

FORT NEGLEY WIG WAG

A Semi-monthly publication of Fort Negley Historical Park

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Why Wig-Wag?

By Ron Crabtree

You might wonder why we picked Wig-Wag for the name of our newsletter. Wig-Wag was a mobile form of communications used all through the Civil War.

The first use of wag-wag in battle was at the First Battle of Bull Run, when Confederate Lieutenant Edward Porter Alexander employed the method. The original method of wig-wag used a single flag waved back and forth, similar to the dots and dashes of Morse Code. This method became popular because it was more mobile than earlier methods had been and only required the transport of a single flag.

Two trees were left standing atop St. Cloud Hill when Fort Negley was built. A platform between these trees served as an observation post and a wig-wag station. This station proved invaluable in sending and receiving vital communications between commands and units.

Because it worked so well for the original occupants of Fort Negley, in order to get our message out to you, we'll Wig-Wag it.

Illustration From *The Signal Corps, USA in the War of Rebellion* by J. Willard Brown, 1896, page 469.



**December 15, 2012 Marked
Fort Negley Visitors Center's
5th Birthday!**

In honor of the occasion, I would like to take this opportunity to place this milestone the context of the site's past.

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When Federal forces and more than 2,000 runaway slaves and freedmen constructed Fort Negley in late 1862, few could have imagined the site's complicated future and evolution from military installation to public park.

Unfortunately most would not live to experience the intense drive to memorialize Civil War battlefields in the late 19th century.



1940s Postcard Illustrating a Restored Fort Negley

It is interesting to consider how the builders of Fort Negley would view the fort's long periods of neglect and bursts of renewed interest throughout the 20th century. Would they be flattered by the Works Progress Administration's restoration of the fort and the site's transformation into a park in 1935 and 1936 and how would they feel about the site's decline and ultimate closure following World War II?

Would the people who endured war and occupation in Nashville be amused by the city's consideration of placing a zoo at Fort Negley in the 1960s or would the preservation efforts of the 1990s impress them?

Although it is impossible to know how people, long deceased, would feel about the changes at Fort Negley over the last 150 years, we can easily measure the site's impact on people and the community today. Since the Visitors Center opened in 2007, tens of thousands of people have visited the site and have participated in hundreds of events and programs. We are thrilled to share this important milestone with you and look forward to the next phase of Fort Negley Historical Park's development and growth.

Photography at the Fort: The Art and Science of 19th Century Portraiture

On Saturday, September 29, FNVC hosted *Photography at the Fort: The Art and Science of 19th Century Portraiture* in partnership with Vacant Chair Photography Studio. Sam, Mary Lou and Betsy Reed demonstrated the art of wet plate photography the process used during the Civil War. Corrinne Castillo and Pen-e the dachshund pose for Sam and Betsy and the finished ambrotype developed in a matter of seconds. The public was offered the opportunity to make an appointment in advance for a portrait sitting.



John Walsh owner of Fort Donelson Relics in Dover, Tennessee displayed his collection of 19th century portraits in the theater and presented *An Introduction to 19th Century Photography* multimedia program. FNVC staff and Vacant Chair plan to schedule similar events in the future.

150th Anniversary of the Garrisoning of Fort Negley

By: Capt. Dave DuBrucq, Commander
10th Regiment, Tennessee U. S. Volunteers



Commemorating the 150th anniversary of the garrisoning of Fort Negley in Nashville, Tennessee, members of the 10th Illinois Infantry, Battery A, 1st Illinois Artillery and the 10th Regiment, Tennessee U. S. Volunteers joined with Fort Negley staff to celebrate Garrison Days on November 4th, 2012.

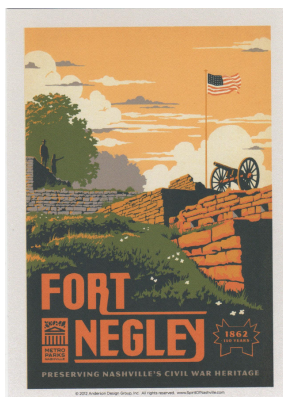
The 10th Regiment, Tennessee U. S. Volunteers joined with Fort Negley staff to celebrate Garrison Days on November 4th, 2012. The 10th Illinois is made up of volunteers from Northern Illinois who traveled to Tennessee for the celebration – and one member who traveled from Houston, Texas. Members of Battery A also traveled from Illinois and for the first time in 150 years, a cannon once again roared from the Fort's original interior.

Demonstrations of period weapons, infantry drill and artillery drill were performed by the Union re-enactors during the program. A living History Civil War encampment was established to display soldier life during the Civil War and period musical entertainment was provided by the Battlefield Balladeers. A commemorative plaque was presented Fort Negley listing the names of 12 soldiers of the 10th Illinois who died while the regiment served at the fort from December of 1862 to July of 1863.

Members of the 10th Illinois had planned the Fort Negley event over a period of several years.

Friends of Fort Negley Gift Shop

Looking for a gift for yourself or the Civil War buff in your life? The Friends of Fort Negley Gift Shop stocks a variety of Civil War themed gifts, souvenirs, prints and Nashville related publications. The gift shop is open during visitors center hours of operation and all sales directly benefit Fort Negley Visitors Center and Historical Park.



Items recently added to the inventory include the Fort Negley Spirit of Nashville Limited Edition Gallery Print designed and created by Anderson Design Group. Prints are available for \$30.00. Postcards of the print are also available for \$2.00.

Collect all four of the official TN Sesquicentennial Hatch posters featuring Robert E. Lee, Battle of Franklin, Nathan Bedford Forrest and Tennessee. The price of each poster is \$20.00.





Nashville Civil War Roundtable

Join us on the third Monday of each month at Fort Negley Visitors Center at 7 pm for an exceptional lineup of speakers and presenters.

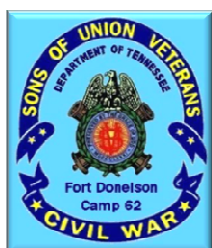
January

Rick Warwick, Williamson Co. Historian, *"The Confederate Reunions at Franklin, 1877-1927"*

February

Kevin McCann, author/historian, *"Hurst's Wurst – The 6th TN Cavalry U.S."*

Although all programs are free and open to the public, the group encourages membership. Annual membership dues along with proceeds from the silent auction support programming and local preservation causes. For more information, please visit <http://nashvillecivilwarroundtable.wordpress.com/>
"Like" us on Facebook!



Fort Donelson Camp No. 62, Sons of Union Veterans, meet at Fort Negley Visitors Center on the fourth Tuesday every other month. The next meeting is scheduled for January 22, 2013. The business meeting begins at 6 p.m. followed by the program at 7 p.m. All programs are free and open to the public. For more information, check out the web site at <http://www.tnsuvcw.org/>.

Upcoming Events In and Around Nashville

Civil War Ball

January 13, 2013

Presented by the Friends of Fort Defiance and the Clarksville Montgomery County Civil War Sesquicentennial Committee

First United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall, Clarksville, Tennessee

\$35.00 per Person

For more information or to make reservations, please visit ball@ftdefianceclarkville.com.

View the Original Emancipation Proclamation at the Tennessee State Museum

February 12 - 15, from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. and February 16 - 18, from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Discovering the Civil War, landmark exhibition from Washington D.C.'s National Archives

Reservations in Advance Recommended

For more information, please contact the Tennessee State Museum at 615 741-2692 or visit www.tnmuseum.org. To make reservations for \$1.00, please contact TPAC at 615-782-4040.

Interested in Joining Fort Negley's Email Events List?

Please contact Fort Negley Visitors Center at 615-862-8470 or at fortnegley@nashville.gov.



Fort Negley
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<http://www.nashville.gov/parks/historic/fortnegley/>

