

Hay's Ferry

NARRATIVE

On December 24, 1863 a Union detachment of the First Brigade of the First Division (Col. A. P. Campbell) marched to Dandridge and attacked Confederate forces at Hay's Ferry. In the engagement that followed, the Federal troops retreated to New Market with a loss of 7 killed, 47 wounded, and 7 missing. We captured 30 prisoners, besides killing Maj. Bale, of the Sixth Georgia Cavalry, and killing and wounding over 100 of the enemy.

HISTORICAL THEMES

Controlling Resources, Guerilla Warfare

EXPLANATION OF ATTACHMENTS/VIDEO:

Maps and reports from Official Records; battle of Hay's Ferry Tennessee Civil War Trails marker

LINKS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

N/A

COUNTY:

Jefferson

DATE:

12/24/1863

GEO COORDINATES:

36.0154° N,
83.4149° W

PRESERVATION

OPPORTUNITY INDEX:

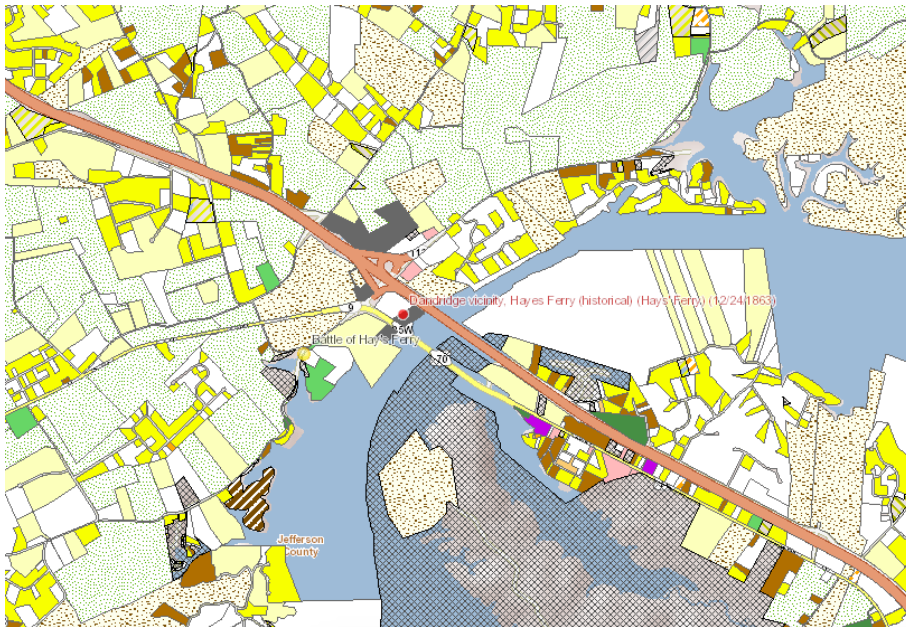
LOW

CONFEDERATE UNITS:

6th Georgia Cavalry

UNION UNITS:

First Brigade, First
Divison, Army of the
Cumberland



Tennessee Civil War Trails Marker text
Battle of Hay's Ferry-Fighting for Food
(preface)

In November 1863, Confederate Gen. James Longstreet led a force from Chattanooga to attack Union Gen. Ambrose E. Burnside's army at Knoxville. The campaign failed, and in December Longstreet's men marched east along the East Tennessee and Virginia Railroad to winter quarters at Russellville, where they remained until March 1864. Numerous small

engagements between Longstreet's and Burnside's armies occurred during the winter.

(main text)

Hay's Ferry once operated near here. The landscape you see now was quite different during the Civil War. Then, fields of corn grew along the banks of the French Broad River, now submerged beneath the waters of Douglas Lake. This corn, left on the stalk, was often all that stood between Confederate soldiers in East Tennessee and starvation during the winter of 1863. On the cold morning of December 24, hungry men from both sides began a battle near here that ended hours later, three miles away.

The Confederate cavalry, more aggressive in its tactics, pushed the Union troopers from one position to another. Col. Charles C. Crew's Georgians captured two Federal guns, but Union horsemen countercharged and recaptured them.

Attacked front and rear, the Federals retreated toward New Market as night approached, leaving the river bottoms and its corn still in Confederate hands. The Clash at Hay's Ferry was one of several fought in Jefferson County, where food was the ultimate prize.

"This was a sad Christmas Eve to us, and as we gathered around the campfires to discuss the events of the day, many an unbidden tear could be seen trickling down the tanned faces of the men when reference was made to those who had fallen in battle during the day." — Sgt. William R. Carter, 1st Tennessee Cavalry (U.S.)

(captions)

The French Broad River bottoms (1941) - Courtesy Richard Taylor

William R. Carter from William R. Carter, History of the First Regiment Tennessee Volunteer Cavalry (1902)

December 23, 1863 - Action at Hay's Ferry, near Dandridge

No circumstantial reports filed.

Excerpt from the Itinerary of the Cavalry, Army of the Cumberland, Major-General David S. Stanley and Brigadier-General Washington L. Elliot commanding

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December 24, Brig.-Gen. Sturgis, chief of cavalry of the Army of the Ohio, and by seniority commanding the cavalry of the Departments of the Ohio and Cumberland, detached the First Brigade of the First Division, Col. A. P. Campbell commanding, to march to Dandridge, in conjunction with some of his own cavalry, and cut off a rebel brigade supposed to be there. At Hay's Ferry Campbell briskly attacked the enemy, who, being heavily re-enforced, compelled him to retreat. On the retreat one gun of Lilly's (Eighteenth Indiana) battery was spiked and abandoned on account of an axle breaking. In this affair our loss was 7 killed, 47 wounded, and 7

missing. We captured 30 prisoners, besides killing Maj. Bale, of the Sixth Georgia Cavalry, and killing and wounding over 100 of the enemy.
OR, Ser. I, Vol. 31, pt. I, pp. 438-439.

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!



tcwpa

**Have Information on a Civil
War Battlesite?**

Contact our team at info@tcwpa.org