

Battle of Sacramento

By Jerry Long
c.2025



Kentucky Place Names, Robert M. Rennick
(Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1984) pp.259-260:

Sacramento (McLean): This 6th class city with post office lies at the junction of KY 81/85 and 254, 8 miles south of Calhoun. On May 20, 1852, the Social Hill post office was established at a settlement called Crossroads. Two years later George L. Helm laid off a town, which according to tradition was named at the suggestion of John Vickers for the town or valley by Sutter's Fort in the California gold fields, from which he had recently returned. The McLean County town was incorporated as Sacramento on March 1, 1860, and the post office was renamed this on October 8, 1861. (source – 'Sacramento', by Kenny Ward, "McLean County News", Bicentennial issue, 1 July 1976, p.11)



Collins Historical Sketches of Kentucky : History of Kentucky, Volume I,
Lewis Collins & Richard H. Collins (Covington, KY: Collins & Co., 1878) p.98:

Annals of Kentucky
Or Important Events in the History of Kentucky, 1539-1874

1861 – Dec. 27 –Engagement at Sacramento, McLean county, between Capt. Robert G. Bacon's company of Federal soldiers , and Confederate troops under Col. Forrest; former defeated, with 8 killed, 9 wounded, 16 prisoners ; Confederate loss not known.



A History of Muhlenberg County, Otto A. Rothert,
(Louisville, KY: John P. Morton & Company, Inc., 1913):

Pages 258-262 – (“Muhlenberg in the Civil War”):

Colonel Nathan B. Forrest and about ^{three} hundred of his men were the next to appear on the scene in Muhlenberg. They passed through Greenville on Friday morning, December 27, 1861. They had a few days before left Hopkinsville, which at that time and until the first part of February, 1862, was an outpost of the Confederate force stationed at Bowling Green. Colonel Forrest and his men were then on a scouting expedition in the territory south of Calhoun, where about a month before General Thomas L. Crittenden had established his headquarters. Many of Forrest's squadron stopped for a late breakfast at the Weir farm north of Greenville, which at that time was managed by an overseer who was evidently a Southern sympathizer, for he not only treated them to milk and honey but also filled many of their knapsacks from the best in his smokehouse. Shortly before crossing the Muhlenberg County line into McLean they encountered about one hundred and seventy Federal soldiers under Major Eli H. Murray and Colonel S. P. Love, who were skirmishing in that neighborhood. In the battle that followed about eight men were killed, a dozen or more wounded, and a number taken prisoner. This fight took place on December 28, 1861, near Sacramento, in that section of McLean County which a few years before wad' part of Muhlenberg. B. T. Martin's account of this encounter is printed in this volume in his "Recollections of the Civil War." Descriptions of this fight are also published in "The Life of General Nathan Bedford Forrest," by J. A. Wyeth, and in "Confederate Operations in Canada and New York," by John W. Headley. From "The Partisan Rangers," by General Adam R. Johnson, I quote:

In a short time we [Adam R. Johnson and Robert M. Martin, scouts for Colonel Forrest] were on the road [from Hopkinsville] to Greenville. Martin's parents living in the vicinity, he determined to visit his home, and wanted me to accompany him. But I preferred to remain to meet Colonel Forrest if he came up. It was late in the afternoon, and I passed the remainder of the day in ascertaining where supplies for cavalry could be obtained, leaving the impression that they were for the Federal cavalry under Jackson. Next morning early Bob Martin rejoined me and we started back, meeting Forrest in the road a few miles out. When informed that provisions and forage were to be had, and the country was clear of the enemy, Forrest determined to go into the town with his little force.

A long march over the rough, muddy roads required a short rest for the men and horses, but Martin and I were ordered to move down the road to Rumsey, ascertain the movements of the Federals, and report the results of our observations. Pushing forward, when we reached Rumsey we ascertained that the enemy had built a pontoon bridge and were crossing their cavalry. Thereupon I returned to report to Colonel Forrest, while Martin remained in the vicinity to observe the movements of the enemy.

I met Forrest on the road beyond the little town of Sacramento, and the Colonel hurried forward his regiment to attack them. The news that the Federals were not far away, and that a combat was imminent, seemed to send a thrill of pleasure through the entire command, for these young warriors already felt in anticipation "the rapture of the fight." When the order "gallop" was given, the men who rode the fleetest steeds impetuously crowded to the front. As I looked back at this confused body .of riders, each rushing to meet the foe first, a fearful sickening dread came over me which I well recall to this day, and I almost presumed to call Forrest's attention to this disorderly mass of men galloping pellmell at breakneck speed, when suddenly there came into view a young woman on a bareback horse, wildly dashing up, frantically waving her hat, while her

long hair was flying in the wind like a pennant, and her cheeks were afire with excitement as she exclaimed: "There the Yankees are! right over there!" pointing back over the hill whence she had just galloped.

Forrest, not checking his horse in the least, shouted: "Johnson, go and see right where they are!"

Letting my eager animal have the reins, I was soon up with the two advanced videttes of Forrest's regiment. They were fortunately riding good horses, and at my word increased their speed. Observing a high point on one side of the road not far in advance, I rode up to its summit and spied just over the crest of the hill a large body of cavalry drawn up in a V-shape and a small platoon stationed in the road in advance of the main force.

I rode back rapidly to Colonel Forrest with this information; he was trying to persuade the brave girl, who was riding by his side, to retire.

I, of course, expected him to halt his disorderly men and order a proper formation to make battle. But this fiery leader, without checking his charger, galloped on until he had reached the videttes, whom I had left on the hilltop to watch the enemy, now quite close to them. Jerking his gun out of the hands of one of them, and without a moment's hesitation, he fired at the Federals. The Confederates in his rear gave "the wild Rebel yell," and the Yankee advance guard fled back to their command. From his post of observation Forrest could plainly see the great odds which he was so eager to attack, but, undisturbed, he halted his men right in face of the enemy and ordered his captains to reform their companies. Under less serious circumstances this would have seemed altogether ludicrous; as the captains rode to right and left commanding their men to form around them, not one of them succeeded in collecting more than a dozen or two men out of the confused mass, every fellow seemingly "on his own hook." Just at this juncture Captain Gould, of the Texas company, coming up and hearing the order to form, dashed to the summit of the hill immediately in the front of the astonished Federals, and shouted in his deep, sonorous voice: "All you Texas boys rally round your leader!"

Gould had more men to the front because his company had the best horses, and as they rushed ahead to "rally round their leader" the Federals likely could see their peculiar saddles and so perhaps concluded that not only Forrest's regiment was in their front, but the entire regiment of the Texas Rangers. At any rate, they began to fall back in disorder, and Forrest throwing out flankers, both right and left, adopting thus in his very first fight those tactics which he afterwards made so formidable, swept down like an avalanche upon the Federals, now in almost as much disorder as his men had lately been.

The Southerners, led by this impetuous chieftain, swooped down upon their foes with such terrific yells and sturdy blows as might have made them believe a whole army was on them, and turning tail, they fled in the wildest terror, a panic-stricken mass of men and horses, Forrest's men mixed up with them, cutting and shooting right and left, and Forrest him self in his fury ignoring all command and always in the thickest of the melee. Never in any battle did leader play a fiercer individual part than did Forrest on this day. With his long arm and long sword, once during the fight and chase he was some distance ahead of his men, making a pathway as he cut and slashed on this side and that, and the demoralized Yankees, looking back and seeing a man whom their excited imaginations doubtless magnified into a veritable giant coming down upon them, pressed to either side, thus widening his path into a lane. Finally he came up with a man who had been a blacksmith, as large as himself, muscular and powerful. While engaged in combat with this man, another Federal was in the very act of running his sword into Forrest's back, when a timely shot

from Lieutenant Lane felled this second antagonist. Forrest hewed the big man to the ground by a mighty stroke.



Some Federal soldiers, while watering their horses at Garst's Pond, one half mile south of Sacramento, McLean County, after a skirmish in Northern Muhlenberg, were surprised and routed by Colonel Forrest's squadron and driven through Sacramento to Calhoun, December 28, 1861



Near the large tree on the right, on the Greenville and Rumsey Road north of Sacramento, McLean County, Captain Albert G. Bacon, of the Third Kentucky Cavalry, was killed in the retreat of the Federals from Garst's Pond to Calhoun. Station Church is shown in the background

Wildly onward rushed the fleeing and pursuing masses, all in the most disorderly manner, until again Forrest was engaged in an unequal contest with two Federal officers and a private, the latter shooting a ball through his collar, and Forrest quieting him with a pistol-shot just as the two officers made an attack upon him with their swords, which he eluded by bending his supple body forward, their weapons only gashing his shoulder. The impetus of his horse carrying him a few paces forward, he checked and drew him a little to one side and shot one of his antagonists as his horse galloped up, and thrust his saber into the other. Severely wounded, both of these officers fell from their steeds, which now uncontrolled, sharply collided with each other at full speed, falling together over the bottom of an abrupt hillock. Forrest, eager in the pursuit, inadvertently rode his horse over these two prostrate animals, causing him to fall and his rider to dart ten feet over his head. Seeing Forrest down, and fearing he had been shot, I leaped my horse over the fallen horses just in time to see him spring to his feet and call out: "Johnson, catch me a horse!" His own horse was badly crippled. Catching one that came plunging down the road, I handed him the bridle, but the saddle did not suit him, and while he was getting his own saddle his men gradually withdrew from the pursuit.

After the defeat of this cavalry force I was ordered forward to reconnoiter, and gathering up a few men on the way, I pushed forward to the top of the ridge, where I could observe the road for some distance; finding it clear, I left the men there as a guard and rode back to Colonel Forrest. There I found Bob Martin in high glee over the role he had played in the late tragedy. He was leading a horse and had his belt full of pistols.

"Hello, Bob; what have you been doing?" I asked him as I rode up "I've been trying to get even with a fellow that stole my horse—old Beauregard," he replied laughingly, meaning the high-headed, slender-limbed gray horse he had lost.

"What success?"

"Well, here is his horse, this is his pistol, and this is his gun," he said as he smiled.

"What became of the Yank?" I inquired.

"I left him over yonder in that strip of woods you see to the left of that road," he replied.

Collecting the guns which the Federals had thrown away, Forrest returned to Hopkinsville.

Forrest's squadron passed through Greenville late Saturday afternoon, December 28, 1861, and that night camped at Mount Pisgah Church, near Pond River. In the meantime the routed Federals returned to their camp at Calhoun, and although General Crittenden sent out five hundred soldiers that same night to capture Forrest and his men, they failed to locate him.

Pages 296-297 – (R. T. Martin's "Recollections of the Civil War":

During the last days of December, 1861, Colonel Forrest, with some three hundred men, made a raid down through Christian and Muhlenberg counties to near Sacramento in McLean County, where he came in contact with Major Eli H. Murray and about one hundred and eighty men of the Third Kentucky Cavalry. Colonel Forrest brought on the attack with part of his men, and Major Murray formed a line and repulsed the first charge. It is said that Murray might have stood his ground against Forrest's entire force had not some of Murray's recruits commenced a retreat to Sacramento, in consequence of which he was unable to check or rally his men. Colonel Forrest, seeing the disorder, charged them, and a running fight ensued which continued for a few miles, after which Forrest's cavalry returned. Murray's men never stopped on the road until they reached Calhoun, badly scattered and generally excited. Six of Murray's command were killed, including Captain A. G. Bacon, of Frankfort, and Isaac Mitchell, who lived near the old Buckner Furnace, and seven were wounded and captured, among whom was Captain A. N. Davis, then

living near Friendship Church. Forrest's loss was two killed, one of whom was Captain Ned Merriwether, and three wounded. It was claimed that some of the citizens of Sacramento did damage by shooting at the Federals as they passed through the town. Some arrests were afterward made and the parties dealt with.

Colonel Forrest came back through Greenville, left some prisoners in town, and continued his march until he reached Pisgah Church, on the lower Hopkinsville Road, where he went into camp. Colonel Forrest and Major D. C. Kelly occupied a room in a residence near the church, where they ate supper and breakfast. In the meantime their men helped themselves to the corn and hay, and left a perfect wreck of feed from the crib and barn all the way to the church house. These things, however, were paid for in Confederate money.

While in this house Colonel Forrest related a good deal concerning the battle he had had with Major Murray. He told about the capture of Captain A. N. Davis and John L. Williams. He stated that in the running fight Davis rushed up behind him, and that he would have received a fatal thrust had not Davis' horse fallen, for in the fall of the animal Davis' arm was dislocated and he rose and surrendered. He also said that he saw John L. Williams, the Greenville carpenter, on the ground, rode up to him, and demanded that he surrender; but Williams looked him straight in the eye, and drew back his pistol and threw it with great force, striking him on the breast, and would have knocked him off his horse had he not been a large man; that immediately some of his (Forrest's) men rushed up and began using their sabers on Williams, but he (Forrest) stopped them at once. He remarked that Williams was too brave a man to be butchered when overpowered.

Williams was a Mason and so was Colonel Forrest. Forrest brought Williams to Greenville, the home of Williams, and left him with his family. He also brought a prisoner to Greenville whose name was, I think, Ed Baker, a lieutenant from Princeton, Kentucky. I saw this prisoner the next day at Reno's Hotel. He was badly wounded; shot in the legs, arms, and body, and was absolutely helpless. He remained in the hotel for two months, and then went home. This was the last raid made in Muhlenberg County by Colonel Forrest or his men.



McLean County News, Calhoun, KY, Thursday, 11 January 1962, p.2:

More about the battle of Sacramento

One of our readers has sent us this account of the Battle of Sacramento. It is by Nathan Bedford Forrest, who was then colonel commanding Confederate troops in the battle. These words were included in his report : on December 30, 1861.

Colonel Forrest said: "As only the advance guard of my command was seen, we came up to their main column. We halted, and seeing that they outnumbered me, I fell back a short distance. The enemy at once attempted to flank our left and began to move towards us, and apparently greatly animated, supposing we were retreating.

They had moved down over one hundred yards and seemed to be forming for a charge, and began to move towards us, when the remainder of my men coming on the ground, I dismounted a number of them with long range guns, directed a flank movement upon the part of Major Kelly and Colonel Starnes upon the right and left, and with the balance of my command, mounted, we charged into their ranks.

The enemy broke in utter confusion, and in spite of the efforts of a few off officers, commenced a disorderly flight at full speed, in which the officers soon joined. We followed them closely, getting in an occasional shot, until we reached the village (Sacramento) when we began to catch up with them, and there commenced a promiscuous saber slaughter in their rear, which was continued for two miles beyond the village (near Station Church) leaving their wounded strewn along the route".

Thus began the career of General Forrest, one of the great figures to emerge from, the Civil War. During the course of the four-year struggle he killed thirty of the enemy in hand-to-hand combat, had twenty horses shot from under him and was wounded or injured half a dozen times.



McLean County News, Calhoun, KY, Thursday, 22 February 1962, p.1:

NEWS reader identifies heroine of Sacramento battle

The mystery of the Battle of Sacramento may be solved.

Most McLean countians who have read the story of this Civil War encounter know, that Colonel Nathan B. Forrest, the Confederate commander, reported that "a beautiful young lady, smiling, with untied tresses floating in the breeze, met the column just before our advance guard came up with the rear of the enemy – infusing nerve into my arm and kindling knightly chivalry within my heart."

We had never known who this girl was, and had never found anyone who knew. We, and others with whom we had discussed the event, had assumed that possibly her name had been kept secret because of fear of reprisal from the Federal troops stationed at Calhoun, and that possibly her secret had died with her.

However, Mrs. Cora Bennett has come to our rescue with some new information.

Mrs. Bennett writes:

"I think this little article will clear the mystery of the lovely lady with the long golden hair that went to Col. Forrest with information of the Federal troops advancing toward Sacramento. She and her sister had been on an errand beyond Sacramento Hill and saw the Union force headed that way.

"The sister rode on to tell her father and brothers.

"This young lady went to Col. Forrest with the message that the enemy was drawing near. Her father, a southerner and owner of many slaves, lived 1½ miles north of Sacramento. She was Miss Morehead. She later married a doctor and died early in life, and is buried in the Cumberland cemetery at Sacramento.

"Her sister married Dan K. Nall. Many of their descendants live McLean county.

"Her father, Hugh Morehead died several years later. When the property was sold to settle the estate, my father bought the home place 72 years ago. I bought it from my father in 1926 and I still own it.

"I can't recall her given niece, Mrs. Fanny Nall Martin, told me of this several years ago."

With this information, perhaps some of you can supply the girl's first name and tell more about the event.

We will appreciate anything you can tell us that will add to the recorded history of McLean county in the Civil War.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 4 November 1962, p.5A:

Western Kentucky News Roundup – McLean County

A marker commemorating the Battle of Sacramento during the Civil War will be unveiled today at 2:30 p.m. just south of the highway Y at Sacramento. The marker was prepared by the Kentucky Historical Marker Commission. The plaque describes a fight in December of 1861 between Confederate cavalymen from a division commanded by Gen. Thomas L. Crittenden whose headquarters were at Calhoun.



Kentucky Historical Society highway marker, #523:

The Kentucky Historical Society dedicated a highway marker commemorating the Battle of Sacramento on 4 November 1962 at the intersection of highways 81 & 85, at Sacramento in McLean County, KY. It was the first historical marker erected by the society in McLean County:



Surprise Attack Here

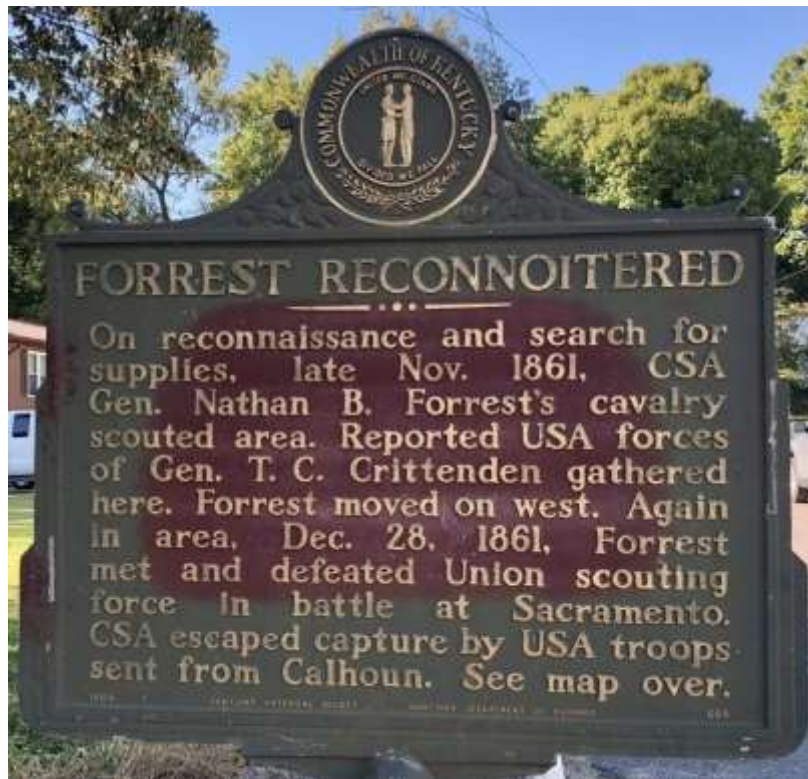
CSA cavalry from Hopkinsville under Colonel Nathan Bedford Forrest surprised Union forces under Major Eli H. Murray December 28, 1861. Forrest sent dismounted men to attack both enemy flanks, and, with the remainder mounted, he bore down road upon Union center, which broke and fled. Forrest pursued 4 miles, dispersed USA troops, returned to Hopkinsville.



Kentucky Historical Society highway marker, #665:

“Forrest Reconnoitered” (marker number: 665). Marker is in Calhoun at the intersection of Poplar Street and West 2nd Street, on the right when traveling south on Poplar Street. Erected 24 June 1964 by the Kentucky Historical Society & Kentucky Department of Highways.

Side one inscription – On reconnaissance and search for supplies, late Nov. 1861, CSA Gen. Nathan B. Forrest's cavalry scouted area. Reported USA forces of Gen. T. C. Crittenden gathered here. Forrest moved on to west. Again in area, Dec. 28, 1861, Forrest met and defeated Union scouting force in battle at Sacramento. CSA escaped capture by USA troops sent from Calhoun. See map over. Side two – Kentucky map of: Confederate Raids and Invasions and a Federal Retreat, in Kentucky.



The Register, Kentucky Historical Society
(Frankfort, KY, Vol. 75, No. 2, April 1977) pp.79-91:

**Skirmish At Sacramento:
Battle Of Future Generals**

By John K. Ward *

Between the Battle of Bull Run, in July 1861, and early 1862, the Civil War consisted mainly of small skirmishes and probing attacks as both sides settled down to the business of war. The importance of the small fights was not so much in what they accomplished but in the experience gained by commanders and the talents which began to emerge in the growing armies of the North and South. Kentucky served as the testing ground for many of these future commanders [1].

One of these skirmishes, long overlooked for the total talent involved, took place near the small west-central Kentucky village of Sacramento on 28 December 1861. Three future generals, two Southern and one Northern, began their war records here.

Sacramento is remembered mainly as the first cavalry action of Nathan Bedford Forrest, at that time a lieutenant colonel in the Confederate Army [2]. With Forrest at Sacramento, serving as a scout, was Adam Rankin Johnson, who would rise to the rank of brigadier general.

Their opponent at Sacramento was 18-year-old Union Major Eli H. Murray. Murray would be brevetted brigadier general of volunteers at the age of 22 and receive the praise of no less a personage than General William T. Sherman.

The initial developments leading to the fight at Sacramento occurred during the previous month. In early November, Confederate Lieutenant Colonel Nathan Bedford Forrest's cavalry regiment was assigned to Brigadier General Lloyd Tilghman's command. Forrest set up winter headquarters at Hopkinsville [3] at that time a major outpost on the Confederate defense line in Kentucky [4].

Forrest's unit, which retained up to its surrender the name Forrest's (Old) Regiment, Cavalry, was organized in Memphis, Tennessee, in October 1861. At that time the regiment was composed of: Captain J. F. Overton's Company (A), Captain Charles May's Company (C), Captain N. C. Gould's Company (D), Captain Daniel C. Trewhitt's Company (E), Major D. C. Kelley Troopers (F), and Captain M. D. Logan's Company (G) [5].

In addition to portions of these companies, Forrest had with him at Sacramento a 40-man detachment from Captain W. S. McLemore's Company, 8th Battalion Tennessee Cavalry, under the battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel James W. Starnes; and a 25-man scouting unit under Captain Ned Merriwether, of Todd County, Kentucky [6].

On Thursday, December 26, Forrest set out on a reconnaissance north toward Green River, at that time the dividing line between Union and Confederate positions in Kentucky. He initially split his command for a scout toward Greenville and Rochester, reuniting his forces at Greenville on December 27. With this juncture Forrest numbered his command at about 300 [7].

Not encountering any sign of Federal forces, Forrest decided to move on toward Rumsey. Rumsey was a river town directly across Green River from the headquarters of a Union division, located at Calhoun.

At about the same time that Forrest was moving his command into Hopkinsville, Union Brigadier General Thomas Leonidas Crittenden was moving into his new headquarters at Calhoun [8].

Crittenden was the son of John J. Crittenden, a leading Kentucky statesman and author of the Crittenden Compromise. Thomas' older brother, George, was a Confederate general. Although often called a political general, Thomas distinguished himself during the war, especially at Shiloh, Stone's River, and Chickamauga [9].

Crittenden was appointed a brigadier general of volunteers on 27 September 1861. In early October he was ordered to take command of U.S. forces at Owensboro and Henderson. In November he moved his headquarters to Calhoun on Green River. On December 3 his command was designated the 5th Division, Army of the Ohio [10]. It was Crittenden's division that Forrest was attempting to reconnoitre.

As Forrest moved toward Rumsey, he sent his Kentucky-born scouts, Adam Rankin Johnson, of Henderson, and Robert Martin, from Greenville, on ahead [11]. Both scouts were familiar with the area and both were to build outstanding military careers during the war.

After Shiloh, Forrest released the two scouts to Major General John C. Breckinridge. Johnson and Martin raised a regiment in Kentucky that became part of John Hunt Morgan's command. Johnson eventually reached the rank of brigadier general and was placed in command of the Confederate District of Western Kentucky. In August 1864, during an engagement at Grubb's Cross Roads, he was wounded, the ball striking one eye, traveling across the bridge of his nose and taking out the other eye.

In June 1864, Martin was wounded at Mount Sterling, Kentucky. The wound disabled him for cavalry duty so he was sent to Canada by Confederate Secretary of State Judah P. Benjamin. From Canada Martin was to harass the North. Among his activities was the attempt to burn New York City in 1864. In 1861 Martin and Johnson, at their own requests, were serving as scouts for Forrest [12].

While the scouts spent the night of December 27-28 attempting to ascertain Crittenden's intentions, Forrest was camped with the rest of his force at Greenville. Early on the morning of December 28, Forrest pulled out of Greenville and headed north. Many of his soldiers encountered a Southern sympathizer in the overseer of the Weir farm just north of Greenville. He gave the troopers a late breakfast of milk and honey and then filled their knapsacks with the best from the smokehouse [13].

Just south of Sacramento, Adam Johnson made contact with Forrest. Johnson and his fellow scout had discovered a Union patrol south of the river. Martin was keeping a watch on the Federal force.

As soon as the scout reported, Forrest's troopers "were ordered to a rapid pace, and as the news of the proximity of the enemy ran down the column it was impossible to repress jubilant and defiant shouts, which reached the height of enthusiasm as the women from the houses waved us forward [14].

The Union troops were part of a force which had been sent out the night before on a scouting mission. The force reported to Forrest was composed of elements of Companies A, B, C, and D, 3d Kentucky Cavalry Regiment. Commanded by Major Eli H. Murray, the force numbered 168 men [15].

A few miles south of Sacramento this part of the patrol paused to rest. The men were completely unaware of the nearby Confederate cavalry. The Confederate force not only was informed of the whereabouts of the Federals by Johnson but also by a local Southern sympathizer. In his report Forrest states:

"A beautiful young lady, smiling, with untied tresses floating in the breeze, met the column just before our advance guard came up with the rear of the enemy, infusing nerve into my arm and kindling knightly chivalry within my heart [16].

This beautiful young lady was Mollie S. Moorehead. Her father, a Southern sympathizer, lived near Sacramento. Mollie and her sister, Bettie, had been on an errand and saw the Union soldiers. The sister rode on to warn her father and brothers. Mollie rode to Colonel Forrest. Forrest had some difficulty keeping the enthusiastic young lady from riding into the battle with him. [17].

By the time the young lady contacted Forrest, the discipline of the Southern force had been completely lost. Adam Johnson was to write later that he viewed "this disorderly mass of men galloping pell mell at break neck speed" with a "fearful, sickening dread [18].

After receiving Miss Moorehead's report of the near location of the Union patrol, Forrest sent Johnson on ahead to find the enemy's exact location. Moving to a high point on one side of the road not far in advance of the Confederate force, the scout found the Federal cavalry just over the crest of the hill. Johnson immediately returned and reported to Forrest.

As soon as Forrest, still riding, heard Johnson's report, he galloped to the top of the hill from which Johnson had seen the Federal troops. When the Confederates were seen on the hilltop the Union cavalymen appeared uncertain as to their identity. Forrest clarified the situation by firing at the Federals. This was the opening shot of the skirmish at Sacramento.

Before advancing farther Forrest sought to form his men into some kind of order. His captains attempted to bring their companies into line but most of the officers could collect no more than a dozen men around them [19].

Captain N. C. Gould, leader of a company of Texans, was the only officer to manage anything at all. Most of Gould's men, having faster horses, were at the front anyway so they rallied quickly around their leader. This brought some semblance of order out of the chaos [20].

With about 150 men Forrest charged the Union advance. The Union troops opened fire when Forrest got within 200 yards. At 80 yards Forrest ordered his men to fire. In his report Forrest states, "After these rounds I found that my men were not up in sufficient numbers to pursue them with success, and as they showed signs of fight, I ordered the advance to fall back." Forrest at this time was engaging only Major Murray and 45 men of his command.

General Crittenden reported on December 30: "Major Murray behaved with great gallantry, and . . . repelled the charge, being seconded handsomely by about 45 men [22].

With the arrival of the rest of Forrest's command, the Confederate leader dismounted part of his force armed with Sharp's and Maynard rifles. They were to maintain a steady fire into the Union troops. He then sent mounted troops, under Major Kelley and Colonel Starnes, to hit the Federal flanks. Forrest himself led the remainder of his force straight into the center of Murray's line [23].

"This [charge] was done with an animating shout, and all possible spirit and resolution, but in face of a sharp fire, under which the brave Captain Merriwether ... fell, shot with two balls through the head, by the side of the commander." Captain Ned Merriwether was the first casualty of the battle [24].

Crittenden wrote that Murray and his 45-man force "resisted the whole body of the enemy for ten minutes, and, from the accounts I have from many reliable witnesses, would have repulsed them, but at this critical moment some dastard unknown shouted 'Retreat to Sacramento!' Most of the men fled, of course, without stopping at Sacramento [25].

Once the Union troops broke Forrest never let up, striking their rear again and again. Forrest gave credit to a few of the Federal officers for attempting to halt the flight of the Union

force. They were finally forced to join the fleeing cavalymen. The Confederates did not catch up with the Federals until they reached Sacramento. At that point "there commenced a promiscuous saber slaughter of their rear [26].

The Federal troopers had more than the "promiscuous saber slaughter" to contend with as they rode through Sacramento. A number of the citizens of the village fired at the Union soldiers as they rode through. Some arrests were made afterwards and "the parties dealt with [27]. Actually, the civilians were taken to Calhoun but released upon taking the oath of allegiance to the U.S [28].

The pursuit of the Union forces was continued at almost full speed for two miles beyond Sacramento. According to Forrest's report there were "bleeding and wounded strewn along the route [29].

Some U.S. officers finally managed to pull enough men together to slow and eventually halt the Confederate pursuit. During the final yards, the skirmish was marked by a series of hand-to-hand engagements.

Forrest, large himself, is said at one point to have encountered a Union soldier "as large as himself, muscular and powerful." While engaged in combat with this soldier, another Federal came up behind Forrest and was set to run his sword into Forrest's back. A member of Forrest's command saw the action and shot this second Union trooper. Forrest won his saber duel and killed the first soldier [30].

This victim of Forrest's saber may have been Corporal Isaac Mitchell of Company D. A half an inch short of six feet tall, he was a farmer from near Greenville. Like Forrest, he had been born in Tennessee [31].

Another Greenville native was definitely involved with Forrest. Union Private John L. Williams had been unhorsed, so Forrest rode up and demanded Williams' surrender. According to Forrest's statement in Greenville that night, "Williams looked him straight in the eye, and drew back his pistol and threw it with great force striking [Forrest] on the breast and would have knocked him off his horse had he not been a large man; that immediately some of [Forrest's] men rushed up and began using sabers on Williams, but [Forrest] stopped them at once. He remarked that Williams was too brave a man to be butchered when overpowered [32.]

Williams was taken as a prisoner to Greenville. There he was released on parole to his family. Williams was wounded on the right wrist, "severing the tendons on the palm... and completely disabling the right hand. Also two saber wounds of the skull, one of which penetrated the cranium, and has left a suture which is still unhealed." He was discharged as three-quarters disabled [33].

Other than Captain Merriwether, Private William H. Terry of Captain McLemore's Company was the only Confederate killed. Throughout the skirmish he had been conspicuous for his gallantry. Terry was battering a Federal trooper with his empty rifle when he was killed with a saber thrust from Captain Arthur N. Davis [34].

Captain Davis, commander of the 3d Cavalry's Company D, was described by General Crittenden as also being "conspicuous in the fight for bravery [35]. At one point in the fighting Davis came close to killing Forrest. Forrest stated in Greenville that "in the running fight Davis rushed up behind him, and that he would have received a fatal thrust had not Davis' horse fallen, for in the fall of the animal Davis' arm was dislocated and he rose and surrendered [36].

This injury, which did not heal correctly, was eventually to end Davis' military career. He was held prisoner by the Confederates until 11 August 1862. On 29 April 1863, he resigned on a surgeon's certificate of disability. The surgeon stated that the injury did not wholly disqualify him for military service, but that it did not render any action with the saber impossible [37].

Another Union officer who received praise was also the highest ranking Union soldier killed. This was Captain Albert G. Bacon, commander of Company C. The 43-year-old Frankfort, Kentucky, native is credited with leading the attempt which finally halted the Confederate pursuit. He also had engaged Forrest.

Bacon had narrowly missed Forrest with a saber stroke and Forrest's horse carried him ahead of Bacon. The Confederate leader then turned and shot the Union captain. Forrest ordered the wounded captain to surrender. Bacon attempted to continue the fight thus "obliging" Forrest "to run his saber through" the captain [38].

One other Union officer was a casualty. Second Lieutenant John L. Walters, Company B., was captured during the fighting [39]. Released by the Confederates in October 1862, he returned to duty during the same month. His military career ended under a cloud. In 1863 he was court martialed and cashiered from the service for conduct unbecoming an officer and gentleman [40].

Bacon's death was ultimately to lead to the halting of the Confederate pursuit. The captain's horse and another riderless horse collided at full speed and knocked each other over at the bottom of a short, abrupt hillock. Forrest, again leading the pursuit, ran straight into the two horses. His horse added to the pile up but Forrest went flying over his horse's neck and landed 20 feet ahead of the heap of struggling horses. These three horses were added to almost immediately by a number of other horses and riders, effectively creating a road block. With most of the Federal troops now out of sight and the camp at Calhoun being nearby, the Confederates decided to abandon further pursuit. [41].

In addition to Captain Bacon and Corporal Mitchell, the Union force had lost six enlisted men killed [42]. There were, according to General Crittenden's report of 3 January 1862, a "loss of 8 gallant soldiers, and 3 officers of uncommon bravery and soldierly qualities." The three officers were Captain Bacon, killed; Captain A. N. Davis, and Lieutenant John L. Walters, captured [43]. Crittenden does not mention the fact that at least 10 privates were captured and became prisoners of war in the South [44].

Seven of the eight soldiers had been killed. Private Williams was paroled at his home in Greenville but apparently not considered a total loss. Private Edward Baker, of Company B, was a different story.

A Greenville native, although confused about the Federal's rank, stated that Forrest "also brought a prisoner to Greenville whose name was, I think, Ed Baker, a lieutenant from Princeton, Kentucky. I saw this prisoner the next day at Reno's Hotel. He was badly wounded; shot in the legs, arms, and body, and was absolutely helpless. He remained in the hotel for two months, and then went home [45].

Baker was born in Coventry, England. He was discharged from the U.S. Army on 28 July 1862, and listed as entirely disabled. The surgeon's certificate states that Baker was incapable of performing the duties of a soldier because of gun shot wounds which had perforated his body and limbs [46].

Forrest's report wildly overestimated the Union losses. His report to Brigadier General Charles Clark states: "There were killed on the field and mortally wounded, who have since died, about 65; wounded and taken prisoner, about 35, making their loss about 100 [47].

In forwarding Forrest's report, General Clark added, "The loss of the enemy, it will be seen, is estimated by Colonel Forrest at 65 killed and 35 wounded and taken prisoner, and from private and unofficial sources I learn that the number is not overestimated. [48].

General Crittenden also overestimated enemy losses. He reported, "We do not know the extent of the enemy's loss. Merriwether (either a major or a lieutenant-colonel) was killed and certainly 4 men. The rebels took away three wagon loads of dead and wounded [49].

On 7 January 1862, the *Louisville Democrat* reprinted, from the *Colombia* (Missouri) *Statesman*, a "true statement" about "The Sacramento Affair." This "true statement," gave even higher Confederate losses: "Of the Rebels, thirty were killed and two six-mule wagon loads of wounded and thirteen prisoners." Forrest reported only Captain Merriwether and Private Terry killed and three privates slightly wounded.

As soon as General Crittenden received word of the fight, he sent out a relief force. The force was led by Colonel James Streshley Jackson, commander of the 3d Kentucky Cavalry, and consisted of about 500 men, 260 of them infantry. The infantry were members of the 26th Kentucky Infantry Regiment. [50].

Crittenden's instructions were "to gather up stragglers and the wounded, if there were any . . ." and "if the enemy were still in the vicinity to beat them up, but not to venture far in pursuit [51].

By the time this force arrived at the scene of the battle, Forrest had already departed. He returned southward, passing through Greenville late in the afternoon on December 28. That night he camped at Mount Pisgah Church, near Pond River. From there he returned to Hopkinsville [52].

Apparently one member of Forrest's command was not with him at this time. This may have been one of his scouts, either Adam R. Johnson or Robert Martin. According to the story handed down in the Muster family of Calhoun, one of Forrest's troopers and his horse swam Green River below Calhoun that evening.

Adam Johnson was familiar with the people of McLean County and made his way to the home of John W. Muster, about five miles north of Calhoun. The Musters were strongly pro-Southern and the Southern soldier was given a meal and a place to sleep. The next morning he was again fed before he left.

During the battle the trooper had picked up a saber to a Union cavalryman. The morning after the battle, while the young trooper waited for his breakfast, one of the young Muster boys used the captured sword as his "stick horse." When the soldier prepared to leave the boy began to cry because the trooper was taking his "horse" away. The soldier gave in and left the sword with the boy [53].

The war moved on, gaining in fierceness. Forrest carved out a niche in history as one of the greatest natural-born cavalymen ever produced in America. Adam R. Johnson became a brigade commander under John H. Morgan and was with Morgan during that general's raid into Ohio in 1863. Johnson escaped capture and was later sent back to Kentucky. He became a brigadier general, June 1864, and he and his unit virtually ruled the area between the Green and Cumberland rivers until he was blinded. Eli Murray, the 18-year-old Union commander, started his rise with the fight at Sacramento and on 25 March 1865 he was brevetted brigadier general of volunteers.

As to the course of the war, the skirmish at Sacramento had no major significance. Fewer than 500 men were involved, no territory changed hands, and, except for those who were killed, wounded or captured, the course of the war was not appreciably changed. The battle was, in fact, little noted nor long remembered. But for some of the participants, it was the beginning of very distinguished military careers. Skirmishes such as this gave these young officers needed battle experience, and the opportunity to perfect their strategy at a minor level. Later they would employ the lessons learned here on a wider front.

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1. Harry Williams, "Kentucky, The Hard School of Experience," *The Civil War in Kentucky*, supplement to Louisville *Courier-Journal*, November 20, 1960, 53-58.
2. "The skirmish is mentioned in: Basil W. Duke, *Reminiscences of General Basil W. Duke, C.S.A.* (New York, 1911), 345; Curt Anders, *Fighting Confederates* (New York, 1911); John Allan Wyeth, *Life of General Nathan Bedford Forrest* (New York, 1899), 30.35; Gerald Astor with Joseph Millard, "Heller on Horseback." Joseph Millard, ed., *True Civil War Stories* (Greenwich, Conn., 1961) 175-76; Paul E. Steiner, *Medical-Military Portraits of Union and Confederate Generals* (Philadelphia, 1968), 306.07; Robert Selph Henry, "First With the Most" Forrest (Indianapolis and New York, 1944), 43-45.
3. Thomas Jordan and J. P. Pryor, *The Campaigns of Lieut.-Gen. N. B. Forrest, and of Forrest's Cavalry* (Dayton, O., 1973; orig. pub. 1868), 44.
4. Ed Porter Thompson, *History of the Orphan Brigade* (Dayton, O., 1973; orig. pub. 1898), 881; Otto A. Rothert, *A History of Muhlenberg County* (Louisville, 1913), 258.
5. John Berrien Lindsley, ed., *The Military Annals of Tennessee, Confederate* (Nashville, 1886), 76162.
6. *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 128 vols. and Index (Washington, 1880.1901), Ser. I, VII, 64.65, hereinafter cited as O.R., all references will be to Ser. I, Vol. VII unless otherwise indicated; J. H. Battle, ed., "Todd County History," in J. H. Battle and W. H. Perrin, eds., *Counties of Todd and Christian, Kentucky* (Chicago and Louisville, 1884), 110.
7. O.R., 64-65.
8. "Return of the 5th Division, Department of the Ohio, for part of the month of Jany [sic], 1862," Crittenden Files (National Archives, General Services Administration, Washington, D.C.)
9. Henry E. Simmons, comp., *A Concise Encyclopedia of the Civil War* (New York, 1965), 64.
10. Adjutant General's Office, "Statement of the Military Service of Thomas L. Crittenden," 28 February 1882, Crittenden Files.
11. Adam R. Johnson, *The Partisan Rangers of the Confederate States Army* (Evansville, Ind., 1971; orig. pub. 1904), 40; Rothert, *A History of Muhlenberg County*, 259.
12. Johnson's book contains items by numerous persons who knew Johnson and who give a review of his military career; Thompson also has mentions of Johnson's career; Johnson File, National Archives; Basil W. Duke, *History of Morgan's Cavalry*, (Cincinnati, 1867), contains material on the later career of both Johnson and Martin; Martin's biography in Rothert, *A History of Muhlenberg County*, 318-25; Martin File, National Archives; John W. Headley, *Confederate Operations in Canada and New York* (New York, 1906).
13. Rothert, *A History of Muhlenberg County*, 258.
14. O.R., 65.
15. *Ibid.*, 62; exact companies ascertained by casualties' units of assignment.
16. O.R., 65.
17. Exact identity of this young lady was lost until 1971. Jordan and Pryor gave her name only as "Miss Morehead [sic]," Johnson describes the incident but has no name. Ms. Cora Bennett, "Correspondence," Calhoun *McLean County News*, 22 February 1962, gives the names of some of her relatives. Ms. Elizabeth Cox, McLean County genealogist, used these facts to identify the girl and her sister, contained in correspondence to the author, 1971.
18. Johnson, *The Partisan Rangers*, 41.
19. *Ibid.*, 42; Lester N. Fitzhugh, "One Texas Unit Served Forrest," clipping from unidentified newspaper; Wilena Roberts Bejach, "Civil War Letters of a Mother and Son," *The West Tennessee Historical Society Papers*, IV (1950), 52, letter from James H. Hamner, a trooper under Forrest.
20. Johnson, *The Partisan Rangers*, 42; Fitzhugh, "One Texas Unit Served Forrest."
21. O.R., 65.
22. *Ibid.*, 62.
23. *Ibid.*, 65; Jordan and Pryor, *The Campaigns of Lieut.-Gen. N. B. Forrest*, 51.

24. Jordan and Pryor, *The Campaigns of Lieut.-Gen. N. B. Forrest*, 51; O.R., 65, does not give details of Merriwether's death.
25. O.R., 62.63.
26. *Ibid.*, 65; Jordan and Pryor, *The Campaigns of Lieut.-Gen. N. B. Forrest*, 52, and Johnson, *The Partisan Rangers*, 42, describe the melee.
27. Rothert, *A History of Muhlenberg County*, 296; *Louisville Democrat* in "The Skirmish at Sacramento, Kentucky," *Chicago Times*, 6 January 1862.
28. *Evansville Journal*, 3 January 1862.
29. O.R., 65.
30. Johnson, *The Partisan Rangers*, 42.
31. Mitchell File, National Archives.
32. Rothert, *A History of Muhlenberg County*, 297.
33. Williams File, National Archives.
34. Jordan and Pryor, *The Campaigns of Lieut.-Gen. N. B. Forrest*, 54; O.R., 66; Terry File, National Archives; D. W. Johnston, "Correspondence," *Evansville Journal*, 28 January 1862.
35. O.R., 63.
36. *Ibid.*, 65-66; Rothert, *A History of Muhlenberg County*, 296-97.
37. Davis File, National Archives.
38. Jordan and Pryor, *The Campaigns of Lieut.-Gen. N. B. Forrest*, 53; *Spirit of the Age* (Raleigh, North Carolina), 15 January 1862, citing the *Nashville Banner*, states that Starnes shot Bacon; item reprinted in Frank Moore, ed., *The Rebellion Record: A Diary of American Events, with Documents, Narratives, Illustrative Incidents, Poetry*, 12 vols., (New York, 1862.68), III, 517.
39. O.R., 63; *Chicago Times*, 6 January 1862.
40. Walters File, National Archives.
41. Jordan and Pryor, *The Campaigns of Lieut.-Gen. N. B. Forrest*, 53; Johnson, *The Partisan Rangers*, 43.
42. Kentucky Adjutant General, *Report of the Adjutant General of Kentucky 1861.1866*, 2 vols. (Frankfort, 1866), I, 63-69, hereafter cited as A. G.; Rothert, *A History of Muhlenberg County*, 296-97; O.R., 63; individual files, National Archives.
43. O.R., 63.
44. Captain A. N. Davis to President A. Lincoln, 2 April 1862, in O.R., Set. II, Vol. III, 419, requesting exchange consideration.
45. Rothert, *A History of Muhlenberg County*, 297.
46. Baker File, National Archives.
47. O.R., 64.65.I
48. *Ibid.*, 64.
49. *Ibid.*, 63.
50. *Ibid.*, 62; Thomas Speed, Robert Morrow Kelly, and Alfred Pirtle, *The Union Regiments of Kentucky* (Louisville, 1897), 539.
51. O.R., 62.
52. *Ibid.*, 66; Rothert, *A History of Muhlenberg County*, 262.
53. Mr. John W. Muster III, Interview.

[Note – Ken Ward in his column, "Meandering Through McLean" published an eight part series on the Battle of Sacramento in the McLean County News (Calhoun, KY) on: 20 May 1971 p.11; 27 May 1971 p.6; 3 June 1971 p.3; 10 June 1971 p.2; 24 June 1971 p.2; 8 July 1971 p.8; 15 July 1971 p.8; and 29 July 1971 p.10.]



McLean County News, Calhoun, KY, Thursday, 31 December 1987, pp.1 & 9:

Anniversary of battle is this week

by Gina Hancock, NEWS staff writer

Reporter's Note:

If you wanted to find out something about McLean County's history, you would be hard pressed to find an easily available source. There isn't a history book on McLean County.

Most of McLean County's history is locked in the minds and hearts of a few residents such as Elizabeth Cox, Virginia Davis and Allen Taylor Nall. Oral history and its preservation is just as important sometimes as saving tangible historic items and sites.

The background concerning the identity of Mary Morehead Stowers for this article was provided by Mr. Nall.

To my knowledge, her full and proper name has never been published in any form.

It is important to record the knowledge of such vital resources as these people before their knowledge becomes another missing link in McLean County's history.

The 126 anniversary or Battle of Sacramento was this week.

The battle was fought by troops under the commands of Confederate Colonel Nathan Bedford Forrest and Union Major Eli H. Murray.

There was also a young lady who participated in the battle and has been described as a "Kentucky belle" by John A. Wyeth author of the "Life of General Nathan B. Forrest."

That Kentucky belle rode to Forrest's troops to warn them of the location of the Union soldiers that were nearing Sacramento.

Forrest reported that: "A beautiful young lady, smiling, with untied tresses floating in the breeze, on horseback, met the column just before our advance guard came up on the rear of the enemy, infusing nerve into my arm and kindling knightly chivalry within my heart."

Morehead was the great-aunt of Allen Taylor Nall, of Calhoun.

"My Aunt Fannie 'Nall Martin knew the story and she told me many years ago the story of what happened.

"Mollie, as she was called, wanted to stay with this group, (of soldiers) but they ran her off. She must have been quite a gal," said Nall.

Through Nall's genealogical research and that of his relative Martha Harris of Lake Worth, FL, they found Mollie's full name. It was recorded in the Bennett-Morehead family Bible.

She was Mary "Mollie" Susan Morehead and she was 18-years old at the time she warned Forrest of the location of the Union troops.

Most historic references only identified her as a young lady and even Forrest, in his report, did not provide her name. Mrs. Cora Bennett identified her in 1962, in a letter to the NEWS, as Miss Morehead, the daughter of Hugh Morehead of Sacramento.

Kenny Ward went to great lengths in his 1971 article on the battle for the NEWS, to identify her.

Ward found that the book entitled "The Campaigns of Lieut.-Gen. N.B. Forrest and of Forrest's Cavalry" by General Thomas Jordan and J.P. Pryor identified her as Miss Morehead. Their book was published in 1868.

Ward narrowed her name down to Mollie, but was unclear on the spelling, Elizabeth Cox performed the research on Morehead's name for the 1971 article.

Mollie was born March 16, 1843 and married Dr. George E. Stowers in 1866.

According to Nall, Stowers was a dentist.

"She died I'm sure in childbirth. Her and her baby both have the same date of death," said Nall.

Mollie and her infant son died March 29, 1870.

Sarah E. Morehead was Nall's grandmother and was Mollie's sister.

Sarah married Dan K. Nall.

According to Bennett, Mollie and her sister were on an errand beyond Sacramento Hill when they saw the Union troops.

Bennett wrote: "The sister rode on to tell her father and brothers. The young lady went to Colonel Forrest with the message that the enemy was drawing near. Her father, a Southerner and an owner of many slaves, lived one and a half miles north of Sacramento."

Mollie died nine years after the Battle of Sacramento, which was Forrest's first fight.

Forrest was unable to explain his many successes in battle and could only say that: "I do not know, unless it was because I generally got there first with the most men."

The Kentucky Legislature had declared the state neutral in the war, but to President Abraham Lincoln, Kentucky was an important state to win.

"I think to lose Kentucky is nearly to lose the whole game," Lincoln said.

Lincoln felt that the Union would lose Missouri and Maryland, if Kentucky fell to the Confederacy.

On December 26, 1861, Confederate Brigadier-General Charles Clark sent Forrest to make a tour of observation in the direction of Henderson.

He took with him Companies A, C, and D under the command of Lieutenant Crutcher and Captains May and Gould.

There were also additional details from Companies E, F and G under Major D.C. Kelley and an independent detachment of 25 Kentuckians under Captain Merriwether.

On December 28, Forrest was joined by a company of 40 Tennesseans commanded by Captain Starnes and Lieutenant McLemore.

According to Forrest's report, he and his troops were traveling on the Rumsey road when a scout reported that approximately 500 Union troops had crossed from Calhoun to Rumsey.

It was at this point that Mollie joined Forrest and his troops.

Forrest was finally able to induce her to turn back before they intercepted the Union troops.

According to Forrest's report, when they came within a mile of Sacramento they were within sight of the rear guard of the Union cavalry which had halted. F

Forrest took a Maynard rifle and fired at them. The rear guard rode off to join their column. Forrest ordered his men to follow, but not to fire until they were closer.

The Union troops were part of Union Major General. Thomas L. Crittenden's troops. Crittenden was stationed at Calhoun with approximately 10,000 troops.

When Forrest was within 120 yards of the Union line, he felt he did not have sufficient manpower to charge them.

Forrest was in command of 300 soldiers.

When the Union troops had advanced to 100 yards, Forrest devised a maneuver that he was to use again and again throughout the war.

According to Wyeth, Forrest had some of his men dismount and act as sharpshooters.

While they kept the Union soldiers busy, he ordered a flank movement by Starnes to take 30 mounted troops to the Union's left and Kelley to take 60 mounted men to their right.

When this maneuver succeeded in confusing the Union line, Forrest led a charge with his sword in hand.

The Union cavalry broke and ran.
Forrest and his men pursued them through Sacramento and then on for two more miles.
A squadron of Union soliders [sic] stopped and turned to face the Confederates.
Forrest, leading the pursuit, suddenly found himself surrounded by Union soliders.
Captain Merriwether, who was right behind him, was killed by a bullet wound to the head.
Forrest killed Union Captain Bacon with his sword.
Confederate Private W.H. Terry was killed by Union Captain Davis while trying to protect Forrest.
Forrest, in trying to reach Terry, rammed his horse into Davis' mount. They both fell off.
Davis dislocated his shoulder in the fall and surrendered.
Forrest killed two more soldiers with his sword before the squadron surrendered.
Two Confederate soldiers were killed and three privates were wounded.
Crittenden reported that nine soldiers were killed, Captain Davis was captured and 40 men were missing.
Crittenden wrote: "We have five or six men so badly wounded that we could not bring them in."
Many of the Union soldiers were killed along the road during the chase.
That night Forrest and his men stayed at Greenville.
By February of 1862, Crittenden was no longer stationed at Calhoun.
Crittenden and Forrest would meet at Shiloh and they both would live to see the end of the war.
One hundred and twenty-six years ago, two men who figured prominently in state and national history fought here and worked here.
There was also a young woman who has remained relatively obscured by history, who played a part in a battle of the Civil War.
Although Forrest and others did not know her name, they recorded her act of bravery.
Yes, she must have been quite a gal.



Additional notes on Mollie Morehead

Mary Susan ('Mollie') Morehead, was the daughter of Hugh Nelson Morehead (1807-1875) & Elizabeth Ann Dawson (1810-1885), who were married in Allen County, KY on 21 May 1829. Mollie is listed with her parents in the 1850 census of Simpson County, KY and 1860 census of Butler County, KY; her age was given as 8 years and 17 years, respectively. Mollie married in McLean County, KY, on 14 November 1865, to Dr. George E. Stowers (1839-1927), a dentist and Confederate veteran of the Civil War. George Stowers is listed as a member of the household of Mollie's parents in the 1870 census off Sacramento, McLean County, KY. Mollie's gravestone in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church Cemetery, Sacramento, McLean County, KY, records that she was born on 16 March 1843 and died 29 March 1870. Also buried in the same cemetery are an infant son, who was born and died on 29 March 1870, and her parents. In the 1870 McLean County Federal census mortality schedule it is recorded that Mary Stowers died of dropsy in March 1870; she was reported to be age 27 years, born Kentucky and was married.

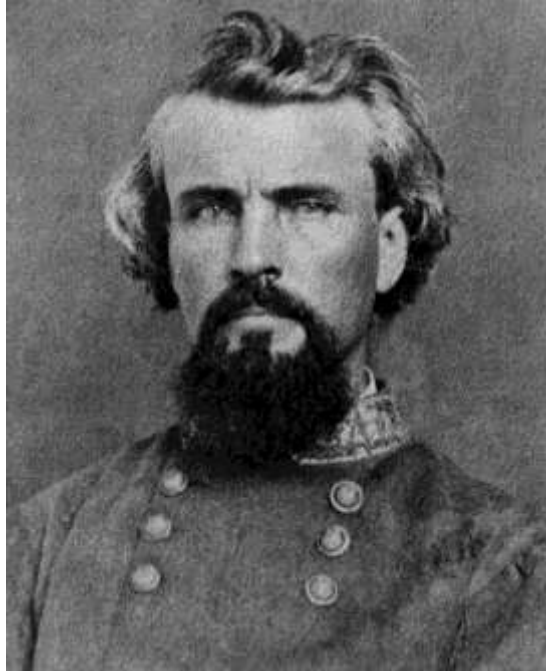


Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Monday, 20 April 1992, pp.1C & 3C:

**Confederate general
used legendary tactic
for 1st time in McLean**

By Glenn Hodges, Messenger-Inquirer

Confederate general Nathan Bedford Forrest, whom William Tecumseh Sherman called the "most remarkable man our Civil War produced on either side," used his most legendary cavalry tactic for the first time in McLean County early in the war.



Confederate general Nathan Bedford Forrest, pictured here, was called the "most remarkable man our Civil War produced on either side" by William Tecumseh Sherman.

In late 1861, Forrest, then a lieutenant colonel, was leading Confederate forays into river counties northwest of Hopkinsville, gathering hogs, cattle, horses and other supplies for the rebel army.

On Saturday, Dec. 28, about 300 soldiers under his command were moving from Greenville toward Rumsey. Within a few hours, scouts from Forrest's advance guard rode back to report a body of nearly 500 Union cavalry crossing the road eight miles in front of them, also heading to Rumsey.

Forrest's men moved forward at a gallop. "As the news of the proximity of the enemy ran down the column," Forrest wrote later, "it was impossible to repress jubilant and defiant shouts, which reached the heights as the women from the houses waved us forward."

As the lead Confederates moved to a mile south of Sacramento, they sighted the rear of the Union force and opened up on it with Forrest himself snatching a rifle from one of his men and firing the first shot.

After a chase, the rebels made contact with the main column of the Union force. It had raced up a long slope, formed a battle line across the road along the brow of a low ridge and commenced firing from a range of about 200 yards.

Forrest, calmly waiting for the rest of his force to arrive from the south, then drew back his center and dismounted part of his force to act as skirmishers and keep the attention of the Union front.

Falling for the maneuver, judging it as a retreat, the Union force advanced.

Then as the rest of his men arrived, Forrest sent Major D.C. Kelley and a party of Confederates under cover of the woods to the right of the Union line, and Lt. Col. J.W. Starnes' troops went to the left.

As Starnes' force hit the Union left and Kelley's men struck the right flank, Forrest ordered his main column to charge, executing the tactic which he afterward practiced so frequently and with such success in nearly all of his encounters.

Standing up in his stirrups, his saber in his left hand, Forrest led the rush forward into the middle of the Union line at full speed.

Attacked on both flanks, and from the center, the Union cavalry broke and ran. "Retreat to Sacramento" was their cry. For nearly one mile to and then through the village of Sacramento, the pursuit turned into not much more than a horse race, the two sides trading pistol fire as they rode. But, beyond Sacramento, Union officers rallied part of their men and turned upon the Confederates in a bloody hand-to-hand clash. Forrest and men in the advance force plowed into the Union horsemen. As a bullet whizzed through his coat collar, Forrest killed a federal soldier with a pistol shot and dispatched two officers, sabering one and shooting the other.

Forrest charged a Union captain, and both men were thrown as their horses collided and crashed to the ground. The federal captain's shoulder was broken in the fall and he was forced to surrender.

By that time Major Kelley arrived with his men, and the chase and fight, which had covered nearly three miles, ended.

"My (men's) horses were almost run down while theirs were fresher," Forrest reported. "I deemed it best to call off the chase because many wounded men were hanging to their saddles to keep from falling. Returning we found their dead and wounded in every direction."

Forrest estimated the Union losses as 65 killed and 35 wounded. Union sources said only nine federal officers and men were killed, but 40 men were either captured or missing. Two Confederates were killed and three wounded in the fight, Forrest reported.

Despite several bruises suffered in the fall, Forrest escaped uninjured.

Forrest's charge at Sacramento was his first and only fight in Kentucky and went down, in the words of his commanding officer, as one of the "most brilliant and successful cavalry engagements that the present war has witnessed."

From that time forth, Forrest, who had no military education, used his ingenious tactics again and again in the war in the West – at Fort Donelson, Shiloh, Murfreesboro, Chickamauga, the Nashville campaign, Brice's Crossroads and Selma. His campaigns would become required study in the military schools of Europe and America.

Forrest was the master of the lightning attack and pursuit; he defeated his opponent by "getting there first with the most men." Always in the thick of every fight, he was involved in 22 principal engagements during the war, killed 30 men in hand-to-hand combat, had 29 horses shot from under him and was wounded or injured six times.

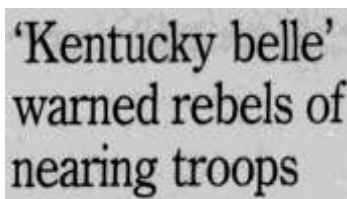
In exasperation, during his march to the sea in 1864, Gen. Sherman told his officers that if they could keep "that devil Forrest" off his heels he would cut the Confederacy in two. Sherman also once promised a brigadier general a promotion to major general if he could kill Forrest. After the war, Sherman showed his respect for the wily Confederate cavalryman. "(Forrest) never read a military book in his life, knew nothing about tactics, could not drill a company, but he had a genius for strategy that was original. He always seemed to know what I was doing or intended to do."

Forrest, a Tennessee native who grew up in Mississippi, moved to Memphis before the war where he was a real estate broker, slave trader and a member of the city board of aldermen. He also ran a plantation in northern Mississippi. After the war Forrest returned to Memphis where he died Oct. 29, 1877, at the age of 56.

The mourners in the cortege on the way to Elmwood Cemetery included former Confederate president Jefferson Davis, members of the Confederate cabinet and some of Forrest's men among the thousands of civilians paying their final tribute. Forrest always had looked out for his men's comfort and safety in the field, even paid for their weapons and horses, and never made a promise to them he didn't keep. He attended their soldier reunions for 10 years after the war until his bad health prevented it. They never forgot his devotion, and in turn responded with pride that during the war they had "rode with Old Bedford."



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Monday, 20 April 1992, pp.1C & 3C:



By Glenn Hodges, Messenger-Inquirer

As Nathan Bedford Forrest's Confederate cavalry approached Sacramento on Dec. 28, 1861, a young woman suddenly rode out to tell the rebels the position of Union troops moving toward the McLean County village. As they galloped away to challenge the federal force, the Confederates ordered her to go back before any fighting started.

The sight was so inspiring to Forrest that he made a gallant notation of it in his report after the ensuing engagement: "A beautiful young lady, smiling, with untied tresses floating in the breeze, on horseback, met the column just before our advance guard came up with the rear of the enemy, infusing nerve into my arm and kindling knightly chivalry within my heart."

Forrest could not identify her and John A Wyeth's biography of Forrest later referred to her only as "a Kentucky belle." But the woman was later identified as 18-year-old Mary "Mollie" Susan Morehead, the daughter of Hugh Morehead, who had a farm 1 ½ miles north of Sacramento, and the great-aunt of Allen T. Nall, who now lives in Calhoun.

Nall, 86, said Mollie and her sister had been running an errand beyond Sacramento Hill when they spotted the Union troops. While her sister went to warn their parents and brothers, Mollie rode south to alert Forrest's men who were following the federal force.

"She wanted to go with the troops, but they made her go back," said Nall, who first learned about the story from his aunt, Fannie Martin. "I've known about it many years, since I was about 14 years old."

Mary "Mollie" Morehead was; born in 1843 and married a dentist, George E. Stowers, in 1866. She died in childbirth March 29, 1870, and is buried with her infant son in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church cemetery at Sacramento.





Statue of Nathan Bedford Forrest in Memphis, Tennessee, 15 August 2015. Forrest was the first leader of the Ku Klux Klan. The statue was removed on 20 December 2017.



Photo from May 2017 Battle of Sacramento reenactment

