



The Buchanan's Station

Cemetery

Blunderbuss



September/October 2012

The Friends of Buchanan's Station Cemetery



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The mission of the Friends of Buchanan Station Cemetery is to promote the preservation of the historic Buchanan Station Cemetery as an educational and interpretational asset for the citizens of Middle Tennessee.

Blunderbuss

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Mr. Dan S. Allen

Mr. Ron Sharpe

Ms. Lu Whitworth

Mr. Mike Slate

Archaeological Research The draft archaeological report has been reviewed and Friends of Buchanan's Station Cemetery comments provided to the Principal Investigator (PI). Here is the Draft Summary of the PI's findings: *Between June 1 and 14, 2012, Dan S. Allen conducted a detailed archaeological survey of the Buchanan's Station Cemetery in Davidson County, Tennessee. The investigation was designed to identify the precise number and location of graves including any unmarked grave locations, research existing information on the identities and grave locations of persons buried in the John Buchanan Cemetery, and define the limits of the cemetery. Concurrently, a literature review was conducted in order to develop cultural/historical contexts and determine if previously recorded archaeological properties were located proximal to the study area.*

The area subjected to archaeological survey is approximately 1/2 acre in size located on the east bank of Mill Creek. Archaeological investigation of the Buchanan's Station

Cemetery was based upon two methods; intensive surface examination and systematic probing of the cemetery area using a ball-swaged tile probe. The primary objective of the surface examination was to record any evidence suggesting the presence and specific locations of inhumations.

As a result of the archaeological investigation, the Buchanan's Station Cemetery was determined to measure approximately 160 feet (east to west) by 100 feet (north to south), or 16,000 square feet (ca. 0.4 acre). A minimum of sixty seven (n=67) inhumation locations were identified and mapped in the cemetery (Figure 13 and Table 3). The inhumations are oriented toward sunrise (east) in the traditional Christian burial pattern of the nineteenth century. The graves are arranged in 11 rows and exhibit some clustering, probably representing separation according to familial association. While the majority of burials (n=50; 67%) are simply marked at the head and foot with roughly-dressed, un-inscribed tabular slabs of local limestone taken from Mill Creek, many of the Buchanan family graves are marked with retained bedstead style grave markers of Indiana limestone and white marble from northern Alabama or Georgia (n= 17; 33%). This is important as the Indiana limestone quarries did not start producing stone for export until after about 1827 and grave markers inscribed with death dates prior to this time suggests the burial was marked later, often many years after inhumation.



Possible graves of John Buchanan, Sr. and wife Jane Trindle Buchanan. 6-13-2012 Photo by FBSC Joe Cathey

Based upon quite ample historical evidence, there is no doubt that the Buchanan's Station Cemetery is an integral part of the battlefield of Buchanan's Station, one of the best documented Euro-American settler and Native American confrontations to occur during the Chickamauga Wars in the Middle Cumberland Region. Accounts of the battle suggest the Station was attacked from all sides by hundreds of Creek, Cherokee, and Shawnee warriors. Smooth bore muskets and the American long rifle were

the contemporary firearms used on the American frontier. While the smooth bore musket had an effective range of less than 100 yards, a rifleman could hit a man-sized target at a range of 300 yards or more. Located approximately 100 yards northwest of the station site, Buchanan's Station Cemetery is easily within the range of any firearm either defending or attacking the fort. In fact, the cemetery area is perhaps the only

surviving component of the battlefield that appears undisturbed and retains any archaeological integrity.

Stations such as Buchanan's were proximal to the earliest burial grounds in the Cumberland Region and Euro-Americans killed during conflicts with Native Americans, each other, or by natural causes were either buried where they were found or taken to the stations for burial. Examples of this pattern found in the narratives of Colonel Joseph Brown (1996:36) and John Davis (1996:79) support the conclusion that likely candidates for burial in some of the unmarked graves of Buchanan's Station cemetery include those killed near or in defense of the station. Historian J.G.M. Ramsey (1853:460) identifies some of these individuals; Samuel Buchanan, William Mulherin, and three others who were guarding the station. Perhaps, Cornelius Riddle shot by the Indians near Buchanan's Station (ibid: 462) and John Blackburn (ibid: 485) were two of these warfare-related deaths. At these early dates, Buchanan's Station Cemetery was the only burial ground in the vicinity and it is not unreasonable to assume that any individual killed nearby, especially in defense of the station, would have been interred there.

In conclusion, it is highly recommended additional research be conducted to develop a more comprehensive history of the site. With the exception of the well-documented Battle of Buchanan's Station, little history prior to or following the battle has been developed for the site through systematic survey of the primary and secondary archival sources. In example, further research to develop chain-of-title for the Buchanan farm and examination of extant photographs of the site's structures by qualified architectural and landscape historians will provide critical information toward preserving and gaining a better understanding of the history of the site.

Special thanks to the following members and Councilman for their time and effort in reviewing and providing comments on the report:

Councilman Phil Claiborne, Mr. Lawrence Epps, Mr. Garnett Forkum, Ms. Kathy Lauder, Ms. Betsy (Aunt B) Phillips, Mr. Mike Slate, Mr. Jeff Syracuse, Mr. Tom Todd, and Ms. Lu Whitworth.

Donations: A very special thanks to these members for their recent contributions to the FBSC fund:

Ms. Danya Downey
Mr. Lawrence Epps

Ms. Harrett Jewell
Ms. Cindy Todd Brumfield
Joe & Nancy Cathey

Fencing Project: To obtain recommendations about pricing and security, Mr. Ron Sharpe consulted with a fencing contractor and obtained an excellent recommendation that improves security without compromising aesthetic qualities of the Buchanan's Station Cemetery. With this approach, FBSC could purchase a fence that fits the period—split rail. Here is what Ron provided in a 29 August 2012 electronic message:

Joe, I spoke to Bennie Wilson, the man who builds steel fences, & he had suggested instead of spending about \$60.00 for a five foot length of fence times whatever length we need, which could be as much as \$8,000.00 We might think of having two NES poll lights installed and put motion sensor, and directional lights to come on. That way we could have a split rail fence and security both. I know all this will need looking at and studying where the lights will work, but I think it is a darn good suggestion to at least look. Hopefully the lights will deter vandals at night. NES will probably help us with the placing the lights. I think the lights are about \$10.00 a month each, to rent. Please let me know what you think. This is just a suggestion

Please once again consider donating to protect and enhance this long forgotten piece of Nashville and Middle Tennessee History.

As stated in the last newsletter, the Buchanan Log House Chapter of APTA is classified by the IRS as a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization. Until The Friends of Buchanan's Station Cemetery are set up as a non-profit, the BLH has offered to set up an account and manage the funds for the protection, preservation and interpretation of this site.

If you would like to contribute to this effort and any future actions, like adding protective fencing, please make your check out to *The Buchanan Log House* and make sure you state that it is for The Friends of Buchanan Station Cemetery. You should then mail the check to:

*Buchanan Log House
C/O Joe Cathey, Blunderbuss Editor
2910 Elm Hill Pike
Nashville, TN 37214*

August Activities

Fourteen members of Friends of Buchanan Station Cemetery met on August 15th to discuss the commemoration ceremony of the 220th anniversary of the Battle of Buchanan's Station. Led by Mike Slate, the group's consensus was that a celebration of the battle would be great for the education of the Nashville and Middle Tennessee community and could be executed by the FBSC with the professional assistance of Cumberland University. Dr. Natalie Inman, Associate Professor of History is developing the program and coordinating the event with the Cumberland University family, including Dr. Kilian's Cumberland Chorus and Master of Ceremonies, Dr. Harvill Eaton. Also participating will be the local chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution with weapons of the period and dressed in period costumes. Cumberland University students will also be dressed in late 18th century attire.

Importantly on August 20th, at the invitation of Mr. Tim Walker, Executive Director, Metro Historical Commission, Dr. Eaton provided an overview of the FBSC proposed commemoration of the Battle of Buchanan's Station Cemetery to the Commission and the Commission gave its full support to this event. The event will take place at the Buchanan's Station Cemetery located on Massman Drive on **September 30, 2012**. More details will be forthcoming soon.

Unmarked Graves: Our Cultural Resources contractor recommended we mark the unmarked graves with a standard solid brick buried vertically at a depth that would not impede mowing. Do any of you in the Nashville area have access to 50 bricks that you would be willing to donate to this effort? I believe our group can muster the shovels and labor necessary to install the brick markers. An estimate to purchase and install the bricks was provided and if we do the work ourselves we can save that \$500 towards fencing.

Lastly, to join the effort to preserve Buchanan's Station Cemetery and promote it as a significant historical site for educational and interpretive purposes, email the Nashville Historical Newsletter at NHN.slate@gmail.com or call Mike Slate at 615-293-3832.