

A Monument for Peace

by W.M. Akers



In December, 1864, the Civil War was nearly over. The armies of the Union had conquered most of the South, but the fighting was not finished. Hoping to reverse the war's course, the Confederate general John Bell Hood marched his army toward Nashville. The capital of Tennessee, Nashville, had been under Union control since 1862. Capturing it, Hood hoped, could save the Confederacy.

It was freezing cold when the battle started on December 15th. The Confederate troops were outnumbered. They fought in ragged uniforms, sometimes without shoes. Against the superior Union army, they had no hope. On December 16th, Hood was defeated. The war was over.

The Union won the Civil War four months later. Although the Southern states returned to the Union, the country remained divided. Fifty years later, most of the war's veterans were dead. Around the country, towns and cities had begun building monuments in their memory. In the North, monuments were built to honor the Union. In the South, monuments honored the Confederacy. Even though the states were united again, no one built a monument to both sides.

In 1914, Mrs. James E. Caldwell and her group, the Ladies Battlefield Association, began raising

money to build a monument for those who died in the Battle of Nashville. They hired Italian sculptor Giuseppe Moretti to design a statue. They raised money by hosting balls and asking local businesses for donations. By 1927, they had enough, and the monument was completed.

Moretti's statue showed a young man standing between two horses. Behind it, a tall white obelisk was built, with an angel at the top. "No guns, no swords, no trappings of war mar the peace-like beauty," Mrs. Caldwell said. It was not a war monument, but a peace monument.

The structure was special because it honored all those who died in the war-no matter which side they fought for. Built less than a decade after World War I, it was also dedicated to the American soldiers of that conflict.

In 1974, a tornado knocked the 40-foot-tall obelisk to the ground, where it shattered to pieces, along with the angel at its top. Moretti's sculpture was damaged, but it was repaired. The city did not have the money, however, to build a new column. A few years later, an interstate was built beside the monument, blocking it from view, and making it hard for anyone to get to it.

For two decades, the monument was alone-out of sight and nearly forgotten by the public. In 1992, the Tennessee Historical Commission chose a new location for the monument, inside a small park near the original battlefield. Again, fundraising was necessary-to move the statue and construct a new obelisk.

The original statue cost \$30,000 in 1927. To move and restore it would cost much more-some estimate more than \$500,000. But after seven years of work, the money was collected, and the statue was rededicated-with a brand new obelisk to go with it. Finally, Mrs. Caldwell's monument was whole again, and the message of peace could be seen once more.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Which Civil War battle was fought from the 15th to the 16th of December 1864?

- A. Battle of Gettysburg
- B. Battle of Atlanta
- C. Battle of Shiloh
- D. Battle of Nashville

2. How does the author describe the Confederate troops led by General John Bell Hood?

- A. lacking in discipline
- B. courageous and undefeated
- C. poorly equipped and outnumbered
- D. well-prepared to face the Union soldiers

3. The United States remained divided fifty years after the Civil War. What evidence from the text supports this conclusion?

- A. "Fifty years later, most of the war's veterans were dead."
- B. "Around the country, towns and cities had begun building monuments in their memory."
- C. "In 1914, Mrs. James E. Caldwell and her group, the Ladies Battlefield Association, began raising money to build a monument for those who died in the Battle of Nashville."
- D. "In the North, monuments were built to honor the Union. In the South, monuments honored the Confederacy... No one built a monument to both sides."

4. What made Caldwell's monument "not a war monument, but a peace monument"?

- A. It was not built to honor a particular war or battle.
- B. It did not depict any weapons or war paraphernalia.
- C. It had an angel on top of the obelisk.
- D. It had two horses.

5. What is this passage mostly about?

- A. the high cost of lives of the Civil War
- B. the ongoing struggle with inequality in the United States
- C. the construction and restoration of a monument in Tennessee
- D. how best to raise money for public works projects

6. Read the following sentences: "The Confederate troops were outnumbered. They fought in ragged uniforms, sometimes without shoes. Against the **superior** Union army, they had no hope."

As used in the passage, what does the word "**superior**" mean?

- A. better
- B. condescending
- C. older
- D. poorer

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

_____ two decades spent out of sight behind an interstate, in 1992 the monument found a new home in a small park near the site of the original battle.

- A. Thus
- B. After
- C. Including
- D. Above all

8. What made Mrs. Caldwell's monument different from previous Civil War monuments?

9. Why is Mrs. Caldwell's monument able to memorialize the Civil War and World War I?

10. How does the monument convey a "message of peace"?