

Little Harpeth River

**tennessee
civil war
preservation
association**

NARRATIVE

After capturing the Union garrison at Brentwood, Confederate cavalry forces commanded by Brig. Gen. Nathan Forrest forced the surrender of a Union railroad bridge stockade near the Little Harpeth River

COUNTY:

Williamson

DATE:

3/25/1863

GEO COORDINATES:

35°18'15.85 N

85°23'13.08 W

HISTORICAL THEMES

Controlling Resources, Crucible for Leadership, Guerilla Warfare, Influence on Campaign

PRESERVATION

OPPORTUNITY INDEX:

HIGH

EXPLANATION OF ATTACHMENTS/VIDEO:

Drawings and prints of stockade and fort at the railroad bridge on the Little Harpeth River.
Narratives of battlefield site

CONFEDERATE UNITS:

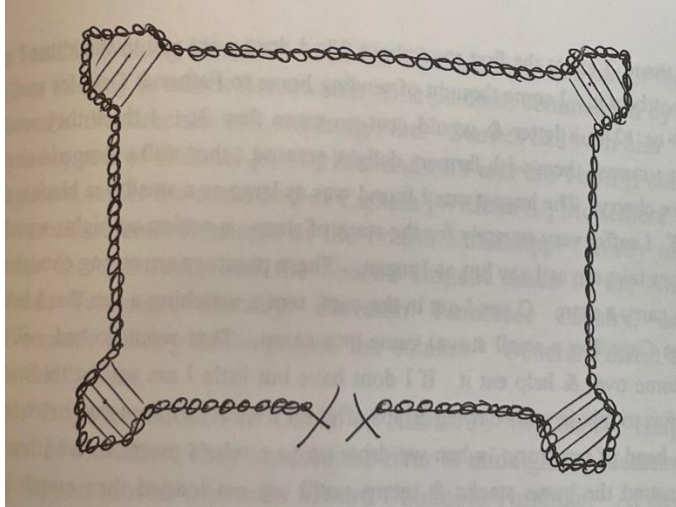
N/A

LINKS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

N/A

UNION UNITS:

N/A



Drawing of Stockade by Charley Prentiss (19th Michigan Infantry)

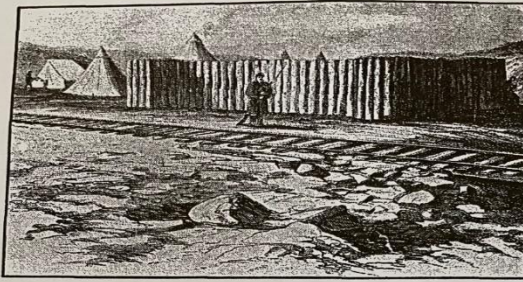
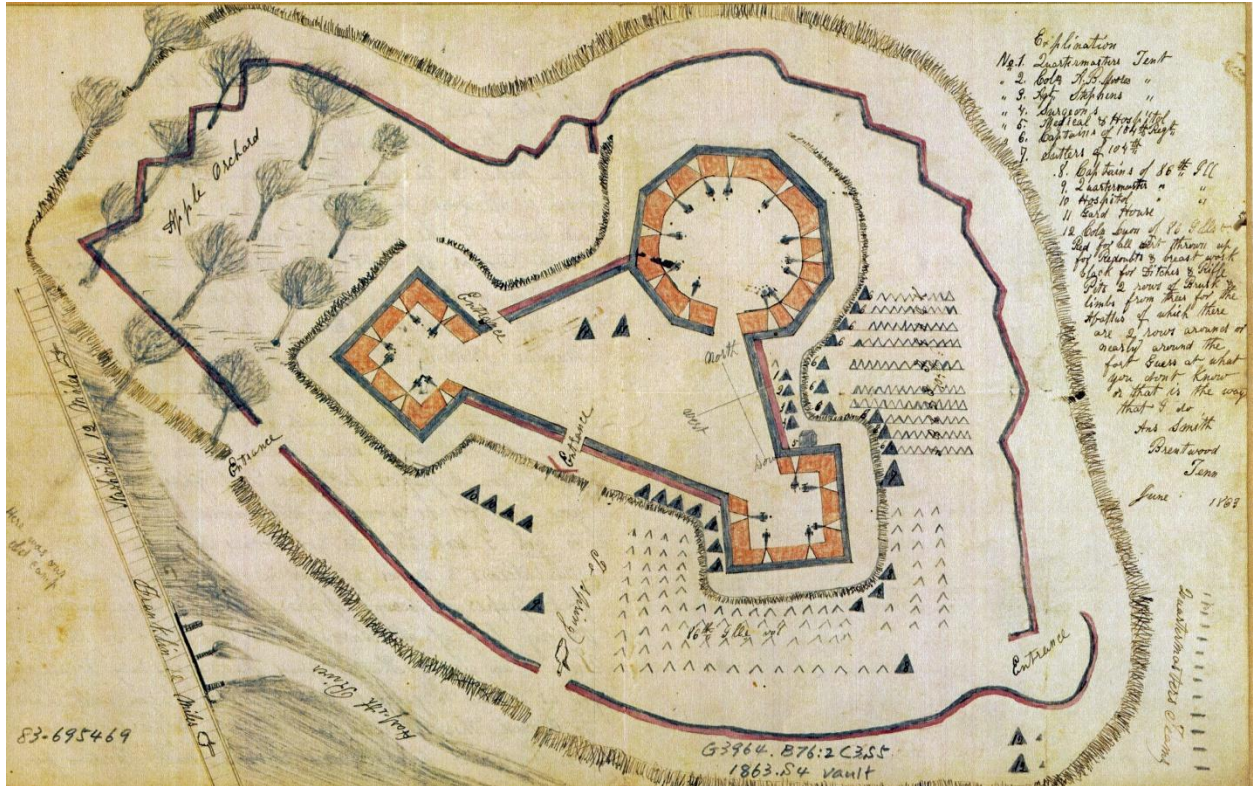


Figure 8. An 1863 view of Union stockade on the Louisville and Nashville Railroad. From Adams and Christian (n.d.: 36).



Figure 9. View of a Union stockade protecting a railroad bridge at Franklin, Tennessee. From Kelley (1989: 15).

Images of stockade at L&N Railroad, Franklin, Tennessee



Drawing by Anson Smith (104th Illinois Infantry) showing triangular fort that replaced the square stockade

After capturing the garrison at Brentwood (see assessment for Brentwood Phase 1), General Forrest took a portion of his troops two miles south and surrounded the stockade that guarded the railroad bridge over the Little Harpeth River. The stockade on the day of the battle was rectangular with four towers. Charley Prentiss of the 19th Michigan sent this sketch of the stockade in a letter to his wife dated two days prior to the battle.

In the letter Prentiss told his wife that the stockade was about 100 square feet, but since General Granger indicated that the stockade could hold over 200 men it must have been larger than that. Other contemporary sketches of this type of stockade can be found in *A Survey of Civil War Period Military Sites in Middle Tennessee* prepared by the Tennessee Department of Conservation Division of Archaeology in Report of Investigations No. 7 dated 1990:

According to a diagram prepared by Lt. Col. Bloodgood for his court-martial for his actions at Thompson's Station and Brentwood, the stockade was located south of the Little Harpeth and east of the railroad

The stockade was garrisoned by 230 men of the 19th Michigan commanded by Captain Elisha Bassett. Bassett had been with the regiment at the Battle of Thompson's Station but after hiding behind a tree 15 or 20 yards in the rear he fled the battlefield prompting his commander to say "I have never seen a man exhibit so much cowardice and fear." Bassett was in no mood for a fight at the Little Harpeth either, and after one warning shot from the Confederate artillery he promptly surrendered.

After the battle the Confederates attempted to destroy the railroad bridge but the damage was repaired quickly and the Nashville train went through to Franklin either late that night or the next day. The stockade was replaced after the battle by a triangular fort that incorporated artillery and was located north of the river and east of the tracks. Two contemporary sketches of that stockade are available. This one was prepared by Anson Smith of the 104th Illinois.

LEGEND OF TERMS:

Historical themes: Topics and subject matter that characterize the battlefield including Control of Tennessee's Resources, Crucible for Leadership, Guerilla Warfare, Transformation in Warfare, Enslaved People, and Influence on Campaign. Sites are identified that exhibit themes at moderate to high levels, and some sites may contain one or more Historical Themes.

Preservation Opportunity Index (POI): A rating assigned for each battlefield to indicate relative opportunity and potential for successful site preservation. The Index is generated by a model that evaluates ratings assigned for site significance, condition, risk of loss, protection potential, and opportunities for interpretation. Based upon the POI values for each region in Tennessee (West, Middle, East), sites are indicated as having High, Medium, or Low opportunity.

Geo Coordinates: General/central location of the battlefield area per latitude and longitude coordinates utilized in Google Earth

DO YOU HAVE INFORMATION ON A BATTLE SITE?

Please email us at info@tcwpa.org and we will reach out to you soon. If you have copies of documents or photos to share, you can include those. If you want to discuss by phone, we will schedule that too.

HELP US COLLECT INFORMATION TO PRESERVE THESE BATTLEFIELDS

TCWPA's Statewide Preservation Plan team captains are recruiting volunteers to help gather information about many of the lesser-known sites with hopes of verifying the condition of each site and identifying opportunities for preservation and interpretation.

If you are interested in helping, please contact TCWPA at info@tcwpa.org .

TCWPA will not publish nor release any confidential information, or the name of the contributor, unless you request to be recognized.

Thank you!

The logo for the Tennessee Civil War Preservation Association (TCWPA) is displayed in a light blue, lowercase, sans-serif font. It is positioned on the left side of a dark blue banner that features a background image of a Civil War-era cannon. The banner also contains contact information on the right side.

tcwpa

Have Information on a Civil
War Battlesite?

Contact our team at info@tcwpa.org