

Town of Cassville

By John Sterrett

The following paper was prepared under the direction of Dr. Jennifer Dickey at Kennesaw State University for an Introduction to Public History course.

The Town of Cassville historical marker was erected in 1952 by the Georgia Historical Commission. This marker is located within the original town limits of Cassville near a cemetery of Confederate soldiers that came to Cassville for medical aid. The town of Cassville was formed in 1833 in Cass County. The name of Cass County was eventually changed to Bartow County in 1861, and the county seat was moved from Cassville to Cartersville in 1867.

Within the town, two colleges offered opportunities for higher education to the people of Cassville and the surrounding areas. The first college was Cassville Female College, which was founded in 1853 with help from the nearby Methodist church. The first president of the Cassville Female College was Reverend Rogers. During the American Civil War, Cassville Female College was turned into a hospital to help treat wounded soldiers. The college was eventually burned down when US forces burned Cassville in 1864.¹ The second college near Cassville, Cherokee Baptist College was established in 1857. It was located near Chapman Hill and was a college for boys. Unfortunately, like the Cassville Female College, it burned to the ground during the 1864 burning of the town. Another marker states that the incineration of these two colleges caused a tragic loss of college-level educational facilities in this region of Georgia.²

Before the US raid, Cassville had its own newspaper called the *Cassville Standard*. The newspaper was a Democratic, weekly print publication to which one could subscribe for \$2 per year. John W. Burke published the first newspaper from the *Cassville Standard* on March 15,

1849. Burke was also a prominent publisher for the *Athens Banner*. However, by 1864 the *Cassville Standard* stopped all printing.³

From 1861 to 1864, eight hospitals in which over 10,000 Confederate troops were treated were in operation within the grounds of Cassville. Of those soldiers that died while getting treatment at Cassville hospitals, roughly 300 of them were buried in the Cassville Cemetery within the town's limits. While the US army was making its way through the South, part of the Confederate army was sitting in Cassville under the command of Capt. Montgomery.⁴ The US army did not initially plan to attack or burn Cassville. The town of Kingston was the original target but due to the presence of the Confederate army in Cassville, the US army shifted its focus. The events prior to the battle and burning are based on a soldier's diary that states that "it appears that Capt. Montgomery had no intimation or fears of an attack and consequently neglected to post proper guards around: the town had no protection whatever."⁵ During the entire fight in Cassville, only a few lives were lost on either side.

Because of the almost complete burning of Cassville, except for a small handful of buildings, and the increased prominence of the Western and Atlantic Railroad, Cassville was not meant to be rebuilt. The Western and Atlantic Railroad greatly affected Cassville. The only way to travel to Cassville was on horseback, and that method of transportation was falling away because of the efficiency of the available railroads. Needing to fill the gap left by the burning and absence of Cassville, the county seat was then transferred over to the rail center in Cartersville. This transfer allowed Cartersville to eventually become an economic center for many residents both in and out of Georgia, and its economic activity remains prominent to this day. What is in Cassville now is a shell of the town in the 1800's. The cemetery, where hospitals such as Cassville Female College buried the 300 Confederate soldiers, is still there, and it is used by the

current residents of the area. The town now houses Cassville Historical Society, which has detailed information about what happened at Cassville and the importance of the town. The choice to not rebuild Cassville can still be felt around the community.

¹ Crellin, Brendan. "Site - Cassville Female College." Georgia Historical Society. Accessed November 26, 2018. https://georgiahistory.com/ghmi_marker_updated/site-cassville-female-college/.

² Crellin, Brendan. "Site: Cherokee Baptist College." Georgia Historical Society. Accessed November 26, 2018. https://georgiahistory.com/ghmi_marker_updated/site-cherokee-baptist-college/.

³ "Georgia Historic Newspapers." The Taylor County News and the Butler Herald. (Butler, Ga.) 1962-current, October 08, 1965, Image 5 « Georgia Historic Newspapers. Accessed November 26, 2018. <https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/lccn/sn89053357/>.

⁴ History of Cassville and the Cassville Historical Society. Accessed November 26, 2018. <http://www.cassvillehistoricalsociety.com/history/>.

⁵ Thecamakstone. "Did Sherman Know about the Actions at Cassville, Georgia?" The Camak Stone. January 19, 2015. Accessed November 26, 2018. <https://thecamakstone.wordpress.com/2013/10/20/cassvilleorders-gif/>.

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Thecamakstone. "Did Sherman Know about the Actions at Cassville, Georgia?" The Camak Stone. January 19, 2015. Accessed November 26, 2018.

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