

Wilkinson's Cross Roads

**tennessee
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NARRATIVE

As the Union army advanced towards Murfreesboro, General Alexander McCook's Right Wing moved to a crossroads at the west end of Wilkinson Pike. There is some evidence to show that a small skirmish occurred at the crossroads but there are no details. McCook's army spent the evening of December 29th, 1862 at the crossroads. On December 31, 1862, the Third Kentucky Cavalry fought to regain supply wagons and captured Union troops from Confederate Cavalry. This fight is attributed to Wilkinson's Crossroads as the Third Kentucky Cavalry (US) was moving towards it when they came upon the captured wagons and troops. This fighting, though, occurred further east near Overall Creek.

HISTORICAL THEMES

Guerilla Warfare

EXPLANATION OF ATTACHMENTS/VIDEO:

Photos; reports from Official Records

LINKS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

N/A

COUNTY:

Rutherford

DATE:

12/31/1862

GEO COORDINATES:

35.875036° N,
86.498772° W

PRESERVATION

OPPORTUNITY INDEX:

MEDIUM

CONFEDERATE UNITS:

Brig. Gen. John
Wharton's Cavalry
Brigade

UNION UNITS:

3rd Kentucky Cavalry



Aerial view of battlefield



View from northwest



View from northeast



View from southeast



View from southwest

December 29, 1862 - Skirmish at Wilkinson's [a.k.a. Wilkerson's] Crossroads Note 1 No circumstantial reports filed. MURFREESBOROUGH, TENN., January 3, 1863. On December 26 we moved from Nashville in three columns. McCook's corps by Nolensville pike; Thomas' from its encampment on Franklin pike, via Wilson pike; Crittenden's on main Murfreesborough pike. The left and center met with a strong resistance, such as the nature of the country permits-rolling or hilly routes, skirted by cedar thickets, farms, and intersected by small streams, with rocky bluff banks, forming serious obstacles. McCook drove Hardee's corps 1 1/2 miles from Nolensville, and occupied the place. Crittenden reached within 1 1/2 miles of La Vergne. Thomas reached the Wilson pike, meeting with no serious opposition. On the 27th, McCook drove Hardee from Nolensville, and pushed

reconnoitering division 6 miles toward Shelbyville, and found Hardee had retreated toward Murfreesborough. Crittenden fought and drove the enemy before him, occupying the line of Stewart's Creek, capturing some prisoners, with slight loss. Thomas occupied the vicinity of Nolensville. On the 28th, McCook, completed his reconnaissance on Hardee's movements. Crittenden remained, awaiting the result and bringing up trains. Thomas moved on to Stewart's Creek. On the 29th, McCook moved into Wilkinson's Cross-roads, 7 miles from Murfreesborough, the end of a short pike, the road rough, through rolling country, skirted by bluffs, covered with dense cedar thickets, tops open timber. Crittenden pushed the enemy rapidly, saved all the bridges, and reached a point within 3 miles of Murfreesborough, his advance driving all their outposts to within sight of town. Thomas, with two divisions, closed up with Crittenden, and took position on the right. On the 30th, McCook advanced on Wilkinson pike. . . ~ ~ W. S. Rosecrans, Major-General OR, Ser. I, Vol. 20, pt. I, p. 184.

Note 1: While it does not explicitly provide verification, the following excerpt from the Reports of Major-General William S. Rosecrans, U. S. Army, commanding Army of the Cumberland, with congratulatory resolutions, orders, etc., seems to indicate that there was a minor skirmish at Wilkinson's Cross-Roads December 29, 1862.

December 31, 1862 - Skirmish at Wilkerson's Crossroads Note 1 No circumstantial reports filed. Excerpt from the Report of Col. Eli H. Murray, Third Kentucky Cavalry, including skirmishes at La Vergne, December 26, Wilkinson's Cross-Roads, December 31, and on Manchester pike, January 5, 1863, relative to the skirmish at Wilkinson's Crossroads, December 31, 1862. HDQRS. THIRD KENTUCKY CAVALRY, Camp Stanley, near Murfreesborough, Tenn. January 7, 1863. SIR: I have the honor herewith to transmit a report of the part taken by my command from December 26, 1862, the day of our advance from Nashville, the engagement before Murfreesborough, and pursuit of the enemy in their retreat. ~ ~ ~ At 8 o'clock, December 31, 1862, Col. Kennett, commanding division, gave me orders to move to Wilkinson's Cross-Roads. Having moved but a short distance, and in the direction of

the cross-roads, I found the greatest confusion, caused by the right wing of the army falling back. Going but little farther, I found our whole train of baggage and ammunition in possession of the enemy. Capt. Wolfley, with part of his battalion, and Capt. Breathitt, commanding the First Battalion, with a squad of his command, in all about 80 men, in a moment were engaged charging down the train. We came upon the enemy in all directions. Here were engagements hand-to-hand, but dashing onward my men were doing in earnest the work before them. The open field gave us the place for charging. The enemy were marching about 250 of our men to their rear as prisoners. These we recaptured. We also recaptured a portion of the Fifth Wisconsin Battery; also a section supposed to be the First Ohio. The hospital of Gen. Palmer's division was still held by them. Bringing about 40 men to dash upon them, their whole command fled. At one time it seemed as if my whole command were taking prisoners to the rear. There being no support near, I ordered the prisoners to be given to the nearest infantry, in order that I might bring all my force against them and hold the train. Maj. Shacklett here rejoined me, and having taken position near the hospital, our cavalry coming to the field, took position on my left. Again the enemy made a dash, but was again repulsed. Near two hours afterward the enemy moved to the right. By order of Col. Kennett we moved in that direction at the trot, again to find them about to attack the train; but after exchanging shots, and under fire from our artillery, again baffled in their design, withdrew. We took between 50 and 60 prisoners, killing and wounding about 25. In the engagement the 80 men of my command drove from the field Wharton's brigade of rebel cavalry saved the baggage and ammunition of a great part of our army; recaptured a portion of the Fifth Wisconsin Battery and a section of, I think, the First Ohio Battery, and, at least calculation, 800 of our men. From that time up to their retreat from Murfreesborough we held our position with the First Cavalry Brigade, under the direct orders of Col. Minty, commanding. **** OR, Ser. I, Vol. 20, pt. I, pp. 627-628. Note 1: A. k.a. "Wilkinson's Crossroads.

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.

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War Battlesite?

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