

THE BATTLE OF FRANKLIN TRUST

Bringing to life the story of The Carter House and the Historic Carnton Plantation

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“The Battle of Franklin Trust is formed to manage the operations of The Carter House and the Historic Carnton Plantation”

(Franklin, Tenn.)—October 20, 2009---The board of directors of The Carter House and The Historic Carnton Plantation recently entered into a joint venture to manage the operation of Franklin’s two key Civil War sites in an effort to better coordinate heritage tourism. The Battle of Franklin Trust is the new nonprofit whose board is comprised of five board members from each joint venture partner plus an additional director without affiliation to either.

The Carter House is located on Columbia Avenue and was the epicenter of the November 30, 1864 Battle of Franklin, described by historians as the five bloodiest hours of the Civil War because of the number of soldiers injured, killed or missing, approximately 10,000 soldiers from both Union and Confederate forces.

Carnton’s role in the battle came when the home served as the largest field hospital in the area of hundreds of wounded and dying Confederate soldiers. The historic house sits off Lewisburg Pike at the edge of the city’s Eastern Flank Battlefield Park, approximately one mile from The Carter House.

This strategic alliance is seen as a way to greatly enhance the visitor experience by offering such things as comprehensive battlefield tours, combination tickets and seamless integration with other battlefield sites. The interpretive approaches to the sites will be preserved by the two boards that continue in their role as fiduciaries of their respective associations.

In making the announcement, The Battle of Franklin Trust Board Chairman Marianne Schroer said, “Together, The Carter House and Historic Carnton Plantation will have a more powerful significance. This venture has the potential of joining the ranks of Gettysburg, Richmond and Charleston as more local battle sites are reclaimed for public access by such groups as the City of Franklin, The Heritage Foundation and Franklin’s Charge. Certainly, the opportunity to affiliate with the National Park Service and the National Heritage Area are greatly enhanced by this joint venture. In addition, 2011 starts the monumental Sesquicentennial for the Civil War and this is a strong step in the direction of Franklin taking the lead for those efforts across the State of Tennessee.”

The ambition to establish the Battle of Franklin Interpretive Center will be realized sooner with both boards working together to raise the funds. This Center is planned for the adjacent property to The Carter House which was formerly the Franklin High School gymnasium. It was announced in 2007 as an interpretive and visitor center for The Carter House, but now takes on a larger role.

The Carter House Board President Ed Underwood said, "We have that gym property and this alliance can make that an even better site. That is a central location for visitors coming to Franklin who are interested in the Civil War. They can go there to purchase tickets and learn more about where to go while on their visit."

After several years in planning, this month Historic Carnton Plantation opened its \$1.2 million dollar visitor center. Officially called The Fleming Center, the new building is named after Sam Fleming, a Franklin native and Middle Tennessee banker who was a lifelong supporter of the museum. The 7,000 square foot facility houses an expansive gift shop, Carnton offices and an exhibit space featuring "Hood's Legacy," which focuses on the Confederate General John Bell Hood, the commander of the Tennessee army who was defeated at the Battle of Franklin. "This exhibit is believed to be the largest collection of Hood artifacts gathered since his death in 1879," says Joanna Stephens, Carnton's curator. The Hood exhibit runs through December 1, 2009.

During the Battle of Franklin, Carnton was used as a Confederate field hospital. It is adjacent to the McGavock Confederate Cemetery which is home to the New York Times bestseller, *The Widow of The South*, by Robert Hicks. Hick's second novel, *A Separate Country*, focuses on the life of John Bell Hood and is released in bookstores this month.

The Carter House and Historic Carnton Plantation are open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on Sundays from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Learn more at www.carterhouse1864.com and www.carnton.org.

The Battle of Franklin Trust is a 501 (c) (3) management corporation acting on behalf of Franklin's battlefield sites to contribute to a greater understanding and enrich the visitor experience of the November 30, 1864 battle. It's organized for the charitable and educational purposes of preserving, restoring, maintaining and interpreting the properties, artifacts and documents related to the battle so as to preserve an important part of the nation's history. Learn more at www.battleoffranklintrust.org or call 615-786-1864. The e-mail address is info@battleoffranklintrust.org.

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