

Travisville

**tennessee
civil war
preservation
association**

NARRATIVE

On September 29, 1861 a Union force consisting of a detail of the 12th Kentucky Infantry attacked approximately 100 Confederate troops encamped at Travisville, Tennessee killing four and capturing four more as prisoners. The skirmish is considered to be the first combat of the Civil War in Tennessee.

HISTORICAL THEMES

Guerilla Warfare

EXPLANATION OF ATTACHMENTS/VIDEO:

Map and report from Official Records

LINKS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

N/A

COUNTY:

Pickett

DATE:

9/29/1861

GEO COORDINATES:

36.5845° N,

84.9938° W

PRESERVATION

OPPORTUNITY INDEX:

MEDIUM

CONFEDERATE UNITS:

N/A

UNION UNITS:

12th Kentucky

Infantry



Report of Col. William A. Hoskins, Twelfth Kentucky Infantry. CAMP AT ALBANY, September 29, 1861. SIR: ~ ~ ~

This morning I received information that the Confederate forces were forming another encampment at Travisville, distant from us 13 miles. Accordingly I ordered Capt. Morrison to take the effective force under his command and proceed to that point, and after reconnoitering sufficiently to satisfy himself that the number was not too great to justify an attack, to take them by surprise, order a surrender, which, should they refuse, to fire upon them.

In obedience to my orders he proceeded to that point as directed. In about two hours after Capt. Morrison left camp Lieut. Adams joined us, as also the Home Guards of Hustonville Cavalry. I ordered a detail of 15 men from the company under command of Lieut. Adams and 30 from the Hustonville Home Guards, which were placed under command of Maj. Brunets, and he ordered to proceed to Travisville, to support Capt. Morrison in the event he was repulsed; but before reaching that point Capt. Morrison had surprised the camp, finding about 100 troops, which, being ordered to surrender, fled, when they were fired upon and 4 killed, the balance effecting their escape by fleeing to the hills. ~ ~ ~

They also took 4 prisoners, 2 of whom, as also 2 horses, were captured by Thomas Huddleston, a private in Capt. Morrison's company; after accomplishing which, to use his own expression, "He looked for more, but they had all fled."

Among the officers with Capt. Morrison were Lieut. Miller, Sergeants Hay, Carr, Chilton, Smith, and Howard. The prisoners were brought this side the line, when, after taking a solemn obligation to prove faithful to the United States Government, they were released. . . .

But for our timely arrival the Confederate troops, I have no doubt, would now have been in possession of this place, as they were to move in this direction on yesterday. ~ ~ ~
OR, Ser. I. Vol. 4, p. 205. Note 2

Note 1: This was the first military combat incident of the Civil War in Tennessee. In reaction to a Confederate attack a few days earlier, Union troops from Kentucky entered the state and dispersed a Rebel camp at this Pickett County location. Like the Grand Junction Insurrection, this event seems to have been ignored in previous historical treatments of the Civil War in Tennessee. The Travisville site has been located by Dr. Michael E. Birdwell and Dr. Calvin W. Dickinson at the History Department of Tennessee Technological University in Cookeville. In the Travisville cemetery they discovered a grave headstone with the following inscription: "James M. Saufley/Killed by James Ferguson of the 1st Kentucky Cavalry, U. S. A. / September 29, 1861." The Tennessee Historical Commission, along with the Upper Cumberland Institute at Tennessee Technological University, sponsored the placement of a historical marker at the Travisville site. Neither E. B. Long, *The Civil War Day by Day: An Almanac, 1861-1865*, fwd. by Bruce Catton, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1971) [Hereinafter: Long, *Almanac*] nor Frederick H. Dyer, *Compendium of the War of the Rebellion*. . . (Des Moines: 1908, rpt. 1980) [Hereinafter: *Dyer's Battle Index for Tennessee*] mention this previously unrecognized event. The otherwise comprehensive *Tennesseans in the Civil War*, 2 Vols., Vol. I (Nashville: THC, 1964), [Hereinafter: *Tennesseans in the Civil War*] likewise make no reference to the affair at Travisville.

Note 2: See also OR, Ser. I. Vol. 4., pp. 284-285. However, the Confederates did not stay dispersed for long as the following indicates: CAMP AT ALBANY, October 1, 1861—8 a.m.
Brig.-Gen. THOMAS:

SIR:. . . I learn that the Confederate troops are rallying again at Travisville, with the intention of attacking us. From the best information, they cannot muster a force exceeding 1,150. Last night at 9 o'clock our picket guards were fired upon by a party of seven persons within 3 miles of the camp; they returned the fire, with what effect I have not ascertained. None of ours were injured that I know of, though one of the picket has not yet come up.

I have ordered a detachment of fifty cavalry to scout the whole country in the neighborhood of the beat at which the pickets were stationed, as also that in which the absent picket was stationed.
~ ~ ~ Very respectfully, your obedient servant, W. A. HOSKINS, Commanding Post. OR, Ser. I, Vol. 4, pp. 286-287.

MCCLARIES', PULASKI COUNTY, KENTUCKY, October 29, 1861. Brig. Gen. GEORGE H. THOMAS, Commanding First Kentucky Brigade: GEN.: ~ ~ ~ I learn that they have also a body of cavalry stationed at Travisville, numbering 1,200, which of course will join their main force at Albany, making in the aggregate 4,400. I have no fears from an attack should it come from the direction of the main road leading from Monticello, but apprehend that they may attempt to flank us by crossing lower down the river. . . ~ ~ ~ Respectfully, &c., GEO. H. THOMAS, Brig.-Gen., U. S. Volunteers, Commanding. OR, Ser. I, Vol. 4, pp. 323.

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