in the archaeology of industrial areas that are active, or subsequently not active, during the Civil War.

Nonetheless Tennessee was important for its natural and man-made resources, copper mines, and saltpeter from the Unaka Mountains (Lepa 2007). Saltpeter, or potassium nitrate, was the primary ingredient in the manufacture of gunpowder and could be obtained rather reliably from cave sediments. In Tennessee, small-scale saltpeter production began in the late 1700s (Smith 1990). However, it was not until the onset of the War of 1812 that large-scale saltpeter mining operations were established in the state, as demands for domestic sources of saltpeter were deemed crucial to the war effort. As a substantial producer of saltpeter during the war were the operations at Big Bone Cave in present-day Van Buren County (Bayless 1982; Maddox 1813, 1821; Smith 1985). Big Bone (Bayless 1982; Smith 1985) and Nickajack Cave (Smith 1989), located near Chattanooga in Marion County, also became important sources of saltpeter for the Confederate Army during the initial years of the Civil War. Cagle Saltpeter Cave, located not far from Big Bone Cave in Van Buren County, was also mined substantially for saltpeter throughout the nineteenth century, and is one of the few historic cave sites in Tennessee that have been the subject of systematic archaeological study (i.e., Blankenship 2007).

Nashville had some of the largest powder Mills in the Confederacy (Lepa 2007).

Nashville and Memphis had large numbers of machine shops and foundries that produced weapons and other military equipment (Lepa 2007). East Tennessee furnished the Confederate states with 25,000,000 pounds of bacon (Seymour 1982). And as stated earlier East Tennessee had the only blast furnace outside of Virginia and an abundance of lead (Seymour 1982).

The 136,000 Confederate soldiers from Tennessee that fought in the war (Seymour 1982) undoubtedly came from the workforce (domestic, agricultural, industrial, etc.). In fact so many men were mobilized as soldiers that some industries, especially those deemed useless to the war effort, simply stopped or were abandoned. The Mount Vernon Furnace, located in Middle Tennessee, for instance, took a break from production during the war (Smith et al 1988). Bluff Iron Furnace in Chattanooga, however, was modified for a third time, this time by Union troops as a lime kiln. Not only were construction methods and phases represented at this site (Council et al 1992), but phases of demolition and reclamation were also evident (Council et al 1992). Bear Spring Furnace continued operations during the war and was later destroyed in fire and rebuilt (Smith et al. 1988).

### **Civil War Cemetery Sites**

The aim of bioarchaeology, whether in a historic or prehistoric context, is to reconstruct the life-ways of archaeological populations from skeletal and cultural remains (Pearson and Buikstra 2006). The increase in historic bioarchaeological interests in the United States over the last several decades is perhaps related to the parallel influx of modern Native American involvement in the management of prehistoric skeletal remains (Ubelaker 1995). Prehistoric bioarchaeologists are starting to experience the affects of NAGPRA (Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act) on field and research

opportunities. Consequently, bioarchaeologists are becoming more and more interested in historic populations where politics appear less involved. “This shift of interest also reflects a growing awareness of the inadequacy of the historic written record on many biological matters and the need for verification of the information that is written” (Ubelaker 1995:37) because a great deal of historical records and the information therein are biased politically and socially.

Some of the most popular topics addressed by historic bioarchaeologists in Tennessee include mortuary archaeology, paleopathology, health, diet, and demography (Larsen 2006). Historic bioarchaeologists analyzing Civil War cemeteries should be able to touch on at least some of these topics. It is unlikely, however, that significant studies addressing skeletal remains be done on Civil War casualties due to the sensitivity of the public toward this particular group. This is unfortunate in light of the array of historic records historic bioarchaeologists would have at their disposal as corroborating or contesting evidence.

On the other hand, unexcavated Civil War burials and cemeteries do contain a tremendous amount of information despite limitations to skeletal analyses. Cemeteries contain information concerning social differentiation of groups by status, class, ancestry, occupation, age, and kinship. Social differentiation manifests itself in burial segregation, clustering of graves, grave markers, and even by the absence of markers. Cemeteries are thus social markers representative of an array of cultural facets. The disposition of the body, in it of itself, is a product of the deceases social and community affiliation as well as their social geography (Matternes 1993).

Like other unmarked or abandoned church or family cemeteries, unmarked Civil War cemeteries are also more likely to be discovered by contractors like the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) or Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) while attempting to build highways, pave roads, and build shopping centers (Ubelaker 1995). When archaeologists are called in to survey, locate, excavate (if needed), relocate and/or analysis human remains there are time and financial restrictions that in many cases hinder in depth and detailed analysis (Ubelaker 1995). In addition to this, when burials are involved, contractors try to avoid excavating and usually attempt to build around cemeteries. In such cases, which are indeed most cases, archaeologists are only allowed to survey, document, and possibly mark the burials and cemeteries. This was the case with the Anderson Prison Cemetery in Georgia (Prentice and Prentice 2000). Conversely, Irish Civil War veterans who died during the Battle of Antietam in Maryland were not only excavated and relocated, but forensics, military history and documentary archives were used in an attempt to obtain positive identifications (Potter and Owsley 2000). Unfortunately none were positively identified.

Civil War cemetery sites are lost for the same reasons other period cemeteries have been lost, destruction or decomposition of temporary grave markers as well as loss of memory and or lack of documentation. It should be noted, however, that Civil War cemetery sites in this chapter only apply to sites in which soldiers were buried during war, following a battle or on the grounds of Civil War post or hospitals (Smith and Nance 2003). And accordingly, most Civil War cemeteries are located on the grounds of churches, houses, school buildings or other public structures in close proximity to battle fields. These structures, during the war, were often used as temporary hospitals and post by Union

or Confederate forces (Smith and Nance 2003). West Tennessee's Shiloh (40HR179), Parker's Crossroads (40HE118), Britton Lane (40MD164), Fort Pillow (40LA50), Post Chewalla (40MY108); Middle Tennessee's Stones River (40RD177), Carnton (40WM92), Guest Hollow (40WR34); East Tennessee's 40GN218, 40GN220 and 40GN219 are known locations of Civil War cemetery sites (Smith and Nance 2003). Not much archaeological investigation into these sites has been done so nothing more will be said of them.

Military burial practices, on the other hand, are accounted for in Tennessee as well as other states during the war. In Tennessee there is documentation of burial practices for at least one Confederate Civil War soldier, Colonel William M. Shy. The body of Colonel Shy was embalmed with arsenic, placed in a cast iron coffin then buried in a steel vault (Dowd 1980). Cast iron coffins were very expensive and only wealthy people could have afforded them; most people in 1864 were buried in pine boxes. This particular coffin also had a glass plate over the face for viewing with an oval iron plate to cover it just before burial. The coffin had been originally painted white, was sealed and bolted with steel screws and had four handles on each side (Dowd 1980). The burial practices surrounding Colonel Shy's body are a very isolated example of such practices. Most soldiers were simply buried in mass shallow graves after the war (Seymour 1982). This was the case after the Battle at Fort Sanders in East Tennessee where many soldiers lay in shallow graves until the stench and animal activity surrounding the graves prompted the military to purchase pine-box coffins for 92 individuals and move their bodies to the Confederate Cemetery on Bethel Avenue (Seymour 1982). In the aftermath of the Battle of Antietam fields and orchards were turned into graveyards on two farmsteads on the Antietam

National Battlefield in Sharpsburg, Maryland (Manning-Sterling 2000). There dirt was simply thrown over deceased soldiers leaving body parts exposed to the elements and vultures (Williams 1968). At the Hatcher-Cheatham Site in Virginia the Cheatham's encountered a war-torn farmland and the stench of death from the shallow graves of soldiers on their property (Geier 1994).

Another account of soldier burial practices comes from Lambert (1961) involving the Confederate army in Clay County Kentucky. Civil War Veterans were buried by their comrades immediately after battle in shallow graves with their field uniforms. Yet due to the poorly equipped conditions of the Confederate army many of their casualties were buried without boots and other items in short supply. Men who died in camp or in hospitals received much more elaborate burials. Casualties were buried in patches of woods in the mountains sometimes with rudimentary uninscribed field stones.

Many ex-slaves also fought in the war on the Union and Confederate sides but it is unknown, to date, where and how these individuals were buried and whether they were buried separately from white troops (Bergerson et al 1999; Rollins 1994). What is known is that the Federal government did not give grave markers to Confederate blacks (but they did for Union blacks) because their positions as teamsters, cooks, nurses, and valets did not qualify them as part of the military forces (Cartwright 1994). As a result of grave marker discrimination there is undoubtedly a misinterpretation of the number of black casualties that died in the Civil War.

## **Discussion**

By 1994 only seven civil war period sites, five in Middle Tennessee had any archaeological excavation (Smith 1994b). Reports were scarce and excavations never

produced large amounts of artifactual information concerning soldiers' day-to-day lives (Smith 1994b). Insights derived from faunal remains and other mundane items as well as from artifact distribution patterns were rare (Smith 1994b). Today in Tennessee hundreds of Civil War sites have been investigated, a representative sample of which have been discussed in this chapter. Due to the efforts of Samuel Smith and Benjamin Nance (2003) more Civil War sites have been recorded than ever before, providing more opportunities for Civil War Archaeology.

Recent technological advances contribute significantly in locating and surveying sites as well as to the recovery effort. The use of metal detectors can never be undervalued. They have helped locate several Civil War military sites across the United States (Bearss 2000; Geier and Potter 2000; Cornelison Jr. 2000; Smith and Nance 2003). Remote sensing and computer visualizations are also important advances that can aid in the assessment of archaeological sites (Bearss 2000; Geier and Potter 2000). Aerial photographs, magnetometers, soil probes, volunteers, and Geographic Information System (GIS) software assist in locating and surveying military sites (Cornelison, Jr. 2000). Proton magnetometers and the metal probe, both of which measures soil resistivity, are also very useful in detecting grave pits (Ubelaker 1989). Civil War archaeologists take advantage of these and other advances such as ground-penetrating radar, (which can be used over ground and water to detect subsurface structures), to obtain as much information from the archaeological record as possible (Ubelaker 1989). All this being said, there is never one hundred percent recovery of archaeological remains no matter the methods. This should not act as a deterrent but should motivate researchers to continue the pursuit for better methods and theories so that history benefits from the maximum retrieval of material

culture.

Relic collecting is a major problem with Civil War sites. As a result, there is a “continuing need for collection and preservation of the information contained in such sites, and this is best accomplished by using archaeological retrieval and recording techniques (Smith 1994, Smith and Nance 2003: 212). Efforts to preserve not only Civil War sites but also other military sites in Tennessee have been undertaken by the Tennessee Wars Commission (1996) and the Tennessee Civil War Preservation Association, Inc. (Smith and Nance 2003). There are overwhelming numbers of investigations and preservation measures pertaining to fortifications and battlefields, but little attention has been paid to encampments, blockades, cemeteries, and other types of Civil War military sites (Smith and Nance 2003). These sites deserve more attention in the near future in order that the physical evidence of the Civil War not be lost to science. Synergy produced by the partnership of history and archaeology, focused on the vanishing remains of our Civil War past, can produce a here to fore unattainable level of accurate interpretation of a defining era in our nation’s history.

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