

## James Thomas Callender

by Carol Kaplan, NCCA Board Member

Soldiers who died in the Civil War were, of necessity, almost always buried on the battlefield where they fell. After the war, however, a national movement arose to reinter them in a more honorable manner. Thus, national cemeteries were created for the Union soldiers who died so far from home; Confederate soldiers were more often buried in private burial grounds or brought home by their families. Young James Callender was one of the latter, returned to City Cemetery three years after his death in the War.

James Thomas Callender, born in Nashville in 1841, was named for his grandfather, a feisty newspaperman despised by Thomas Jefferson (for printing unpleasant truths about Jefferson's life!). James's father, Thomas, was a merchant and an alderman; his mother, Mary Sangster, had moved to Nashville from Virginia with her brother and sister. James had two sisters, Mary Catherine and Sarah, and two brothers, John Hill and William. He never knew Mary Catherine, who died in 1837 at 18 months, becoming the first of her family to be buried at City Cemetery. However, James lost his mother when he was six years old, and his father died of typhoid fever four years later. James, Sarah, and William were sent to live with their aunt Catherine Owen in Brentwood, who had no children of her own. Catherine and her wealthy husband James Owen lived at Ashlawn, a home which still stands on Franklin Road. Sarah married James Owen's nephew, but died at 21 in 1859. She was buried with her family at City Cemetery.

In 1859, when the Owen Chapel Church of Christ was organized, James and Catherine Owen, along with James and William Callender, became charter members. The building was located across Franklin Road from Ashlawn. The congregation still meets there today in a brick building built just after the Civil War on land donated by James Owen.

In 1861, with fears of civil war on everyone's mind, Christian Church ministers stood firm in their opposition to the war. Tolbert Fanning was jailed in Murfreesboro for speaking against slavery, and David Lipscomb was threatened with hanging for preaching that "Christians should not kill one another." Philip Fall, leader of Nashville's Christian Church (now Vine Street congregation), refused to pray for Jefferson Davis and, evoking his British citizenship, flew the Union Jack over his church, thus preserving its neutrality. However, their message had little impact on the young men who heard it. Fanning's Franklin College closed as his students rushed to join the fight, and Philip Fall's son Albert was killed at Fort Donelson, fighting for the Confederacy. When Confederate training camps were established on Franklin Road, James Callender, age 20, and William, three years younger, enlisted.



The tombstone of James Callender's father, Thomas Callendar, one of only two surviving markers in the Thomas family plot. (photo courtesy of NCCA)

On June 24, 1863, at the Battle of Hoover's Gap, James, a private in C Company, 20th Tennessee Infantry, was shot and killed. He was buried on the battlefield, and his funeral sermon was delivered at Owen Chapel, September 27, 1863. Brother William survived the war and returned home to Brentwood, where he married Mary Jane Zellner, whose sister Margaret was married to David Lipscomb. In 1869 Will and Mary Jane's first child was born, a son they named James Thomas.

On April 27, 1866, this notice appeared in the Republican Banner: "The remains of James Thomas Callender will be conveyed from the residence of his brother, Dr. J.H. Callender, no. 26 South Summer St., to the Nashville Cemetery today at 3:30 o'clock pm. Services at the grave by Rev. Dr. Bunting" Dr. Bunting, the pastor of First Presbyterian Church, lived next door to John Callender. James, remembered by his brothers, now rested with his parents, sisters, and Aunt Catherine Owen in the family plot in Section 8. Sadly, the only tombstones readable today are those of the parents, Thomas and Mary Callender.