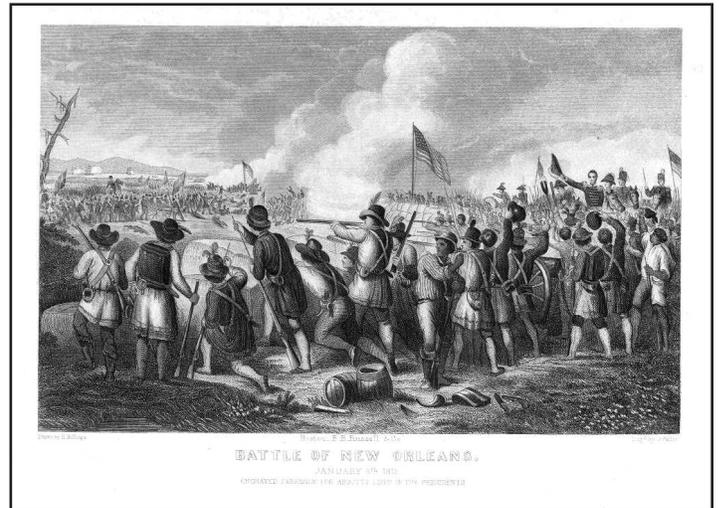


## To Live in Hearts We Leave Behind Is Not to Die

by Carol Kaplan, NCCA Board Member

Jeffrey Lockelier was a black man, born free in North Carolina in 1788. A young fellow with a taste for adventure, he came to Nashville in 1807. Because the idea of soldiering appealed to him, he joined the militia, serving under Andrew Jackson during the War of 1812. He distinguished himself in the Indian Wars at Enitachopco and Emuckfau Creeks and in the deadly Battle of Horseshoe Bend, which finally crushed the Creek Nation, forcing them to turn over 23 million acres to the U.S. Government. Lockelier served with distinction in every conflict: his obituary stated that "none could boast of a heart more devoted to his country's cause," for "his military services terminated only when his country ceased to have enemies." After the 1815 Battle of New Orleans, Jeffrey Lockelier, now known as "Major Jeffrey," returned to Middle Tennessee, where he met and married a woman named Sabina, a slave of the Sumner family in Williamson County. He soon purchased his wife from Thomas Sumner and petitioned the court to grant her freedom in July of 1817. The census taker spelled their entry as "Major Locklun."

Struggling with a heart ailment in his early 40s, Major Jeffrey "endured a long confinement," during which he was visited by his old commanders, President Andrew Jackson and General John Coffee. He "enjoyed, to a high degree their good opinion and friendship." Lockelier's death occurred



African-American soldiers fight at the Battle Of New Orleans during the War of 1812.

September 22, 1830, at the age of 42. His obituary appeared in newspapers across the country, including the *New York Evening Post*, which marveled: "Though a very humble member of society, still it may be truly said, but few enjoyed the esteem and good will of the community to a greater extent than he did. His universal benevolence was a distinguished trait in his character; and it seemed to be the business and the pleasure of his life to serve others without even the expectation of reward."

The admiring obituary that appeared in the *National Banner & Nashville Whig* 27 September 1830, ends like this:

*"One should not be forgotten who bestowed his best days to the service of his country; who lived a life of active benevolence, and died praising the goodness and mercy of his God."*

Jeffrey Lockelier was not forgotten by the city planners who named Nashville's Locklayer St., near the Bicentennial Mall, in his honor. Unfortunately, the stone which once marked his grave in Nashville's historic City Cemetery no longer exists, but it is scheduled to be replaced as part of the cemetery's tombstone restoration project, which recently replaced missing stones on the graves of Sally Thomas and Angeline Brady.



A faithful crowd comes out on a rainy Saturday to help dedicate new tombstones for Sally Thomas and Angeline Brady, who both died in the early 1850s.