

Soldiers' remains to be held by state

Rest Haven could be final burial site

By Kevin Walters
THE TENNESSEAN

FRANKLIN — The bones of a Civil War-era soldier, recently found on a construction site in Franklin, will stay with state archaeologist Mike Moore until a new burial place is determined.

City leaders recently spoke with developers of the site to make the decision, though where a final burial site might be and how long it could take before the soldier's entire skeleton can be excavated are still unclear.

In mid-May, crews working at a Columbia Avenue construction site partially unearthed the soldier's skeletal remains. Some local historians believe the man, probably a Union soldier, died in late 1864 — about the time of the Battle of Franklin.

The Wolfe Co., which is developing the site, is seeking a court order to be allowed to legally remove the soldier's remains, said Don McCartney, Wolfe vice president.

If the court order is granted, the bones would be removed and given to Moore for safekeeping, according to state Department of Environment and Conservation spokeswoman Tisha Calabrese-Benton. Moore is already in possession of some of the soldier's bones as well as a bullet, some buttons and nails found with the body.

"The state is being very good," McCartney said. "The city is working excellently. I think we're all being very respectful."

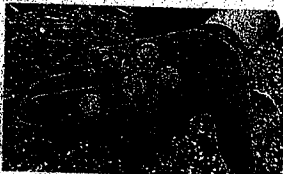
City officials are pushing to get the remaining bones out of the ground and properly reburied for security's sake and out of respect for the dead soldier.

"We all are a little nervous that there may be some vandalism when it's not being watched," said Mayor John Schroer.

Alderman Mike Skinner is working with local historians to find a map of the city's Rest Haven Cemetery, where the skeleton could be reburied.

"However we bury him, in whatever place, I think the connotation that will be is: Here lies an unknown soldier of the era of the Battle of Franklin," Skinner said.

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These buttons were discovered near the bones of a Civil War-era soldier. MITCHELL KLINE / THE TENNESSEAN

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