

Fort Donelson Skirmish

**tennessee
civil war
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association**

NARRATIVE

On October 11, 1864 a recruiting party of United States Colored Troops was attacked by the 16th Kentucky Cavalry (Col. James Chenoweth) five miles from Fort Donelson. Following several assaults on the USCT position situated on a hill and in several log buildings, the Confederate cavalry withdrew with 20 casualties. USCT losses were 4 killed including an officer and 9 wounded. Lieut. Col. T.R. Weaver (119th USCT) noted that the "colored soldiers...behaved nobly."

HISTORICAL THEMES

Guerilla Warfare, Enslaved People

EXPLANATION OF ATTACHMENTS/VIDEO:

Accounts from the Official Records

LINKS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

N/A

COUNTY:

Stewart

DATE:

10/11/1864

GEO COORDINATES:

Unknown

PRESERVATION

OPPORTUNITY INDEX:

LOW

CONFEDERATE UNITS:

16th Kentucky
Cavalry (Chenoweth)

UNION UNITS:

4th Heavy Artillery
USCT
119th USCT
83rd Ill Infantry

CLARKSVILLE, October 11, 1864.

Maj. B. H. POLK, Assistant Adjutant-Gen.: Capt. Flood reports that Lieut.-Col. Weaver and ninety colored troops from Pine Bluff were attacked to-day five miles from [Fort] Donelson by 200 rebels. The rebels were handsomely whipped, with the loss of Lieut.-Col. Sorey, and about 25 men killed and wounded. Our loss, 1 lieutenant and 3 men killed and 9 wounded. A. A. SMITH, Col. Eighty-third Illinois, Cmdg. Post. OR, Ser. I, Vol. 39, pt. III, p. 218.

OCTOBER 11, 1864.-Skirmish near Fort Donelson, Tenn.

Report of Lieut. Col. Thomas R. Weaver, One hundred and nineteenth U. S. Colored Infantry. FORT DONELSON, TENN., October 12, 1864.

I have the honor to report that on yesterday morning at 4 o'clock I left Pine Bluff with a recruiting party of eighty-five men of the Fourth Colored Artillery (Heavy), and when near the house of Doctor Williams, within about five miles of this place, I discovered a force of rebel cavalry in our front, which I have since learned was composed of parts of three regiments under command of Col. Chenoweth. My advance commenced firing as soon as they discovered them, which threw them into some confusion. I immediately moved the main body forward a short distance to a slightly elevated position and formed line near the house of Mr. Sexton, where we were immediately attacked, the rebel cavalry charging up the hill in good style until within fifty yards of our line, when they were met by a volley which sent them back in confusion. They reformed and charged again, but were again driven back. They then began moving a force on both flanks, as the same time keeping up a vigorous attack in front, when, finding that we were being surrounded, I directed my men to occupy the log dwellings and outhouses of Mr. Sexton, which they succeeded in doing, after driving the rebels away from them, but in doing so Mr. Sexton, a peaceable citizen, was killed, my men supposing him to be one of the rebels, as he attempted to escape. The rebels, having dismounted their force, continued the attack on the houses, but were met by a well-directed fire, which soon compelled them to withdraw into the woods. Finding it impossible to dislodge us they attempted to send in a flag of truce, which was instantly fired on, and although the act was a violation of the usages of civilized warfare we believed we were justifiable in doing so, as we had no favors to ask nor none to grant, and knowing the treatment which officers and men of colored regiments have generally received at their hands we believe we will not be censured for firing on their flag of truce. The rebels shortly after disappeared, leaving their dead and severely wounded in our possession. Shortly after we occupied and houses I sent two men to Capt. Flood, commanding at this post, for assistance, which arrived shortly after

the rebels withdrew. Our thanks are due Capt. Flood, his officers and men, for the promptness with which they came to our assistance. The rebels left Lieut.-Col. Sorey, Capt. [Maj.] Garr, and 1 enlisted man dead, 3 men mortally and 4 severely wounded, in our hands, and Doctor Williams informs me that they took at least 7 wounded off with them. We have had 4 of their wounded brought in; the others will die. Our loss is Lieut. Johnston, Company I, Fourth Colored Artillery (Heavy), and 3 enlisted men killed, and 9 enlisted men wounded. The entire command lament the loss of Lieut. Johnston, as he was a most excellent officer and possessing the entire confidence of his men. Our success must be attributed in a great measure to his exertions. As for the colored soldiers they behaved nobly. There was not a single instance in which they did not surpass my expectations of them. We brought all our killed and wounded in with us. The wounded are in hospital and are doing well. Their wounded say they crossed the Tennessee River in the morning with 250 men, and admit a loss of 20 men. Lieut. Upham, commanding Company D, Fourth Colored Artillery (Heavy), Lieut.'s Wright, Russell O'Healy, and Hill, of the One hundred and nineteenth Colored Infantry, who accompanied the expedition, were conspicuous during the entire fight, and did their whole duty. Our guide, Mr. Joice, was also mortally wounded and has since died. Very respectfully, your obedient servant, T. R. WEAVER, Lieut.-Col. 119th Colored Infantry, Cmdg. OR, Ser. I, Vol. 39, pt. I, pp. 857-858. Note 1 Note 1: See also: Ibid., Ser. I, Vol. 39, pt. III, p. 218

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 in the lower-left corner of a dark blue banner that features a background image of a Civil War-era cannon.

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Have Information on a Civil
War Battlesite?

Contact our team at info@tcwpa.org