

"Kentucky - noble, loyal, gallant Kentucky - having learned the meaning of secession neutrality, has ceased to be neutral and is arming and equipping herself for the fray under the good old flag of the Union."

-The New York Herald
September 26, 1861

Usually, when one thinks of the Civil War, Kentucky is not one of the states that immediately comes to mind. However, Kentucky and its people played a significant role in the conflict of a nation divided. From the very top with both Civil War presidents, Union - Abraham Lincoln and Confederate - Jefferson Davis, being native Kentuckians, right down to the many Kentuckians that fought and died for both sides. In fact, President Lincoln considered Kentucky so important in the fight that he wrote, "I think to lose Kentucky is nearly the same as to lose the whole game."

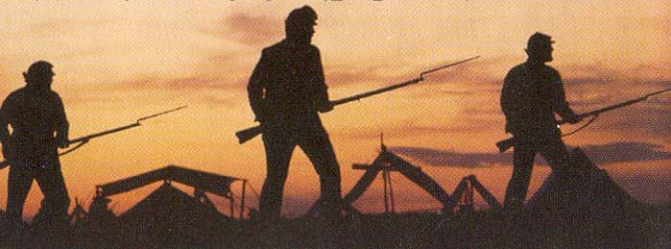
Although Kentucky tried to maintain a position of neutrality from the start, its physical location inevitably made it impossible to avoid participation. Kentucky's river systems and railroads, as well as its prized selection of skilled recruits, made it a sought after resource by both sides. There were 67 residents of Kentucky who were Union Generals, with 38 residents of the state who were Confederate Generals. It is estimated that 35,000 to 40,000 Kentuckians fought for the Confederacy and nearly 103,000 Kentuckians fought for the Union. There are over 65 Civil War battlegrounds in Kentucky. Not only did our native sons fight in the war, but many battles and skirmishes were fought on Kentucky soil. Kentuckians were so divided in their loyalties, that even families and churches chose sides.

The Big Sandy Valley in Eastern Kentucky was the scene of two decisive battles, several large-scale invasions, and hundreds of raids and skirmishes. The largest of these battles occurred at Middle Creek in Floyd County and became known as the "battle that launched a presidency". With his success of pushing back Brig. Gen. Humphrey Marshall and the Confederates, Col. James A. Garfield received a promotion to Brig. Gen. which provided him with a base to seek and attain the Presidency.

Did you know?

The Emancipation Proclamation did not apply to Kentucky. The Proclamation of 1863 only applied to Confederate States and did not free Kentucky's slaves. The Civil War ended in 1865, and Kentucky slaves were legally freed when the 13th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States was ratified soon afterward.

Taken From: Kentucky Joins the Confederacy by Mark V. Wetherington
(http://www.kyhumanities.org/magazine/ky_joins_confed.html)



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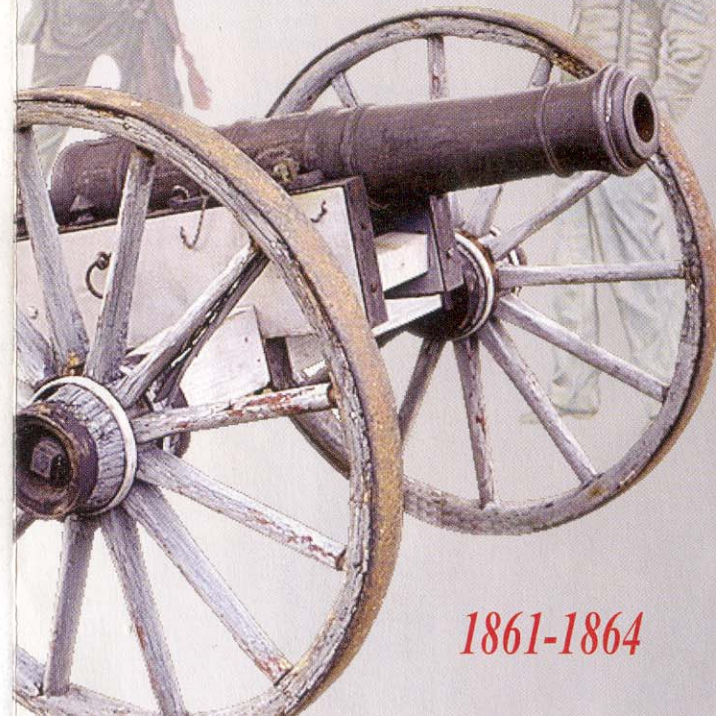
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EASTERN KENTUCKY'S CIVIL WAR BATTLES & SKIRMISHES

In September 1861, Kentucky-born President Abraham Lincoln wrote, "I think to lose Kentucky is nearly the same as to lose the whole game."



1861-1864

Skirmish at West Liberty, October 23, 1861

Col. L.A. Harris' 2nd Ohio Infantry regiment and a company of Union cavalry, part of Gen. William "Bull" Nelson's command, skirmish with Capt. Jack May's much smaller Morgan Guards, driving them out of Morgan County and back to Prestonsburg.

Battle of Ivy Mountain, November 8, 1861

Led by May, three companies of the newly formed 5th Kentucky Infantry, C.S.A., fight a delaying action against four Union regiments, led by Nelson, slowing their progress so that the main body of the 5th, under Col. John S. Williams, can evacuate Pikeville and fall back to Pound Gap. Union losses are eight killed and twenty four wounded. Confederate losses are ten killed and fifteen wounded.

Skirmish at Tom's Creek, January 4, 1862

Nine hundred Union infantry under Garfield, having marched up the Big Sandy from Catlettsburg, skirmish with one hundred Confederate cavalry sent on a scouting expedition by Marshall, whose command occupies a fortified position at Hager's Farm near present day Hager Hill, Kentucky.

Skirmish at Jenny's Creek, January 7, 1862

Three hundred Union cavalry (the 2nd Virginia Cavalry under Colonel Bolles) attack two hundred Confederate cavalry which Marshall has posted at Jenny's Creek, several miles west of Paintsville, and drive them off. Six Confederates are killed and several wounded. Union casualties are two killed and one wounded.

Battle of Middle Creek, January 10, 1862

Eleven hundred Union troops under Garfield fight a day-long battle with 1,967 Confederates under Marshall. Garfield mounts several assaults and finally succeeds in driving one Confederate regiment from its entrenched position. When night falls, the Confederates retreat, burning some of their supplies and leaving their dead on the battlefield. Union casualties are three killed and eighteen wounded. Confederate casualties are twelve killed and fifteen wounded.

Battle of Pound Gap, March 14, 1862

Six hundred Federal infantry and one hundred cavalry led by Garfield attack the Confederate garrison at Pound Gap, consisting of five companies of Virginia State Militia under Major J. B. Thompson. After a twenty minute fight, the rebels are routed and flee their fort, consisting of sixty log huts, commissary, hospital, and officers quarters. There are no Union casualties. Confederate casualties are seven killed and wounded.

Meniffee's Raid on Pikeville, August 2-5, 1862

Capt. Nathaniel Meniffee and his irregular band of Confederate guerrillas raid Pikeville, skirmishing several times with the town's home guards. Nine Union men are killed and the rest are driven from the county. Meniffee celebrates his victory by looting John Dil's general store, causing the proprietor, a well known Union man, to flee for his life. The town's stockyards are looted and a large number of cattle are driven back to Virginia.

Marshall's Invasion of Eastern Kentucky, September 1862

Acting in concert with armies led by Kirby Smith and Braxton Bragg, Marshall comes through Pound Gap with Col. Robert C. Trigg's 54th Virginia, Col. Alfred C. Moore's 29th Virginia, Col. Campbell Slemple's 64th Virginia, and Col. J.W. Gillespie's 43rd Tennessee. Leading the van is Brig. Gen. John S. Williams's 5th Kentucky Infantry. They occupy Pikeville, Prestonsburg, Salyersville, West Liberty, and other towns along the Mount Sterling-Pound Gap Road. Following the Battle of Perryville (October 8, 1862), Marshall moves his army back to their base in Southwestern Virginia.

Battle of Wireman's Shoals, December 4, 1862

While escorting several pushboats filled with military supplies up the Big Sandy from the Union base at Catlettsburg to the Union outpost at Pikeville, Lt. Levi Hampton and a small detachment of the 39th Kentucky Infantry are attacked, surrounded, and captured by 800 Virginia Partisan Rangers under Co. John N. Clarkson. Union losses are two killed, twelve wounded, and thirty eight captured. The Confederates capture 500 Enfield rifles, 7,000 rounds of ammunition, and enough uniforms to outfit Clarkson's entire command. After Hampton surrenders, Clarkson's men murder him and strip his body of its clothing.

MARSHALL'S RAID THROUGH EASTERN KENTUCKY, MARCH-APRIL 1863

On March 15, 1863, Marshall came through Pound Gap with 1,800 mounted men, including Col. Hentery Giltner's 4th Kentucky, Col. Thomas Johnson's 2nd Kentucky, Col. Ezekiel F. Clay's 1st Kentucky, Col. Ben E. Caudill's 11th Kentucky, and a squadron of men under Captain G.M. Jessee. He is later joined by Col. Jack May and his newly-formed 10th Kentucky Cavalry. After dispersing a Union force that has been harassing Col. Roy Cluke's cavalry at Salyersville, Marshall marches to Louisa, intending to capture the Union supply depot at Fort Bishop, but when he and his officers arrive on the scene and discover how well-defended it is, they change their plans. After this fiasco, they move through Breathitt, Wolfe, and Owsley counties, burning and plundering 43 Wolfe County and Owsley County farms before returning to their base in Southwestern Virginia.

Skirmish at Smokey Valley, March 24, 1863

Eighteen hundred Confederate cavalry led by Marshall attack a defensive position held by 300 mounted men of Col. George W. Gallup's 14th Kentucky Mounted Infantry, forcing them to fall back to Fort Bishop. Union losses are one killed, two wounded, and four missing. On the following day, after inspecting the fort's defenses with his telescope, Marshall decided not to attack it.

Battle of Turman's Ferry, January 9, 1864

While camped for the night in a schoolhouse near Turman's Ferry on the Big Sandy River fourteen miles above Catlettsburg, 75 men of the 39th Kentucky Infantry are surrounded and attacked by 150 Confederate cavalry under Colonel M. J. Ferguson. Awakened from their sleep, the Kentuckians flee in panic, running barefoot into the snow and sub-zero weather. Fourteen are killed or wounded in the attack and many others suffer frostbite.

Clay's Raid into Eastern Kentucky, March-April 1864

Six hundred Confederate cavalry under Colonel Clay come through Pound Gap and marched down the Big Sandy to Paintsville, where on April 13, they encounter four companies of Gallup's 14th Kentucky Mounted Infantry and 500 home guards. When the rebels attack the Union position, they are repulsed, suffering two killed, two wounded, and seven captured. Clay then sends Gallup a flag of truce, asking for time to bury his dead and exchange prisoners. Judging Gallup's forces to be stronger than his own, Clay retreats to Salyersville.

Battle of Puncheon Creek (Half Mountain), April 14, 1864

Colonel Gallup, leading the 14th Kentucky Mounted Infantry under Lt. Col. Joseph R. Brown and the 39th Kentucky Mounted Infantry under Col. David A. Mims -- a total of 800 men -- launches a surprise attack on Colonel Clay's 600 Confederate cavalry while they are camped at Half Mountain on the Licking River, six miles above Salyersville. A four hour engagement ensues, during which Clay is wounded in the eye and captured. Confederate losses are 60 killed and wounded and 60 captured, along with 200 horses, 400 saddles, 300 small arms, and all their tents and equipment. Union losses are one killed and four wounded.



Morgan's Last Kentucky Raid, June 2-12, 1864

Leading 1,400 cavalry and 800 dismounted men, Brig. Gen. John Hunt Morgan comes through Pound Gap, passes down Troublesome Creek, and raids Mount Sterling capturing 380 Union soldiers. Brig. Gen. Stephen Burbridge is leading a large Federal force up the Big Sandy Valley and the purpose of Morgan's raid is to divert Burbridge from his objective, Preston's Saltworks at Saltville, Virginia. At Mount Sterling, Morgan's men steal and plunder, taking \$80,000 from the Farmer's Branch Bank.

Battle of Cynthiana, June 12, 1864

After raiding Lexington, where they capture 2,000 horses, Morgan and his men march to Cynthiana, where on June 11, they defeat and capture that town's 400 man Union garrison. On the following day, lacking ammunition for their rifles, they are attacked and routed by Burbridge's troopers, who capture their baggage train and send them fleeing in several directions. On their way back to Virginia, Morgan and some of his men pass through Prestonsburg, where Morgan rests his mount and spends a pleasant hour drinking a glass of water and chatting with local ladies on the porch of the John Graham Johns House.